Corruption and Economic Crime Branch

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

A Year of Commitment, Action and Impact
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Foreword
By Brigitte Strobel-Shaw,
Chief, CEB, UNODC

No country is immune from corruption and no sector in society left unaffected. In government offices, police forces, legal systems or the banking industry, corrupt conduct can be found. It persists in public institutions and private companies, health care and educational services and competitive sports.

Even in the fields of wildlife preservation, environmental protection and food safety, corruption disrupts and destroys. Acts of corruption are committed by individuals or organizations for illicit and personal gains or benefits. Whether in the form of bribery, embezzlement, abuse of power or money-laundering, corruption affects everyone, everywhere.

The consequences of corrupt practices are far-reaching and long-lasting. Corruption fuels organized crime, drains resources for essential services and erodes trust in public institutions. It distorts electoral processes and hinders the implementation of the SDG Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is a tremendous task to reduce corruption. But this is what we, at the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch of UNODC together with our many partners, strive to achieve through our work.

Throughout 2023, our dedicated and diverse team in our headquarters in Vienna, Austria and in our field offices, continued to assist countries to counter corruption at all levels and restore trust where it has been undermined.

We cooperated with thousands of stakeholders worldwide, including representatives from anti-corruption bodies, the judiciary, law enforcement, academia, youth and the private sector. We further increased our presence in the field to bring service delivery closer to the beneficiaries.

We were active in all areas of daily life that are impacted by corruption, including education, sports, health, climate change and the environment, asset recovery, business and judicial integrity.

The results of our actions are highlighted throughout this Annual Report.

United in the pursuit of change

A blueprint for achieving a better future

In 2023, we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption – the only global legally binding anti-corruption instrument in the world. Since its adoption by the General Assembly, the Convention has transformed the way we prevent and combat corruption. In 2023, the accession of Barbados as the 196th party underscored its truly global character.

It is a unique tool to combat corruption, and CEB is tasked with supporting countries to turn the obligations enshrined in the Convention into everyday reality. We are also tasked to provide support to the efficient functioning of the Implementation Review Mechanism – a comprehensive peer review process to assess compliance with the Convention by its parties.

We achieved significant progress in 2023, including the adoption of 21 executive summaries and the completion of 23 country visits.

2023 saw also greater recognition of the critical role anti-corruption measures play in furthering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Last September, at the SDG Summit in New York, world leaders took another decisive step forward by adopting a declaration calling for accelerated action towards achieving the Global Goals, including through the effective implementation of the Convention’s obligations to prevent and combat corruption and boost international cooperation.

A further highlight of 2023 came at the end of the year when in December over 2,000 government representatives from 160 countries gathered in Atlanta, USA for the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

The Conference resulted in the adoption of twelve resolutions and two decisions, some on topics that the Conference had not dealt with before, such as corruption in procurement, the societal impacts of corruption, the protection of reporting persons, the links between corruption and organized crime, among others.

Challenges on the horizon

As our world evolves, we will address new and complex challenges that hamper global efforts against corruption.

The issue of climate change is high on our agenda. Corruption can lead to the misappropriation of resources designated to respond to this global and pressing issue. We cannot let this happen.

The twentieth anniversary of the UN Convention against Corruption provided us with the opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved globally to tackle corruption.

At the same time, it made us assess what remains to be done to implement this essential instrument fully and effectively.

Of course, challenges lie ahead, and we cannot reduce corruption overnight, but the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch will continue to strive to be a global, trusted and committed partner, offering practical solutions, contributing to more inclusive and resilient societies and empowering a broad range of stakeholders actively engaged in anti-corruption efforts.

We need to stand ‘United against Corruption,’ because only together we can succeed to create a world where integrity, transparency and accountability are a global reality.
How we operate

Corruption and its negative consequences are a global reality. They hamper the fulfilment of peace and security, human rights and development. By cooperating with governments, the private and public sectors and representatives of civil society, including youth and academia, we have the power to create change.

With a three-step approach, we support countries to deliver on their commitments under the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Through our technical assistance programmes, we ensure authorities are properly equipped to address corruption at all levels of society while restoring trust in the rule of law.

