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**Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption**

Vienna, 3–6 September 2024

Item 2(a)(i) of the provisional agenda\*

**Implementation of Conference resolution entitled “Follow-up to the Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption”: discussion of the negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption****The negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption**

Note by the Secretariat

**I. Introduction**

1. In Resolution 10/3, entitled “Follow-up to the Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption”, adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (“the Conference”) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption at its tenth session, held in Atlanta, United States of America, from 11 to 15 December 2023, the Conference requested the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption to consider including, as a topic for discussion at its fifteenth meeting “the negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption”. Accordingly, UNODC sent out on 13 May 2024 a note verbale containing a questionnaire to States parties to the Convention requesting them to share information and experiences on the negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption.

2. By 6 August 2024, submissions had been received from 41 parties containing information relevant to the discussion topic: Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, European Union, Finland, France, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Myanmar, Oman, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and United States.

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\* [CAC/COSP/WG.4/2024/1](#).



3. The present background paper has been prepared on the basis of the above-mentioned response by States parties to note verbale CU 2024/133(A)/DTA/CEB/TSS. In addition, with the agreement of the parties concerned, the submissions have been made available on the website of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

## **II. The negative effects of corruption on youth and the role played by youth in preventing and combating corruption**

### **A. Thematic background**

4. Corruption affects all members of society in different ways. It negatively impacts young people by undermining their trust in institutions, hampering their access to quality education and employment opportunities, among other things. Nonetheless, youth have proved that they can play an important role in preventing and countering corruption, with their energy, creativity, their commitment to justice and their ability to adapt to emerging technologies and a changing world.

5. The independent progress study on Youth, Peace and Security,<sup>1</sup> which was prepared as a response to Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), encouraged Member States to start challenging stereotypes about young people related to their role primarily as perpetrators of violence, corruption and organized crime. These misperceptions were further reinforced by gendered structures: young men were viewed as threats whilst young women were viewed as victims. The consequence of these stereotypes, the study concluded, resulted “in a failure to adequately appreciate and harness the agency, creative practice and resilience of young people, most of whom are not involved in these [harmful practices], and some of whom are actively invested in crafting more peaceful societies for themselves and their communities”.

6. When it came to peace and security, “young people across the globe articulated the view that peace and security are more than just the absence of violence and, as such, are of universal concern. They stressed the importance of ending violence and addressing its symptoms (negative peace) as well as engaging the underlying causes of corruption, inequality and social injustice (positive peace)”.<sup>2</sup> This reference to corruption as an underlying cause is of particular interest as a recent study on world protests<sup>3</sup> found that between 2006 and 2020, youth and student protests increased from 53 to 376, making young people one of the top six groups involved in demonstrations. Corruption was the cause of 20 per cent of the global protests assessed in this study, making it the second most common issue. Corruption accounted for 16 per cent of protests in high-income countries, 24 per cent in middle-income countries, and 18 per cent in low-income countries. According to this study, protests against corruption had a marked increase in the past 15 years.

7. The importance of education to prevent corruption and raise awareness of its harmful effects is reflected in article 13 of the Convention, and was re-emphasized by the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention in its resolution 9/8 entitled “Anti-corruption awareness-raising, education, training and research”. The resolution, called upon States parties to promote programmes that instil concepts and principles of integrity and accountability, and to devote special attention to working with young people and children as part of a strategy to prevent corruption. These echoed similar requests made by the Conference in its multiple prior resolutions<sup>4</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations (2018), The missing peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security, [Progress Study on Youth Peace Security A-72-761\\_S-2018-86\\_ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/publications/progress-study-on-youth-peace-security-a-72-761-s-2018-86-english) (unfpa.org).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ortiz, Isabel; Burge, Sara; Berrada, Mohamed; Cortez, Hernan Saenz (2022), World Protests. A Study of Key Protest Issues in the 21st Century; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York; Initiative for Policy Dialogue/Global Social Justice.

<sup>4</sup> 3/2, 4/3, 5/4, 5/5, 6/6, 6/10, 8/8, 9/3, 9/6.

most recently at its tenth session in resolution 10/10 entitled “Addressing the Societal Impacts of Corruption”.

8. The secretariat note CAC/COSP/WG.4/2022/CRP.1 prepared for the thirteenth session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption held on 15–17 June 2022,<sup>5</sup> also highlighted the importance of not separating the role played by young people in preventing and combating corruption from anti-corruption education, training and research. The note underscored how building the capacity of youth was a means to empower them to participate meaningfully in anti-corruption efforts.

