

UN expert: Fighting corruption could help curb poverty
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Funds funneled through money laundering alone are enough to pull out one billion people from poverty, said a United Nations expert on corruption, during a lecture held on campus.

Muhyeddeen Touq, Commissioner General for Human Rights in Jordan, recently told an AUB audience that it was high time for people from all sectors to join forces to fight corruption, which is draining resources and preventing sustainable governance. Touq was presenting a lecture titled “Negotiating the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC): Lessons and Norms Pertaining to the Arab World.”

Sponsored by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and the UN Research Initiative, the lecture attracted a number of students and international policy experts who discussed corruption in international affairs and policymaking practices within the Middle East.

The UNCAC is designed to promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs, by creating measures to prevent and combat corruption effectively.

Touq said that the world in the last 15 years has seen a phenomenal increase in corruption both in the economic and political spheres.

“The high level of corruption is not confined to a certain sovereign area but has spread all over the world, posing threats to the economy, security, and to the sustainable development of countries in the developing world,” said Touq.

The IFI-UN collaboration will mobilize policy-makers and experts from around the world to monitor UN practices in the region.

“It is an ambitious program, but we feel it is critical to our public policy research institute and credible university to push the UN to do a better job living up to its ideals and improve in different capacities within the Middle East,” said Rami Khouri, IFI director.

Current chairman of the World Bank-UN Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative and member of the Steering Committee for the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Austria, Touq devoted the last decade of his career to diplomacy, public policy, and governance. He twice served as a minister and an ambassador to several European countries, UN and International Organizations. He also chaired the Ad-Hoc Committee for the Negotiation of the UN Convention against Corruption and led the campaign to endorse and promote the convention internationally.