CONVENE
At international, regional and national events, we bring together anti-corruption stakeholders from all sectors of society. We provide platforms for formal and informal exchange and the sharing of expertise. We form partnerships with businesses and create global networks of youth advocates, law enforcement authorities and judges.

EMPOWER
We support crime prevention and criminal justice authorities, financial and academic institutions, public and private companies. We provide them with the training, tools and resources needed to understand, prevent, identify, investigate and prosecute cases of corruption. Our services guide the recovery of stolen assets and the protection of individuals who have taken a stance against corrupt conduct.

ASSESS
We review the anti-corruption efforts made by countries in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Convention and advise on the effective implementation of obligations and measures to address challenges. We assess national anti-corruption laws and assist with revisions and updates.

Our impact in numbers

190 parties to the UN Convention against Corruption with Barbados’s ratification in 2023
35 new countries joined the GlobE Network - the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities, increasing the membership number of countries in the Network by the end of 2023 to 105
2,300 anti-corruption practitioners, members of judiciaries and prosecutors trained in preventing, detecting, investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating corruption cases.

Seven laws and four policies previously developed with our support, officially adopted across nine countries in 2023.

- Chile
- Malaysia
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan
- Viet Nam
- Zambia

TWO additional regional anti-corruption hubs established in:
- Nairobi, Kenya to cover Africa
- Bangkok, Thailand to cover South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific

TWO additional subregional anti-corruption hubs established in:
- Bogotá, Colombia to cover South America
- Pretoria, South Africa to cover Southern Africa

THREE additional regional anti-corruption platforms established:
- Central America
- The Caribbean
- Central Asia
31 October 2003 was a landmark date for the global campaign against corruption. On this day, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the ground-breaking and unique Convention against Corruption.

With UNODC as the guardian of the Convention, the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch is proud to be the trusted partner for its implementation.

CORRUPTION IS AN INSIDIOUS PLAGUE THAT HAS A WIDE RANGE OF CORROSIVE EFFECTS ON SOCIETIES. THIS EVIL PHENOMENON IS FOUND IN ALL COUNTRIES - BIG AND SMALL, RICH AND POOR - BUT IT IS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD THAT ITS EFFECTS ARE MOST Destructive.

In the foreword of the world’s first and only universal legally binding anti-corruption treaty, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, wrote:

With UNODC as the guardian of the Convention, the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch is proud to be the trusted partner for its implementation.
In just two decades, the Convention has been ratified by 189 States and the European Union and has reshaped the global anti-corruption landscape. Today, through this treaty and our support, countries have the tools at their disposal to successfully respond to corruption. Under the theme ‘Uniting the World against Corruption’ we marked this anniversary with events in three cities that played a key role in the development of the Convention.

Vienna, Austria, October 2023

Between 2002 and 2003, the Convention was drafted and negotiated in Vienna, Austria. In October 2023, the anniversary was celebrated at the United Nations in Vienna, attended by Austrian President, Alexander Van der Bellen. The event reflected on the achievements to date and on what still needs to be done to reach the Convention’s full and effective implementation.

Mérida, Mexico, December 2023

In 2003 in Mérida, Mexico, the Convention was opened for signature. In December 2023, a conference in Mérida addressed challenges faced by many countries as they implement the Convention. The contribution of the private sector, academia and citizens to anti-corruption efforts was also discussed, as well as the importance of international cooperation.

New York, USA, November 2023

In 2003, the Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in New York, USA. In November 2023, an event at the United Nations in New York highlighted the Convention’s crucial contribution to advancing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the domains of peace, security and sustainable development.
The Conference of the States Parties

The Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CoSP), is the main decision-making body of the Convention and the world’s largest anti-corruption gathering. Every two years, parties meet to review its implementation and discuss how to improve international cooperation and measures to prevent and tackle corruption.

In December 2023, delegates gathered for the tenth session of the Conference in Atlanta, USA, to debate over five days on a wide range of issues. Topics on the agenda included corruption in the private sector, education and health care, how corruption facilitates human trafficking and infiltrates sporting events, as well as the role of youth advocates to combat corruption and the protection of citizens who report corrupt acts.

