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English only

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**Implementation Review Group****First resumed fifteenth session**

Vienna, 28 August–6 September 2024

**Briefing for non-governmental organizations in accordance with resolution 4/6 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption entitled “Non-governmental organizations and the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption”****Summary**

1. At its fourth session, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption adopted resolution 4/6 entitled “Non-governmental organizations and the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption”. In that resolution, the Conference decided that briefings for non-governmental organizations would be convened on the margins of the sessions of the Implementation Review Group (hereinafter “the Group”) on the outcomes of the review process, including technical assistance needs identified. The Conference also decided that those briefings would be conducted by the secretariat in cooperation with a member of the bureau and would be based on the reports of the Group, thematic implementation reports and regional supplementary addenda. The Conference requested States parties and signatories to use the briefings and to draw on the discussions and proposals of its fourth session to continue the constructive dialogue on the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention (hereinafter “the Mechanism”).
2. Moreover, in the same resolution, the Conference encouraged non-governmental organizations to report to it and/or the Group, as appropriate, individually or collectively, on their activities and contributions to the implementation of the recommendations and conclusions of the Group approved by the Conference, including those related to meeting technical assistance needs and advancing capacity to effectively implement the Convention. The briefings would serve to further promote constructive dialogue with non-governmental organizations dealing with anti-corruption issues.
3. The first briefing for non-governmental organizations, held in accordance with Conference resolution 4/6, took place in the margins of the third session of the Group on 20 June 2012, and subsequent briefings were held annually on 30 May 2013, 5 June 2014, 4 June 2015, 23 June 2016, 22 June 2017, 5 September 2018, 3 September 2019, 1 September 2020, 7 September 2021, 15 June 2022, and 13 June 2023 in the margins of the fourth to the fourteenth sessions of the Group.



4. The twelfth briefing for non-governmental organizations was held in the margins of the first resumed fifteenth session of the Group on 3 September 2024 and was chaired by Christine Cline (United States of America), President-designate of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption at its tenth session. The Chair delivered introductory remarks, welcoming the decision taken by the Conference to involve non-governmental organizations in the work of the Mechanism.
5. At the start of the briefing, the secretariat recalled Conference resolution 4/6 and reiterated the terms of the briefing for non-governmental organizations. In order to allow for a more interactive discussion, the participants were invited to ask questions after each of the three presentations by the secretariat, which covered (i) the performance of the Mechanism ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2024/3](#)), (ii) thematic reports by the Secretariat and their regional supplements on the implementation of chapter II (Preventive measures) and chapter V (Asset recovery) of the Convention ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2024/6](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2024/7](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2024/11](#) and [CAC/COSP/IRG/2024/12](#)), as well as (iii) an update on technical assistance needs emerging from the country reviews and on technical assistance provided by UNODC in support of the implementation of the Convention. The secretariat also presented the new Country Profiles Database.
6. In the ensuing discussion, one speaker provided information on the work undertaken by his organization in advancing the implementation of the Convention, including through the publication of over 40 so-called “parallel reports” on the implementation of the Convention, and the provision of support in developing action plans towards reform efforts. He shared information on the UNCAC Review Status Tracker” published on the website of his organization based on information obtained from the national focal points. In noting that his organization’s Transparency Pledge had been signed by 39 States parties, he highlighted measures that could strengthen the Implementation Review Mechanism through enhanced transparency, civil society participation and strong follow-up procedures. He also noted that civil society organizations filed 45 requests for access to information for UNCAC reviews which had been successful in 27 instances and had resulted in the release of five country review reports. Moreover, he mentioned that his organization’s written submission to the Group in connection with the briefing contained proposals on the next phase of the Mechanism.
7. A number of speakers noted with appreciation that the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties was the most inclusive to date, with the highest level of civil society participation. The organization of the first civil society forum held on the margins of the Conference was highlighted.
8. One speaker indicated that her organization was following with interest the Implementation Review Group’s discussions on the next phase of the Mechanism and urged States parties to improve civil society participation in the intergovernmental processes under the Convention, including in the country reviews, and anti-corruption efforts more generally. She recommended that States parties publicize at the national level the foreseen calendars of the country reviews. She also urged that reviews of article 13 on the participation of society be harmonized with findings of human rights mechanisms and suggested that IRM guidance notes prepared by the secretariat also refer to those mechanisms. Another speaker noting that civil society should be involved in the review of this specific provision.
9. One speaker highlighted the need to develop instruments and mechanisms to strengthen the capacities and knowledge of civil society organisations, while another speaker noted that more work was needed to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers. In this regard, a representative of the secretariat noted that UNODC highlighted the differentiated impact of whistle-blower reporting and protection, based on gender and other groups that were considered vulnerable and specified that UNODC was developing dedicated technical assistance to render whistle-blowing mechanisms more inclusive and gender sensitive.

10. Another speaker shared information on his organization's capacity-building efforts in relation to prevention and enforcement, and in developing indicators aimed at assessing the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures.

11. One speaker focused on countering organized crime, noted the interest of civil society organisations to engage in the intergovernmental processes of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as that of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and thanked the United States of America for its efforts in trying to facilitate such engagement. He also thanked the States parties who had signed declarations aimed at ensuring the accessibility of information relating to the reviews.