9. This investment in youth remains essential for the sustainability of all development efforts. By 2030, the number of the global youth population has been projected to reach nearly 1.3 billion, with Asia and Africa as the two continents with the highest global youth population, which will continue to increase.<sup>6</sup> Thus, youth empowerment has become an important cross-cutting issue for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

## B. Analysis of submissions

### Formal and non-formal anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education

10. Education plays an important role in strengthening a culture of integrity and is a key tool in preventing and fighting corruption. Anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education can be implemented through formal as well as non-formal education. Formal education involves structured learning within educational institutions, and it often includes curricula that integrate anti-corruption, ethics and integrity topics into lesson plans to ensure that students understand the risks and effects of corruption and are equipped with the skills to resist unethical pressure. Non-formal education encompasses learning that occurs outside the traditional classroom, this can include youth clubs, workshops, community programmes, or online resources that engage young people in discussions about corruption, ethics and integrity. Both forms of education are essential in creating an environment where corruption is rejected.

11. In response to the above-cited note verbale of May 2024, 27 submissions were received in relation to primary, secondary and/or tertiary education (including research) on ethics, integrity and anti-corruption from the following States parties: Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Botswana, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Finland, Guatemala, Kuwait, Kenya, Latvia, Mauritius, Mexico, Myanmar, Mauritius, Oman, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

12. A compilation of the current submissions together with responses received to a note verbale by the secretariat dated 23 February 2022,<sup>7</sup> provided information from 38 States parties regarding ethics, integrity and anti-corruption education in their countries. States indicated that the most common approach was a mix of formal and non-formal education methods, with many countries referring to the legal requirement to include anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education in the school curriculum or to officially mandate the Anti-Corruption Authorities and the Ministry of Education to collaborate to set up formal and non-formal education pathways.

13. Among the submissions for 2024, eight States parties had incorporated anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education into primary and secondary education curricula as mandatory subjects, either as part of civic education, social studies and economics, religion, languages, or sports. Other States had conducted pilot projects

<sup>5</sup> UNODC (2022), CAC/COSP/WG.4/2022/CRP.1, Anti-corruption awareness-raising, education, training and research.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, Global Issues: Youth, [Youth | United Nations](#).

<sup>7</sup> In 2022, the following 14 States parties reported on ethics, integrity and anti-corruption education: Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Iraq, Kuwait, Madagascar, Namibia, Pakistan, Panama, Qatar, Russian Federation, Serbia and United States.

with selected kindergartens and schools, aiming to roll out anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education nationwide. The importance of building the capacity of educators, as well as developing dedicated material and tools for educators, was stressed by several States parties.

Australia provided an example working with a not-for-profit organization to provide ethics classes to public schools in the state of New South Wales to give school children the space to explore ethical dilemma.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo reported on the beginning of training of primary and secondary teachers, in collaboration with UNODC and UNESCO. The anti-corruption bodies in Latvia, Myanmar and Ukraine had also developed materials for teachers, while the Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption of Austria outlined its cooperation with the Vienna University of Teacher Education to develop a nation-wide training programme for teachers to strengthen anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education across the country.

14. A number of States parties informed of universities having established dedicated graduate and/or undergraduate programmes on anti-corruption, ethics and integrity, or making efforts to mainstream these topics into all university courses. Other approaches focussed on prioritizing high-risk sectors, e.g. health, or tertiary institutions where the future graduates were likely to be in professions at high risk of facing corruption, such as the police academies or training institutions for border management officials. These institutions had offered dedicated courses on corruption and anti-corruption there. A few States also mentioned collaboration between universities and various ministries. This had resulted in lectures and talks by youth and with officials, such as judges, prosecutors, etc., to discuss corruption-related matters, as well as study visits for youth to anti-corruption bodies and other institutions.

A collaboration amongst professional training institutions, such as the Royal School of Administration (ERA), the Royal Academy for Judicial Profession, the Bar Association of Cambodia and other relevant institutions, had taken place in Cambodia to conduct anti-corruption training workshops for newly recruited officials and prosecutors, judges, court clerks, and lawyers. The training had been made mandatory before being able to take up positions. In a similar effort, Latvia had included anti-corruption related topics in tertiary level programmes for police officers, custom officers and doctors.

The State Audit Institution and the Ministry of Higher Education of Oman reported conducting over 250 seminars for university students on corruption, its effects, the importance of promoting integrity, as well as the effects of corruption on the country's availability and management of public resources.