The 2023 Conference resulted in the adoption by consensus of twelve new anti-corruption resolutions covering a wide range of topics:

- Promoting integrity, accountability and transparency in the fight against corruption
- Strengthening anti-corruption efforts in small island developing States
- Preventing corruption
- Developing methodologies and indicators for measuring corruption and the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks
- Developing measures to address corruption involving organized criminal groups
- Using beneficial ownership information to strengthen asset recovery
- Promoting international cooperation in civil and administrative proceedings related to corruption
- Protecting the people who report cases of corruption
- Promoting transparency and integrity in public procurement processes
- Addressing the societal impacts of corruption
- Countering corruption during times of emergencies and recovery
- Providing incentives for the private sector to adopt integrity measures to prevent and combat corruption

Strengthening the role of non-governmental entities

At CoSP10, UNODC launched a road map to strengthen the role of non-governmental entities in the fight against corruption. The paper is based on recommendations resulting from three regional dialogues held with young people, representatives from academia and civil society organizations between February and October 2023. It brings together their ideas and proposals for anti-corruption efforts and is expected to increase their engagement leading up to CoSP11 in Qatar in 2025.
Young people make their voices heard at CoSP10

For the first time since the establishment of the Conference of the States Parties, young people were given an opportunity to speak out. The Youth Changemakers Event provided a forum for young people to discuss how corruption impacts their lives and how they can contribute to anti-corruption actions.

Young people change the narrative: youth as partners in anti-corruption efforts

Dexter Yan, a 24-year-old law student from the Philippines, and a member of UNODC’s YouthLED Integrity Advisory Board, delivered a statement in the plenary.

He described the realities of young people living in corrupt systems.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, CORRUPTION IS MORE THAN JUST A DAILY INCONVENIENCE. FOR SOME, CORRUPTION IS THE ROAD STILL UNUSABLE AND UNDER CONSTRUCTION MONTHS SINCE THEY FIRST BROKE GROUND.

FOR STUDENTS, CORRUPTION IS THE REASON THEY STUDY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS NAMED AFTER POLITICIANS, WITH WORN-DOWN BUILDINGS, OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS, DRIPPING ROOFS AND UNDERPAID TEACHERS.

CORRUPTION IS WHY THEY HAVE TO CROSS RIVERS EVERY DAY JUST TO GET TO SCHOOL BECAUSE THERE ARE NO ROADS TO WALK ON IN THE FIRST PLACE.

CORRUPTION IS WALKING THROUGH KNEE-DEEP FLOODS ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL, OR SEEING THE ISLAND YOU’VE LIVED ON YOUR WHOLE LIFE SINK DAY-BY-DAY, WHILE THOSE IN POWER REVEL IN YACHTS AND KEEP WARM IN MANSIONS ON HIGHER GROUND.

In his closing remarks, Dexter called on world leaders to see young people as:

NO LONGER JUST VICTIMS OF CORRUPTION OR BENEFICIARIES OF YOUR INTERVENTIONS’ AND RATHER AS ‘PARTNERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION.”
A peer review of progress and challenges

As the guardian of the UN Convention against Corruption, UNODC serves as the secretariat of the Implementation Review Mechanism (IRM), established in 2009 to identify gaps and good practices in implementing the Convention.

As part of this peer review mechanism, countries undergo assessments of their national anti-corruption laws, policies, practices and other measures. The mechanism also helps identify assistance needs, and States can approach each other, UNODC or other technical assistance providers for support.

In 2023, we continued to facilitate country reviews, and significant progress was made, including the adoption of 21 executive summaries and the completion of 23 country visits.

Moreover, in 2023, the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention decided to extend the duration of the Mechanism’s second cycle until June 2026 and tasked one of its working groups – the Implementation Review Group – with continuing discussions on the Mechanism’s performance and on the scope, thematic sequence and details of the Mechanism’s next phase. The aim is to provide recommendations to the Conference at its eleventh session and launch the new phase of the Review Mechanism as soon as possible.

As of 1 December 2023, almost all reviews in the first cycle, covering the Convention’s chapters on criminalization and law enforcement and international cooperation, have been completed, with 94 per cent of all executive summaries finalized.