12. In response to a question on channels for the participation of civil society organisations in the discussions on the next phase of the Mechanism, a representative of the secretariat noted that the future channels would be similar to the current entry points whereby NGOs would continue to submit written submissions to the Conference and the Implementation Review Group (when NGO briefings are held on its margins). He also noted that, while informal consultations on draft resolutions or decisions are only open to States parties, NGOs could reach out to governments at the national level in order to express their views with regard to the next phase of the Mechanism. Furthermore, he noted that UNODC was using opportunities to undertake additional outreach with regard to the next phase at the regional level and, in some contexts, there may exist opportunities for civil society organizations to engage in those discussions.

13. In response to a question on the provision of financial support for the participation of civil society organisations, a representative of the secretariat noted that such support would be subject to extrabudgetary contributions.

14. In response to a question on lessons learned from other review mechanisms on the delays in the nomination of focal points, a representative of the secretariat highlighted that UNODC was making use of different channels, including but not limited to high-level meetings to follow up on delays, training engagements and opportunities afforded by the GlobE Network.

15. One speaker noted that her government was proud to have co-sponsored Conference resolution 10/9 on "Promoting transparency and integrity in public procurement in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" and shared information on national public procurement reforms, which enabled multi-stakeholder engagement in the public procurement processes.

16. Another speaker expressed concern in relation to the implementation of article 7(3) of the Convention and paragraph 12 of the political declaration entitled "Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation", adopted by the General Assembly at its special session in June 2021 on measures to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for political office and political parties, given the low levels of political financing transparency. She noted that the topic had been last addressed by the Working Group on Prevention in 2014 and referred to the joint statement made by 100 non-governmental organizations to the tenth session of the Conference requesting that the Conference and the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption address it at future sessions.

17. One speaker recognized the value of diverse perspectives and explained that his Government had included a civil society representative in its delegation for this session of the Group in order to pay tribute to the substantial contribution of civil society, as the "eyes and ears" of society, to the fight against corruption. He noted the need for enhanced transparency and broader participation in the intergovernmental processes with a view to ensuring that the work of the subsidiary bodies benefit from the expertise of other stakeholders.

18. One speaker welcomed the adoption of Conference resolution 10/5 on “Measures to address corruption involving organized criminal groups” in view of the need for a strategic multilateral response to the interlinkages between corruption and organized crime. In this regard, a representative of the secretariat highlighted the policy work that would be undertaken by the Working Group on Prevention and the open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the United Nations Convention against Corruption, as well as the more operational work undertaken on specific topics such as migrant smuggling.

19. Another speaker highlighted the need for technical assistance to enhance the capacities to investigate and prosecute corruption and particularly bribery cases and noted the findings of a publication by the UNODC-World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative entitled “Left out of the Bargain – Settlements in Foreign Bribery Cases and Implications for Asset Recovery”.<sup>1</sup>

20. In response to a question on the UNODC publication on the state of implementation of the provisions of the Convention under review during the second cycle of the Mechanism, a representative of the secretariat noted that the publication would be finalized in time for the eleventh session of the Conference. He also noted that this publication would provide a more detailed analysis of the findings by each specific provision, and that the secretariat aimed at engaging expertise with a view to improving its database on the findings of the reviews, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources.

21. Another speaker provided information on how her Government had harnessed the contribution of civil society in the development and evaluation of its integrity strategy. She also noted efforts in promoting the participation of youth and women in the fight against corruption, as well as campaigns launched in the areas of education and sports to raise awareness on the risk posed by corruption. She noted the importance of developing a statistical framework to measure corruption and the effectiveness of measures aimed at combatting it.

22. Some speakers noted the importance of assessing the interlinkages between corruption and gender and youth, respectively, and welcomed the conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled “The negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption”.<sup>2</sup> One of the speakers noted the challenge posed by limited data on gender and youth, while another speaker emphasized the importance of recognizing the role of other intersecting identities in establishing vulnerability. A representative of the secretariat highlighted the work undertaken to attempt to address differentiated impact, including in its work on whistleblower protection.

23. One speaker urged States parties to address climate change and corruption, building on Conference resolutions 8/12 and 10/2 and, in this regard, also mentioned evidence showing that the climate change crisis and environmental crime were fuelled by corruption. In response to a question on the work undertaken by the secretariat on technical assistance aimed at addressing the interlinkages between corruption and climate change, a representative of the secretariat noted that, in addition to producing knowledge products in collaboration with the World Bank on the matter, efforts were made to customize anti-corruption tools, to support the mainstreaming of climate change in anti-corruption strategies and to build knowledge and expertise at the national level, also in view significant knowledge gaps remained with research conducted at the country level. He informed the meeting that the secretariat had initiated consultations with some States parties on incorporating climate change considerations in anti-corruption activities, including through “green” procurement tools to mitigate risks.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://star.worldbank.org/sites/star/files/9781464800863.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://track.unodc.org/uploads/documents/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/workinggroup4/2024-September-3-6/CAC-COSP-WG.4-CRP.1.pdf>.

24. In response to a question on the challenges and good practices identified in the delivery of technical assistance, a representative of the secretariat noted that a report to be presented at the second resumed fifteenth session of the Group, based on 42 responses by States parties to a questionnaire on technical assistance would shed light on such experiences. In response to a question on how the secretariat could better involve civil society in the delivery of technical assistance, a representative of the secretariat highlighted UNODC's increasing number of implementing partnerships secretariat with civil society organizations and other non-governmental partners, which was integrated into the organization's programmatic approach and its reliance on CSOs for expertise on specific topics. UNODC was requested to publish more information in this regard.

25. In concluding, the Chair welcomed all statements made by participants and noted with appreciation that the briefing provided another important opportunity to strengthen collaboration and dialogue between civil society and the States parties to the Convention.

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