15. Several States parties had initiated innovative programmes designed to include anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education in various settings, such as online courses, through hackathons, board games and after school visits to relevant institutions and projects. Other endeavours included anti-corruption awareness campaigns, cartoons, theatre and essay competitions, media campaigns and debates involving children and youth. Such an example was reported by Myanmar where the Anti-Corruption Commission had delivered 100 youth talks in basic education and secondary level schools during the academic year 2023/2024. These extracurricular activities aimed at emphasizing the importance of ethical behaviour and integrity among students, while also showcasing the impact corruption had on the individual, on their communities and on the country.

In Azerbaijan, schools had offered a variety of programmes, such as essay competitions, debates, and awareness campaigns, to emphasize the importance of ethical behaviour and integrity among students. Occasionally, those were organized in collaboration with members of the civil society, and non-profit organizations. A similar approach had been reported by Portugal where the National Anti-Corruption Mechanism of Portugal recognized the work done by the NGO All4Integrity through the “RedEscolas Anti-Corruption Program”.

Botswana reported that its Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime developed a programme, “Boammaaruri” programme to instil values of integrity and ethics by using a cartoon character in the form of a mascot named “Boammaauri” (Honesty).

The Republic of Moldova informed on the anti-corruption volunteer programme of the National Anti-Corruption Centre (NAC) that carried out various activities together with young anti-corruption volunteers including the “Quiz Pro Integrity”, “an anti-corruption day in your city”, “an integrity lesson in my school/university”, “integrity comprehensible to children”, mock trials “simulate, learn, remain upright”, and the board game “4integrity”. The Republic of Moldova also shared how the use of arts and culture for education through “The Art of Staying Integral”, a sociocultural project to prevent corruption launched by NAC in partnership with the Moldovan Theatre Centre and the “Mihai Eminescu” National Theatre. The initiative had included the broadcasting of a performance of “The Election of Mr Macabets”.

The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority of Qatar had cooperated with the UNODC Global Resources for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment (GRACE) initiative and Microsoft in the organization and implementation of the Arab Youth Anti-Corruption Hackathon. 110 young people from the Arab world had been hosted to compete in designing electronic applications to combat corruption. Qatar had provided funding to the three winning teams to continue the development of their products which were subsequently presented at the tenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC, in Atlanta, United States in December 2023.

### **Awareness-raising and capacity-building of educators**

16. A majority of submissions emphasized two aspects. First was the importance of using age-appropriate language and creative tools to raise awareness among children and youth. Many States parties had made considerable efforts to communicate with a younger audience through the use of creative, engaging methods and age-appropriate language. The importance of this was highlighted by a recent study conducted by UNODC and the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria on corruption in Nigeria, that has shown the impact of awareness-raising campaigns and the importance to target the “the tech-savvy youth who have shown the most significant increases in terms of their readiness to refuse requests for bribes”.<sup>8</sup>

17. The second aspect, also highlighted in many submissions, concerned the need to raise awareness of various anti-corruption stakeholders, including educators, and to strengthen their capacity to teach anti-corruption, ethics and integrity but also in being a role model for their students. The States shared detailed information on activities to enhance the capacities of educators while also strengthening a culture of integrity in the educational sector, e.g. through offering certifications and developing code of conducts for educational institutions and their staff.

<sup>8</sup> UNODC (July 2024), [Corruption in Nigeria: Patterns and Trends. Third survey on corruption as experienced by the population](#), p. 138.

The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training of Kuwait had launched several training programmes on enhancing transparency and combating corruption during the 2023/2024 training season. Furthermore, Kuwait University had established an incentive mechanism for faculty members to pass training courses. The Ministry of Education had also launched a course on the code of conduct to combat forgery of university and professional certificates issued by the Ministry. The impact of this initiative was seen in the subsequent decrease in cases of forgery of academic certificates, from 28 cases in 2019 to four cases of forgery in 2023.

Qatar explained how the University Student Integrity Charter, a code of conduct for students, showed that codes of conduct and integrity standards should be applied both to those working in the education sector as well as the students.

The Russian Federation informed that under its 2024 BRICS presidency, anti-corruption education was again prioritized; enhanced cooperation and information sharing on national anti-corruption education approaches among BRICS countries has been high on the BRICS agenda with a significant number of joint education and training initiatives successfully implemented over the years.

### **Corruption related research and measuring impact**

18. Several submissions received in 2022 on anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education and research, had highlighted efforts to promote anti-corruption research through cooperation between anti-corruption bodies and universities. In 2024, three States referred to such cooperation or supporting and/or funding corruption-related research projects.