The second review cycle, covering the chapters on prevention and asset recovery, is well underway, with 45 per cent of the executive summaries completed.

The IRM has

- Led to legal, institutional and policy reforms
- Improved domestic coordination and international cooperation
- Promoted engagement with civil society and the private sector
- Provided a benchmark to assess progress
- Facilitated an exchange of best practices and knowledge
- Identified technical assistance needs

Since the launch of the IRM, the reviews have

- Identified 1,500+ good practices
- Made 9,100+ recommendations to address challenges
- Identified 4,300+ technical assistance needs

Country profiles

The Review Mechanism produces an unprecedented wealth of information related to countries’ implementation of the Convention. Our country profiles database provides access to key documents produced by the Mechanism to date, including executive summaries, which highlight the recommendations, good practices and technical assistance needs identified during the course of the assessment, as well as full country reports - where available - and other information about countries’ implementation of the Convention.
We need to act globally to counter corruption and in 2023, we provided training to over 2,300 anti-corruption practitioners, members of judiciaries or prosecutors from over 80 different countries in preventing, detecting, investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating corruption cases.

Through 222 national, 75 regional and 68 global activities and events we led or co-organized, we reached 22,000 representatives from the judiciary, prosecution, law enforcement, investigation, anti-corruption authorities, academia, the private sector, youth and civil society.

**Combating corruption around the world**

**Our activities included**
- Training to enhance specialized skills
- Evaluating national anti-corruption strategies
- Assisting in drafting and updating legislation
- Organizing study visits
- Delivering workshops
- Setting up whistle-blower protection schemes
- Assisting with asset recovery

**Convening global and regional expert meetings**

**Increasing visibility and awareness by participating in international conferences**

**Areas we focus on**
- Anti-corruption platforms
  - Southeast Asia
  - Eastern Africa
  - South America and Mexico
  - Southern Africa
  - Western Balkans
  - West and Sahel Africa
  - Central America
  - Caribbean
  - Central Asia

**Areas we focus on**
- Environmental protection
- Climate change mitigation
- Education
- Business
- Banking
- Gender
- Sports
- Health care
- Wildlife preservation
- Law enforcement
- Criminal justice
- International investment
- Public procurement and management of public finances
Targeting technical assistance for regional anti-corruption impact

In recent years, UNODC has expanded its presence on the ground to bring our support closer to the point of delivery. Through our Regional Anti-Corruption Platforms and Hubs, we enhance our field-based activities and respond faster to the anti-corruption priorities and technical assistance needs identified at the regional and country levels. These joint and tailored efforts accelerate the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.

In 2023, we created three new regional platforms and four new regional or subregional hubs.

### Regional anti-corruption platforms

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Southeast Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>South America and Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Western Balkans</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>West and Sahel Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Central America</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Central Asia</td>
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Countries from the same region identify shared corruption-related challenges and together adopt a road map of commitments and activities that focus on these priority areas.

Platforms provide a forum for anti-corruption authorities to share experiences and good practices at the regional level.

### Regional anti-corruption hubs

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Regional hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, Mexico)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Regional hub for Africa (Nairobi, Kenya)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Regional hub for South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Subregional hub for South America (Bogotá, Colombia)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Subregional hub for Southern Africa (Pretoria, South Africa)</td>
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Hubs are managed by our experts who have expertise in the specific corruption challenges prevalent in the region. They design and deliver the technical assistance activities that address the priorities identified by the regional platforms.

Hubs coordinate technical assistance in cooperation with other providers, regional organizations, anti-corruption initiatives and development partners, serving as repositories of regional experience.

### Highlights from 2023

**Western Balkans:** July, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Round table on anti-corruption education – approaches and challenges.

**South America and Mexico:** July, Bogotá, Colombia
Conference on anti-corruption and transparent and inclusive public procurement.

**West and Sahel Africa:** October, Saly, Senegal
Regional workshop on the role and benefits of specialized bodies in financial investigations and asset recovery.

