

UN AGENCIES AND THEIR CORRUPT PRACTICES IN PAKISTAN

Corruption is not only an organized crime, but also white collar crime, and at times becomes victimless crime if there is no complainant. The true category in which corruption should be placed in the list of crimes depends on the nature of corruption, the complaint, the victim and the offender. However, the higher you go the colder it is, and the higher is the position of the offender or the institution, the greater is the corruption. Individual corruption cases may come to light due to one or other reasons, like opposition protest, sensational stories in media, disagreement of the partners, internal accountability, leakage of reports, etc. However, the worst form is that of the institutional corruption where the departments and organizations are involved in corrupt practices. The difficulty with this organized-white collar crime situation is that the “rules of business” are framed in such a way that the “trickle-down effects” are always made a mockery. The UN agencies in Pakistan are one of these institutions which have added to the corruption in the country and not reduced it. The fluid situation in Pakistan—often with natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, internally-displaced persons (IDPs), or man-made disasters like drone-attacks and military operations with a plethora of social implications—has been a good saleable commodity for the UN agencies in Pakistan. The poor nation’s adversity always proves to be an opportunity for the UN workers in Pakistan. Billions of dollars are requested from the international donors and affluent countries, all coming from their tax payers, but then who knows how much is spent on whose rehabilitation and whose recovery and whose reconstruction? One should not be carried away by the claims of beguiling, deceptive and colorful reports of the “few chosen NGOs” and their donor UN agencies. Never a value free, independent and impartial research has been conducted to evaluate the performance of the UN agencies in Pakistan, especially in terms of the impact of the million dollar budget and allocations for their “most valuable projects”. The maximum of the UN budget is spent on their management cost, unbelievable salaries, traveling expenses, boarding and lodging in five-star hotels, media flashed seminars and workshops with unjustified extravagance, and the strain goes through the whole family of the UN recipients, obviously a few “Islamabad-based NGOs”, mostly owned by the soft spoken selected women, and fluently English-speaking families of the ruling elites. Basically, the UN compulsion is that in most cases they want the government should “**be on board**”. Their project designers often soothe the senior officers/officials with their high sounding words and phrases of mutual collaboration and understanding for this purpose, especially when they need a memorandum of understanding or a letter of acceptance from some government departments. They then steel the needs of the poor and sell it to the donors on the pretext that the government in Pakistan needs support and capacity building. The miseries of the poor nation and poor departments are thus sold very frankly and skillfully. Funds come after a long period of assessment (another

trick of the UN agencies) but by then no one knows who made what commitment with whom and where? At the end, a few computers, a printer, a fax machine and the like stuff reach the department. May be sometimes with vehicles and honorarium too! The major chunk is spent on UN own cost and management .This is not jargon or unwarranted accusations. If you wish, you may see dozen of examples in every government department.

1. THE UNODC (UN. GIFT) sent experts for “being on board” for human trafficking but at the end of meetings in Peshawar and sumptuous lunches in Islamabad, the huge money from UAE donor was spent on “project development” and the actual project never saw the light of dawn. We think that with that money, the Anti-Human Trafficking Cell of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) could have been fully equipped and developed in all respect. The researchers should also see the low quality of research conducted by the UN agencies through their partners. Few may know that these researches, reports, and manuals of extremely poor quality in terms of academic excellence, though the get-up is always very attractive, thanks to the UN money. They often seem to be written for donors in English than for local consumption. However, UNODC is relatively better than other agencies. Examples of individual corruption and inefficiency in UNICEF or other UN agencies are not untraceable.
2. The UNICEF spent plenty of money on data collection on juvenile justice indicators and held numerous meetings and workshops in five star hotels, and also established that so-called PCCWD and NCCWD but it never achieved the desired results and no data was collected by any of them. Plenty of money was spent on so many projects of child protection but at the end the UNICEF puts responsibility on the individual partners and blame the government for lack of will, and hides the tricks they play with the minds and sensitivities of the poor officials. The corrupt elements in the government often exploit this situation and writes a letter of appreciation to theses UN agencies while praising them for “being on board”. Such appreciation “(mutual cooperation)” make the job of international workers easier. Again, how much money comes and how much is spent on which sector remains in dark forever. A critical evaluation of the progress and impact of child protection section of UNICEF needs to be done in an open and by impartial researchers in Pakistan. Another bad corrupt practice is that the UN agencies are expert in hijacking the works and ideas of others. There are many examples of this imperceptible white collar crime. The UNICEF projects need a serious assessment in Pakistan. The UNIFEM (now the UN Women) is another replica of the UNICEF. What the UNICEF

does in the name of children rights, the UNIFEM does it for women rights (a few selected women in Pakistan, no doubt about that). The UNIFEM never produced good data or research or a policy but like UNICEF is happy on a few laws in Pakistan. UN agencies often quote the laws as a wonderful achievement whereas we all know the implementation and rule of law in Pakistan. Even the passage of such dictated laws or copied from some international instrument is a trick and engineered action. That's why such laws never produce the desired impact. This is another story to be told of the maneuverings of UN agencies in Pakistan.

3. The UNHCR, while hard pressed for performance during the military operations, did wonderful. To "be on board", they offered a hefty salary to the son of a senior officer and while realizing that he may go on retirement soon, they also accommodated the relative of the next senior officer on a much appreciated assignment. Such classical corrupt practices are not new to the people in the decision making corridors, but who cares is the usual response, and those who care are afraid of the wrath of such senior officers and their accomplices in government. The worst institutional corruption of the UN agencies in connivance with the government corrupt mafias could be seen in the UNHCR by giving projects and vehicles to a few NGOs and enormous corruption can be seen in their projects if given to the FIA/NAB for investigation.

Sometimes there are serious reservations of the government officials about the credentials of the UN workers in Pakistan. At times, they seem to be more political than humanitarian service deliverers. The UNDP project of law-enforcement/justice reforms for Malakand seems to be more bureaucratic than true assistance. Many know the tricky nature of documentation in the name of "capacity-building". These are lengthy stories and no one has the courage to expose these UN agencies what they do with the poor Pakistani nation. Our departments are still ill-equipped, ill-trained and scapegoats of unnecessary sacrifices, our children are still orphans, our street children and children in labor are still simmering under threats and debts, our drug addicts are still just skeleton, our women are still deprived and under-privileged, our crime data is still not found, and the UN agencies are working well, with the sons and daughters of elites busy in making connection and linkages and exploring avenues of partnership so that "everyone should be on board" for the poor humanity! We wish the honest and patriot sections of the society should critically debate on the role of UN agencies in Pakistan. The government officials must think a hundred times before signing an MOU with

the UN agencies and they must ask beforehand that who is the actual donor, what is the actual stage of project document and is it the project development phase or implementation stage and who will have the financial authority (the government officials or the UN nominees,) and how the impact of the project be evaluated? The UN workers keep such things away and later on say that they have to follow UN rules, not the government rules. This is just an intellectual fraud and a joke with procedural fairness. Had this been done, there would have been little embezzlement and miscarriage of the international money. The UN agencies, for God sake, should now stop to sell our miseries to the donor countries!

The UNDP is not behind others. Their projects often accommodate the near and dear of the ruling elites on deputation or as consultants (may be senior retired bureaucrats to use their connections for getting easily on board). Like other corrupt elements the UNDP knows to focus in which area of development, the area of ruling elites. UNDP projects allocations need to be critically evaluated.

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