19. At the same time, the need to strengthen research on corruption to inform decision-making has remained a priority area where States should invest. This was highlighted throughout the regional dialogues conducted by UNODC in 2023 which resulted in the “Roadmap to strengthening the role of non-governmental actors (young people, academia and civil society) in the fight against corruption”.<sup>9</sup>

Finland reported having conducted an anti-corruption research seminar for Finnish researchers and members of the Anti-Corruption Cooperation Network in 2024 to discuss current topics in corruption related research, with the aim to feeding this into the new Anti-Corruption Action Plan.

Mexico reported that the Executive Secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption System (SNA) supported anti-corruption research by providing an award for anti-corruption research, named “Premio Universitario de Protocolos de Investigación Aplicada en Materia Anticorrupción”/University Award for Applied Research Protocols in Anti-Corruption Matters.

20. Recent reports by States have highlighted<sup>10</sup> that while efforts were made to evaluate the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks, measuring and assessing the impact of anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education remained an important but difficult task. This might explain why only one State referred to its efforts to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their anti-corruption education programmes through corruption surveys. Nevertheless, academic research in this area is growing and several studies have concluded that anti-corruption, ethics and integrity education could have the potential to lead to behavioural change. Borcan et al. (2023), for

<sup>9</sup> CAC/COSP/2023/CRP.15.

<sup>10</sup> CAC/COSP/WG.4/2024/2 “Methodologies and indicators for measuring corruption and the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks” Note by the Secretariat. Some States highlighted that methodologies, challenges and good practices in evaluating the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks as well as in measuring corruption were developed, or were in the process of being developed, to assess the effectiveness of their anti-corruption frameworks, using indicator-based and sometimes combined quantitative and qualitative assessments. These could also include polls, surveys and research.

instance, concluded that “carefully designed ethics trainings for university, coupled with relatively cheap behavioural interventions such as information to help spread the norm of integrity, can be effective at improving ethical conduct among future legal professionals and members of society. Our results suggest that integrity training has the potential to increase the moral burden of unethical decisions across more senior professionals”.<sup>11</sup> It was noted that the impact assessments conducted by UNODC’s Siemens Integrity Project and the Education4Justice initiative have reached the same conclusion.

21. Related to research and measuring impact is also the question on gathering data. Having data disaggregated by age would allow for anti-corruption strategies that target and address the needs and challenges faced by young people, as it would allow to better understand how corruption affects youth differently, thereby prioritizing areas of intervention.

22. The majority of States parties indicated that data collection on the perception and experience of corruption of their population was not disaggregated by age. Only eight out of 39 States parties reported having collected some form of experience- and/or perception-based data on the impact of corruption on young people. One State also reported having conducted surveys focussing on the attitudes of young people towards corruption.

The specialized anti-corruption bodies of Azerbaijan reported collecting experience-based and age-disaggregated data on the impact of corruption on young people, including as victims. The surveys, studies, and reports conducted to obtain the data had been implemented by both government agencies and civil society organizations. The findings show that corruption in recruitment processes disproportionately affects young job seekers, who had at times been requested to pay bribes or use personal connections to secure employment.

The Corruption Prevention Bureau in Latvia had carried out public opinion polls (persons over 18 years of age) in 2021, 2022 and 2023 with the aim to outline society’s and entrepreneurs’ attitude towards corruption. The polls showed that the younger respondents (between 18 and 29 years) are more tolerant of corruption than persons aged between 30 and 39. Every fifth youth (between 18 to 29) admitted being ready to bribe a public official in order to gain a preferable outcome.

Ukraine conducted a survey in December 2023, through which data on corruption experience was obtained from respondents aged 18-29, who had accounted for 16 per cent of the total sample. In this age group, 19.1 per cent of the respondents indicated that they personally (9.85 per cent) or their family members (9.28 per cent) had faced corruption in the past 12 months (i.e. they had given or been asked to give a bribe, used connections, etc.).

### **Engaging Youth in Anti-Corruption Efforts**

23. In an effort to harness the energy, imagination and initiative of the world’s youth in overcoming the challenges facing humankind, the United Nations proclaimed 2010 as the International Year of Youth, encouraging young people to dedicate themselves to “promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and freedoms, and solidarity”.<sup>12</sup> Since then, the UN has significantly expanded its efforts to engage and empower youth globally through initiatives like the Youth2030 strategy, the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the World Youth Skills Day, the 2023 Secretary-General Policy Brief on Meaningful Youth Engagement, and the 2024 Summit of the Future.

24. These UN-wide efforts have been paired with increased inter-agency support and coordination including the use of a Youth Scorecard by UN entities and

<sup>11</sup> Oana Borcan, Nikita Grabher-Meyer, Stephanie Heger, Amrish Patel (2023), Right in the Middle: A Field Experiment On The Role Of Integrity Training And Norms In Combating Corruption.