**Southeast Asia:** November, Bangkok, Thailand
Conference on addressing corruption as a facilitator of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

### Regional priority areas

A key step in the creation of a regional platform is the selection of thematic areas, which participating countries identify as regional priorities. Areas selected include:

- Corruption prevention in the private sector
- Corruption reporting and whistle-blower protection
- Transparency and accountability in public procurement
- Criminalization of corrupt acts

### 2023 gender-related activities of the regional anti-corruption platforms and hubs

**Côte d’Ivoire:** The first regional workshop on the gender dimension of corruption in financial investigations, asset recovery, whistle-blower protection and integrity systems was held.

**Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Congolese magistrates were trained on the gender dimensions of judicial integrity.

**Haiti:** Event held on women’s engagement in anti-corruption efforts, organized by the National Anti-Corruption Authority to mark International Women’s Day.

**Mexico:** Around 600 public officials from the supreme audit institutions received training on the gender dimensions of corruption.

**Papua New Guinea:** Civil society organizations, policymakers, anti-corruption agencies and private sector representatives attended workshops on the gender dimensions of corruption.

**Investigation and prosecution of corruption and money-laundering**

**Asset recovery and international cooperation**

Further areas identified by several platforms as cross-cutting topics to be considered in all priority areas are the use of technology and the gender dimension of corruption.
Stopping the diversion of climate finance

Vast amounts of assets are being invested worldwide in measures to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and help societies adapt to its consequences. Whenever large sums of money are involved, there is a heightened risk of funds being diverted and misused through acts of corruption. When this happens, governments cannot effectively tackle environmental problems, and communities already struggling to cope with the damage caused by climate change suffer further.

In 2023, together with the World Bank and other partners, we started to analyse the impact of corruption on global efforts to respond to climate change. The aim is to integrate anti-corruption considerations into the international climate policy agenda, highlighting the need to tackle corruption to reach international climate goals. Under this new initiative, we aim to prevent corruption that worsens the causes and consequences of climate change.

CORRUPTION PUTS CLIMATE ADAPTATION, MITIGATION, AND RESILIENCE AT RISK, WITH TRILLIONS IN INVESTMENT AT STAKE AND THE RISK OF CAPTURE OF THE REGULATORY REFORMS NEEDED FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION. INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN HELPING GOVERNMENTS IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS CORRUPTION RISKS AND IN SUPPORTING GLOBAL ACTION.

Alexandra Habershon, Programme Manager and Global Lead for Anticorruption, Governance Global Practice, World Bank Group.

Corrupt acts such as:

- **Bribery** and kickbacks during project development
- **Favouritism** in awarding contracts
- **Illegal allocation** of climate subsidies
- **Concealing** environmental violations

Sabotage global efforts against climate change by:

- **Hindering** growth of the clean energy sector
- **Enabling** the destruction of our carbon sinks, such as oceans and forests
- **Leading** to the misappropriation of resources designated to protect our environment
- **Reducing** the capacity of oceans and forests to capture carbon
- **Distorting** regulations aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Exposing the role of corruption in crimes that affect the environment

The damaging effect of corruption is not limited to financial losses. Corruption fuels biodiversity loss, destruction of natural habitats and threatens the existence of endangered species. It deprives governments of revenue streams and communities of essential resources and sources of income.

Environmental crimes enabled by corruption:

- Wildlife trafficking
- Illegal deforestation
- Illegal mining of precious metals and stones
- Trafficking in waste
- Crimes in the fisheries sector

A Kenyan success story

Kenya's natural beauty lies not just in its landscapes but also in the vibrant tapestry of its wildlife. “Preserving this invaluable treasure is not merely a choice but a responsibility owed to future generations,” explains John Mugendi, the Kenya Wildlife Service’s (KWS) Senior Assistant Director.

KWS is responsible for conserving and protecting the country’s wildlife across over 200 nature parks, however, corruption casts a looming shadow over these conservation efforts. In 2015, Kenya and most of East Africa experienced a wildlife poaching crisis, seeing numbers of rhinos, lions and elephants declining by the day. Together, we implemented a corruption risk management process, which identifies vulnerabilities to corruption within an organization and devises efficient and cost-effective mitigation strategies. Through this process, KWS strengthened its management and operational systems to better prevent future corruption incidents. Last year, Kenya reported a decline in poaching, and the number of elephants, rhinos and lions has increased. Mugendi sees wildlife as an environmental and economic asset.

