Why Anti-Corruption Crusades Often Fail to Win Lasting Victories

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Introduction

Definition of anti-corruption crusades:

- announcements by an organization that concerted action will be taken to fight corruption
Levels of Crusades

- international or regional
- national
- sub-national
- ministry or agency
Sectors Sponsoring Crusades

- government
- private sector
- civil society: religious groups, NGOs
Reasons for Crusade Failures

- political
- administrative
Political Reasons

- simple lip service
- witch hunts → military coups
- lack of buy-in from social partners
- elections, shift in political priorities
Administrative Reasons

- applying “wholesale” solutions
- losing interest in “housekeeping” activities
- rolling back reforms
Lessons to be Learned

“failure” can be the step before success

at political level, crusades need:
  – genuine commitment
  – to be protected from politicization
  – to be inclusive and participatory

at administrative level, crusades need:
  – to take into account unique conditions
  – to consistently apply adapted solutions
  – to reassess activities having unintended results
UN Approach to Corruption

- holistic → deal with underlying causes and not only symptoms
- complementary preventive and enforcement approaches:
  - legal
  - social
  - economic
Role of the UN

- promote the exchange of experiences
- provide technical advice
- 2 major initiatives:
  - African Public Service Charter
  - Public Service Ethics in Africa: a comparative study
Conclusion

- anti-corruption crusades by themselves do not work but should be part of a long-term, multi-faceted, comprehensive strategy
- UN has an information brokering role to assist Member States
Contact

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