<sup>12</sup> See: [International Year of Youth: Aug.2010 – Aug.2011 | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\) \(un.org\)](#).



UN country teams to supporting reporting and monitoring of meaningful youth engagement. Created in 2022, the UN Youth Office (previously the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth) continues to lead on these processes and provides guidance on youth empowerment for the UN system. Providing a forum and enhancing civic engagement opportunities has remained the focus of UNODC's youth related work, including UNODC's GRACE initiative. These efforts resulted in the first youth statement addressing the delegations participating in the Conference of the States Parties in Atlanta in December 2023 and in a roadmap to strengthening the role of non-governmental actors (young people, academia and civil society) in the fight against corruption. This roadmap was co-created by young people and aims to be a guiding document for governments around the world.<sup>13</sup>

25. Engaging young people remains key to tackling the challenges that corruption poses to societies, countries and communities. Acknowledging the potential for young people to become positive agents of change requires finding meaningful ways to engage them in anti-corruption efforts.

26. Depending on their role and the type of engagement, the contribution of young people can be categorized as "voice" (i.e. engaging constructively in dialogue and raising issues that affect them), "insight" (i.e. gathering and communicating knowledge from young people to inform decisions of anti-corruption authorities, including their policies and programmes) and "action" (i.e. leading or participating in initiatives to address issues affecting them and their communities, including anti-corruption-related activities).<sup>14</sup> The majority of States reported the use of different methods and approaches to reach and engage young people, from conducting awareness-raising activities at places youth are regularly visiting, e.g. schools, sport clubs, youth clubs, youth networks and associations etc., to dedicated capacity-building activities.

In 2023, the United States reported supporting activities that provided platforms for young people. These included the establishment of the Global Youth Democracy Network (YDN) and the Community of Democracies' YouthLeads group and holding the Young Changemakers event at the Conference of the States Parties in Atlanta in December 2023. The event provided an opportunity for young people, including from UNODC youth networks, to inform States parties of their actions and priorities in countering corruption, while also engaging with senior policy-makers, including the United States Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, and the Special Envoy for Global Youth Issues.

Insights of young people can be harvested during global as well as national level processes. States parties reported engaging in dialogue with youth, often leading to their inclusion in the development, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption policies and strategies. Such efforts also contributed to generating data and knowledge on national corruption challenges and the effectiveness of domestic regulations and policies.

Mexico highlighted their digital platform "Participa", through which the Secretaría de la Función Pública (SFP) promoted the inclusion of young people to capture their opinion about policies, programmes, actions, procedures or services. The objective was to prevent and identify possible irregularities or acts of corruption affecting programmes and resources directed at young people.

27. Engaging young people is possibly easiest done by reaching them in the places that they frequent the most, such as educational institutions, youth centres and recreational and cultural spaces. An example of this is the establishment of integrity clubs at universities as reported by Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius and Saudi Arabia.

<sup>13</sup> [www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/CAC-COSP-2023-CRP.15.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/CAC-COSP-2023-CRP.15.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> UNODC, ICAC, IAACA (2023), [Policy Guide for national anti-corruption authorities on meaningful youth engagement in anti-corruption work](#), p. 2.



28. Some State parties informed of initiatives making use of digital media and innovation to educate and raise awareness about corruption as well as harvesting the knowledge of young people of digital technology and innovation. Others reported on their efforts to include youth in monitoring public resources and finances, as in Botswana where the inclusion of youth views in the budget development and monitoring through the Youth Pitso project has been implemented with the support of the NGO network BOCONGO.

The InJuve project, in Honduras has established Municipal Youth Commissions, which were reported as democratic structures that organize young people at the local level. The Youth Commissions have been essential in the planning of local regulations and initiatives, as well as in the supervision and transparency of the use of municipal budgets. Since 2022, 97 Municipal Youth Commissions have been created in 15 departments of the country, which has strengthened transparency and accountability in local public management.

The European Union reported the implementation of a youth monitoring project “You Monitor” under the Erasmus+ project, with the aim to “empower YOUTH people to build MONITORial communities against corruption”.

The Secretaría de la Función Pública (SFP) in Mexico reported promoting the Social Comptroller’s Office mechanism in federal social development programmes that serve young people. In these programmes, the beneficiaries themselves formed committees to monitor the fulfilment of the goals and the correct application of the public resources assigned to the programmes thereby allowing young people to support the anti-corruption bodies in the implementation of their activities and strengthening their law enforcement capacity.