In 2023, we supported the following countries to assess and manage risks of corruption within the wildlife, fisheries and forestry sectors:

- Bolivia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Sierra Leone
- Solomon Islands
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda

More information about our work on crimes that affect the environment can be found [here](#).
Creating a global community of anti-corruption authorities

A key commitment of the UN Convention against Corruption is the improvement of direct cooperation between law enforcement authorities. Our Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) fulfils this obligation.

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Highlights from 2023

Networking with impact

Corruption knows no borders and resolving cases demands a global and diverse community of anti-corruption officials who collaborate directly and efficiently. At GlobE events, network members have an opportunity to meet in-person and make contacts that help them progress cross-border corruption cases. The fourth GlobE Plenary took place in July, in Vienna, Austria. 214 participants from 199 authorities based in 71 Member States and parties to the UN Convention against Corruption and 12 international organizations attended the meeting.

Bilateral and multilateral meetings and training sessions were held, including one on the use of technology tools in corruption investigations.

The main challenges in the exchange of information and ways to overcome them were discussed, as well as the use of technology and innovation in the work of anti-corruption authorities.

Members of the Network talked about the benefits of being part of the GlobE Network and making contacts with counterparts from all over the world.

Regional expansion

The scope of the GlobE Network was extended further in September with the launch of the first regional component. Law enforcement agencies, anti-corruption bodies, police, prosecutors and financial investigation units from the Western Balkans will cooperate in investigations and transnational corruption cases through direct collaboration. Meeting in Vienna, Austria, representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia approved a declaration and launched the regional component to bolster regional anti-corruption efforts through:

- enhanced information-sharing and regional coordination
- access to tools, knowledge and expertise
- promoting transparency and accountability

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Celebrating women

In March, to mark International Women’s Day, we spoke to some of the many inspirational women who are a part of the GlobE Network. A series of interviews focused on their professional and personal backgrounds, their challenges and successes and highlighted their advice to future generations. The interviews also illustrate that gender equality in the workplace remains crucial to effectively tackle corruption.

IN SPAIN, WE ASKED FOR A SUSPECT’S CONTACTS – ADDRESSES, POLICE RECORDS AND CRIMINAL REGISTRIES AND THE RESPONSE CAME WITHIN THE HOUR. THIS MEANS THE WORLD TO A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR, BECAUSE THIS IS INFORMATION THAT OTHERWISE WE WOULD ONLY GET IN WEEKS OR EVEN MONTHS, AND I GOT THAT IN ONE HOUR, SO IT WAS PERFECT.

Joao Ramos, Judicial Police, Portugal.

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The power of storytelling

In November, the GlobE Network launched a storytelling series tailored to the needs of our member authorities. This series harnesses the knowledge of GlobE members who share their stories and offer insights and approaches to the challenges they have faced. Through the lens of experience, our anti-corruption colleagues share not only their successes but also the lessons learned in navigating the complexities of their work. The first virtual session focused on the innovative approach of the United Kingdom’s Serious Fraud Office to maximize asset recovery using a variety of tools.
Investing in education and youth empowerment

Children and young people took centre stage at UNODC events in 2023, and we continued to undertake activities to inspire, engage and empower them to act against corruption.

Through our Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment initiative, known as GRACE, we work with educators to incorporate anti-corruption curricula throughout primary and secondary education, as well as with other partners and our Youth-LED Integrity Advisory Board to motivate youth-led anti-corruption efforts.

Highlights from 2023

An ancient philosophy for modern teaching techniques

Integrity, ethics, altruism and empathy are the key values of the African indigenous philosophy of umuntu. These values also inspire our work with school children. In 2023, we visited Malawi, where we worked alongside the country’s Anti-Corruption Bureau and Ministry of Education to develop educational material for primary schools based on this important African philosophy. By embodying umuntu values and behaviours, we believe that it is possible to build just, inclusive and resilient communities where corruption is ultimately rejected. In February 2023, UNODC and UNDP representatives met with over 180 students, teachers, parents, traditional and religious leaders across Malawi to discuss the best way to make ethics and integrity learning both accessible and meaningful. "The consultation experience was so enriching," said Catherine Nkhoma, Principal Public Education Officer at the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Malawi. "While we know corruption is a difficult and cross-sectional problem, we need to start somewhere."
Little leaders, big impact

