

## The Accountant & the Struggle against Fraud & Corruption

Written by Dr. Conchita Manabat

*“... in uncertain economic times, there is a stronger temptation to defend one’s interest without concern for the common good, without paying much heed to justice and legality. For this reason everyone, especially those who practice a profession which deals with the proper functioning of a country’s economic life, is asked to play a positive, constructive role in performing their daily work.”*

*His Holiness, Pope Francis*



In 2014, the World Congress of Accountants was held in Rome. Following that event, Pope Francis invited thousands of professional accountants to a private audience at the Vatican and challenged the global profession’s leaders to do more in the global fight against fraud and corruption.

Of late, the President of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), Ms. Olivia F. Kirtley of the United States, as she is to hand over the IFAC post to the President-elect Rachel Grimes of Australia, outlined what the international organization under her watch has done to “*have lasting impact in reducing both the supply and demand side of fraud and corruption*”. She summarized the initiatives focusing on the following significant items:

1. **Capacity Building:** *accelerating the profession’s long-term vision of increasing professional accountancy capacity in developing countries.*
2. **Governance:** *greater participation in—and advocacy for—stronger governance across all organizations.*
3. **Public Sector Financial Management:** *more transparent and complete public sector financial information, including use of International Public Sector Accounting Standards™ (IPSAS™).*

Further, Kirtley said, *“Serving the public interest is at the very heart of IFAC’s mission. Combatting fraud and corruption is clearly a public interest mission where our profession can provide valuable skills and experience. We also recognize that this many-decades old fight is one we can’t win alone. There is real need to join forces with other organizations to both make meaningful progress and yield faster results. Combatting this problem requires intense, coordinated action across all civil society institutions. The accountancy profession will continue to vigorously do its part.”*

Fraud and corruption are a global menace. Collectively, it is a social cancer that has affected the entire society with enormous adverse impact. It has muddled the economic and social playing fields benefitting or providing advantage to those who have mastered and/or participated in what others consider to be the “resourceful or innovative” mode of conduct. The social cancer has changed the mindset of the past and present generations and perhaps, the next generation.

The awareness, call to action and hopefully, the positive and prompt response may take sometime to re-align the mindset to what is right and proper. But not all is lost if there will be a conscientious, committed and sustained adherence to what is good for all.

May this brief be part of the clarion call for change to all colleagues in the profession for a level playing field and a better world.

*Dr. Conchita L. Manabat is the President of the Development Center for Finance and a member of the Boards of Trustees of the FINEX Development & Research Foundation and the University of San Carlos. A past Chair of the International Association of Financial Executives Institutes (IAFEI), she now serves as the Chairperson of the Advisory Council of the said organization. She was once the head regulator of the accounting profession in the Philippines and she founded the Deloitte firm in the country.*

*This column accepts contributions from accountants, especially articles that are of interest to the accountancy profession, in particular, and to the business community, in general. These can be e-mailed to [boa.secretariat@gmail.com](mailto:boa.secretariat@gmail.com)*

|

← **Formatted:** Widow/Orphan control, Adjust space between Latin and Asian text, Adjust space between Asian text and numbers