### III. The negative effects of corruption on women and the role played by women in preventing and combating corruption

#### A. Thematic background

29. The interlinkages between gender inequality and corruption have been recognized within regional and international fora, including at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) against corruption in 2021 and at the tenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in December 2023, which reiterated the importance of enhancing our understanding of this complex nexus and how to address it. The Conference adopted, inter alia, resolution 10/10 entitled “Addressing the Societal Impacts of Corruption”<sup>15</sup> as well as three other Conference resolutions<sup>16</sup> that recognized the need to address the relationship between gender inequality and corruption.

30. Resolution 10/10 encourages States parties to take measures “to mainstream a gender perspective into preventive anti-corruption policies and strategies” as well as to “promote the meaningful participation and engagement of, and cooperation with, women’s and community-based organizations that support women in the policy development, planning, implementation and monitoring of their anti-corruption programmes”. Furthermore, in echoing Conference resolution 10/12 entitled “Providing incentives for the private sector to adopt integrity measures to prevent and combat corruption”, States parties were encouraged to promote “the meaningful

<sup>15</sup> CoSP resolution 10/10 “Addressing the social impacts of corruption”, [www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E\\_L.14\\_Rev.1.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E_L.14_Rev.1.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> CoSP resolutions 10/3 “Follow-up to the Marrakech declaration on the prevention of corruption”, 10/9 “Promoting transparency and integrity in public procurement in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and 10/12 “Providing incentives for the private sector to adopt integrity measures to prevent and combat corruption”.

participation, leadership and representation of women and girls in anti-corruption activities, programmes and initiatives”.

31. Conference resolution 10/10 mandated UNODC to continue to provide technical assistance “upon request, based on [the] priorities and needs [of States parties], with a view to supporting the implementation of the present resolution.” The language of the resolution reflects the continuous efforts of States parties and UNODC in mainstreaming a gender perspective in responses to corruption. UNODC responded to a wide range and number of requests for support and cooperation in relation to the gender and corruption nexus from States parties, including Argentina, Chad, Chile, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Serbia and South Africa. Such valuable collaboration has taken the form of a series of national engagements such as trainings, workshops, inputs and advice on the inclusion of gender elements in anti-corruption strategies and assistance related to national corruption surveys. Other multilateral engagements included presentations both to the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group as well as the BRICS anti-corruption working group meetings. A dedicated workshop was also delivered to the participating States of the UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Platform for West Africa and the Sahel. In partnership with the UN Global Compact, UNODC has worked on raising awareness around the link between business integrity and gender through online and in-person events.

## **B. Analysis of submissions**

### **Assessing the differentiated impact of corruption through sex-disaggregated data**

32. Research and data collection provide an important foundation for evidence-based policymaking in the effort to establish effective policy solutions. Yet, the financial constraints and at times the lack of a capacity have been common impediments to States wishing to carry out nationally representative quantitative corruption surveys. Conference Resolution 10/10 encourages States parties to “consider carrying out surveys on the views and experiences of corruption, including its impact on women, men, girls and boys, through the collection of disaggregated corruption data, with a view to developing effective anti-corruption policies and strategies consistent with the Convention, and to voluntarily share the results of these efforts with other States parties through the Conference and at relevant meetings of its subsidiary bodies.” Fourteen submissions outlined the collection of sex-disaggregated data on corruption or reported having carried out studies on the gender dimensions of corruption.

33. States reported having conducted studies and surveys of different kinds, both perception and experience-based, and through different means, such as online or in person. As an example, the Australian Institute of Criminology had carried out an online perception-based survey on corruption and legitimacy among public officials. The female respondents recorded significantly higher ratings of perceived corruption than male respondents in relation to politicians and government institutions.<sup>17</sup> Latvia indicated that an analysis conducted in the country showed that men were twice as likely to engage in corrupt activities, although women more often held public official positions that are exposed to higher risks of corruption. An innovative approach was reported by Colombia where a diagnostic on disincentives to report acts of corruption associated with gender had been carried out.

34. Several States parties reported having conducted national corruption studies and had reached the conclusion that women were more vulnerable to corruption compared to men, highlighting that this limits their access to essential public services such as health care, education and justice. Azerbaijan informed having carried out both quantitative and qualitative research domestically, which had indicated that corruption disproportionately affected women in various sectors, such as health care, education, and employment, and that women faced increased vulnerability to bribery

<sup>17</sup> [www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi687](http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi687).

and exploitation when accessing public services. It was explained that quantitative data had shown a significant correlation between levels of corruption and reduced opportunities for women in the workforce. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, studies had highlighted that women were often victims of abusive practices and embezzlement and pointed to sexual corruption as being a significant problem in the country.

The Ministry of Justice of Romania had undertaken experience-based research to explore the causes and determinants of corruption. The findings had indicated that men were most prone to denial and justification of committing acts of corruption by judging the act morally justifiable at the time of its perpetration and persisting in the speech of the condemned throughout the period of trial and detention. The study showed that women, on the other hand, were more inclined to reassess the seriousness of the act of corruption in the light of its criminal classification, even though considering the act as morally justifiable at the time of its commission. Another study, which had evaluated anti-corruption efforts within the central public administration offices, highlighted that men (31 per cent) as being more likely than women (18 per cent) to consider the risk of compromising one's professional career and losing one's job as the main reason for not succumbing to acts of corruption. Women, conversely, were more likely than men to cite moral values and education as a reason for not committing acts of corruption (77 per cent compared to 61 per cent).

#### **Efforts to promote the role of women in preventing and combating corruption**

35. Several States acknowledged the negative impact of corruption on women and the gendered dimensions of corruption. The empowerment of women and the implementation of measures for fostering inclusion and diversity are strong tools in the fight against corruption. To address such issues, twelve States parties highlighted their overall efforts towards the achievement of gender equality, for the promotion of women's leadership and political representation, as well their equal participation in the labour market. Examples provided ranged from mechanisms for gender-sensitive budgeting, to gender impact assessments of legislation. Three States specifically noted their efforts to include gender considerations in the design of their whistle-blower reporting and protection mechanisms. One State underscored its efforts to promote legal aid to increase women's access to justice.

36. A total of ten States parties reported on efforts to promote the role of women in preventing and combating corruption. These efforts included various initiatives to empower women and to enhance their capacity to combat corruption, such trainings and other capacity-building activities. Other efforts had included programmes to promote women's participation and leadership in initiatives aimed at combating corruption and policies to strengthen their role women in this area while underlining the importance of the participation of women in anti-corruption efforts. One State had ensured the engagement of women from different sectors in its anti-corruption efforts to promote a more inclusive and equitable vision of its fight against corruption, thereby more accurately reflecting the needs and expectations of the entire population. Another State indicated that its National Anti-Corruption Plan had included a range of strategies to enhance the involvement of women in anti-corruption measures, recognizing that women can play a pivotal role in promoting transparency and accountability, especially in sectors where they are significantly represented.

37. Three submissions underscored the importance of criminalizing sexual corruption with both the European Union and the United Republic of Tanzania outlining their efforts to criminalize this particular form of corruption. Conference resolution 10/10 encourages States parties to "raise awareness that demanding sex or acts of a sexual nature within the context of the abuse of authority may be considered a particular form of corruption, and to close potential legislative gaps, as necessary, and take further measures, as needed and appropriate, in order to prevent and prosecute such forms of corruption effectively".

Some States also reflected on their efforts beyond the domestic scope to promote the role of women in preventing and combating corruption. The inclusion of gender perspectives and gender mainstreaming was reported by Canada, the European Union, France and the United States as being a critical component of their foreign policy and international cooperation programming, including through an intersectional gender analysis framework which had been developed by the United States Department of State.

38. Eight States parties had implemented training and awareness-raising activities on corruption specifically for women through campaigns to enhance understanding of the forms of corruption suffered by women, in particular regarding sexual corruption, with the aim to educate women and raise awareness about women's rights, as well as to raise awareness across society about gender-related corruption.

#### **Meaningful participation and engagement of, and cooperation with, women's and community-based organizations that support women**

39. Six of these States parties reported on their efforts to promote the meaningful participation and engagement of, and cooperation with, women's and community-based organizations that support women. Such efforts had sought to strengthen cooperation with civil society organizations to collaborate with women's organizations and community-based groups that support women to integrate their perspectives into policy development, planning, implementation, and monitoring of anti-corruption programmes.

40. One State party noted that women's organizations and community-based groups in the country were actively monitoring the efficacy of anti-corruption endeavours, offering invaluable insights and fostering accountability. It reported facilitating the substantial involvement and partnership with women's and community-based organizations at different stages of anti-corruption initiatives, spanning from policy formulation to planning, execution, and assessment, and noted that these partnerships had guaranteed that women's perspectives were reflected and acknowledged. This had highlighted how their contributions were highly valued in the fight against corruption.

El Salvador indicated that its Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República – PGR) had a space for dialogue and citizen participation called the Permanent Roundtable. This forum cooperated inter alia with women's organizations and female leaders in order to formulate and plan proposals for the development of policies, programmes, projects and strategic alliances on specific issues of institutional interest. This mechanism had provided an opportunity to analyse of gaps or obstacles, including corruption, which women faced in accessing institutional services at the national level and, most importantly, it had allowed for the identification of potential means for their mitigation.

#### **Promotion of women's participation, leadership and representation in the private sector**

41. Ensuring equal representation and enabling women to take on leadership roles and take seats at decision-making tables has long been acknowledged as a means to prevent and fight corruption. In Conference resolution 10/12, States parties were encouraged to "promote meaningful participation, leadership and representation of women and girls in anti-corruption activities, programmes and initiatives, and in private sector integrity programmes". Several States parties highlighted their efforts to promote women's participation, leadership and representation in the private sector and in anti-corruption efforts therein, including through mechanisms to empower female entrepreneurs and their engagement in business integrity efforts. One of the States highlighted how it had promoted the role of women in preventing and fighting corruption through an instance of citizen participation involving CEOs who may provide and validate proposals for institutional and legislative reform in the fight against corruption. It indicated the gender equal makeup of this body ensured that

decisions and proposals of the National Commission against Corruption benefited from a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

The initiative “Women’s Business Seal Program” seeks to increase the participation of women in public procurement, creating the technical conditions that allow women to participate as suppliers in public purchases and acquisitions. The initiative in Honduras was reported as co-led by the State Contracting and Acquisitions Regulatory Office (ONCAE) and the Secretariat of Women’s Affairs (SEMUJER). Its key actions to date had included the set-up of an inter-institutional table, the redesign and relaunch of the ONCAE website to make it more accessible to female entrepreneurs who wish to participate in public tenders and the selection of companies led by women to participate in a pilot training workshop. In addition, an instrument had been designed to collect information on the characteristics, needs, challenges and opportunities of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises led by women, as well as their performance in different areas.

#### **Further efforts to mainstream gender in anti-corruption responses**

42. Two States parties highlighted their efforts to mainstream gender in its anti-corruption efforts as a broader undertaking. Côte d’Ivoire reported that the Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance (HABG) had included a gender dimension as part of its annual workplan in 2024, to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for preventing and combating corruption. This had included drafting a policy for taking gender into account in anti-corruption initiatives with the support of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, UNODC and UN-Women. Furthermore, a Gender Committee had been established within the HABG to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the gender policy.

43. In El Salvador, the Tribunal de Ética Gubernamental (TEG) had implemented a project with the assistance of UN-Women for the development of gender-sensitive outcome indicators in its institutional integrity model. TEG had also adopted an Institutional Policy on Equality and Non-Discrimination, thereby making principle of equality and non-discrimination transversal in all its work, with the goal to visualize, recognize and eradicate the existence of inequalities faced by women as a vulnerable group.

## **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

44. Information summarized in the present note indicated that efforts have been made by States parties to collect data on the negative effects of corruption on women and youth and to enhance the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption. The submissions received by the secretariat, however, were limited and do not allow for comprehensive conclusions. Thus, the Working Group may wish to encourage States parties to continue to provide information to the secretariat on the negative effects of corruption on women and youth, and inform on national, regional and international approaches to strengthen the meaningful participation of young people and women in efforts to prevent and fight corruption, in order to continue and enhance the process of mutual learning.

45. As highlighted in the present paper, sex and age-disaggregated data collection and research remained limited, despite several Conference resolutions urging States parties to improve such endeavours. Therefore, the Working Group may wish to encourage States parties to strengthen their efforts when it comes to conducting research, to strengthen data collection disaggregated by age and gender. Furthermore, in line with article 5 of the Convention, the Working Group may wish to encourage States parties to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of educational and youth-focussed anti-corruption programmes as well as those that have included a gender perspective, to assess their impact.

46. Endeavours to prevent and fight corruption require a “whole of society” approach – men and women, boys and girls all have a role to play. Given the rising number of young people across the globe, but in particular in Africa and Asia, the empowerment of women and youth remain important cross-cutting issues for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, to which corruption remains a key spoiler. Thus, the Working Group may also wish to encourage States parties to provide more resources to relevant anti-corruption bodies and institutions to support the meaningful engagement of women and young people in the fight against corruption.

47. The Working Group may wish to request UNODC, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, to continue to support States parties’ efforts in implementing Conference resolutions 9/8 on anti-corruption education, awareness-raising and training, and 10/10 on addressing the societal impacts of corruption. In line with paragraph 2 and 9 of Conference resolution 10/10, the Working Group may further wish to request the secretariat to continue to provide technical assistance to States parties, upon request, based on their priorities and needs with a view to supporting the implementation of the resolution, while continuing to mainstream a gender perspective into its relevant anti-corruption activities and programmes.

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