In November 2023, 24 children aged between seven and eight put their debating skills to the test at the United Nations in Vienna, Austria for UNODC’s first ‘Young Guardians of Integrity Conference’. An unfair game led to a lively discussion about rules and honesty. The children were asked to write a number from one to ten on a piece of paper. They were told that if a child chose the same number as the facilitator, they would receive a prize. Much to their surprise, the facilitator picked 22 as the lucky number. “That’s not fair. You did not stick to the rules,” shouted a nine-year-old boy. A collective grumbling occurred in the room as the children realized that nobody wins if one person does not stick to the rules.

This game, tested by educators around the world using the GRACE initiative’s lessons plans, teaches about the importance of core values such as honesty and respect.

Coding against corruption

In 2023, we organized two further events in our successful ‘Coding4Integrity’ youth anti-corruption hackathon series. These activities give young people an opportunity to use and boost their skills to develop technological solutions for problems that are caused by corruption. The events showcased what young people can achieve when we empower them to use their creativity.

Mexico

The first hackathon took place in Mexico where, with the support of the Siemens Integrity Initiative, 60 young students and software developers designed systems to tackle real-life challenges related to the Mexican health-care system. These included transparency in the public procurement of medicines, reporting of corruption in the health sector, and preventing the sale and use of counterfeit pharmaceuticals.

The winning solution ‘FarmaBot’ uses mobile phone technology to identify fake medications. It consists of an application programming interface (API) that verifies the authenticity of medication via the lot number.

Qatar

In September, the State of Qatar, with the support of Microsoft, hosted our Arab Youth Anti-Corruption Hackathon, which brought together 110 young developers to come up with innovative anti-corruption technologies.

The three winning solutions addressed:

- Corruption in the procurement process – ‘ProcureGuard’ is a digital procurement platform that provides a fair and transparent recommendation system to assist evaluating committees in selecting the most suitable supplier using AI tools.

- Corruption in the education sector – ‘ProctorPal’ can prevent, detect and tackle cheating and corruption in online exams. The security system offers a multi-layered security approach, including ID verification, dual-camera monitoring, eye tracking and behavioural analysis.

- Protection of people who report corrupt acts – ‘IntegrityHub’ is a mobile application, supporting 100 different languages that utilizes advanced speech-to-text technology and data engineering to convert voice reports into text while ensuring the whistle-blower’s anonymity.

Winners of our Coding4Integrity events have the opportunity to further develop their anti-corruption technology solutions with the support of our hackathon partners.
Safeguarding sport from corruption

Corruption poses a serious threat to the integrity of sports and to its social and economic benefits. Since 2017, our Programme on Safeguarding Sport from Corruption and Economic Crime has been supporting governments, sports organizations and relevant stakeholders.

Illegal betting

Sport-focused corruption includes:
- Competition manipulation
- Illegal betting
- the organization of sports events
- the transfer of athletes
- the ownership of sports organizations
- procurement processes

FOOTBALL IS A MULTI-BILLION-DOLLAR GLOBAL INDUSTRY WHICH MAKES IT A POTENTIAL TARGET FOR CORRUPTION AND OTHER KINDS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AND THAT IS SOMETHING WE SHOULD AVOID AND COMBAT TO ENSURE THAT THE PLAYING FIELD IS ALWAYS LEVEL.

Gianni Infantino, President, Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

Highlights from 2023

During 2023, the Programme supported or organized 40 activities which benefited over 1,500 officials from criminal justice authorities and sports organizations from over 60 countries. Highlights include:

July, Vienna, Austria
To protect the sport of rugby from corruption, we worked with World Rugby, the governing body for the sport of rugby union, to bring together representatives of criminal justice authorities and rugby unions from the 18 nations that qualified for the 2023 Rugby World Cup in France.

September, New York, USA
UNODC renewed the Memorandum of Understanding with FIFA that commits both organizations to stop corrupt practices, such as match-fixing and bribery, from undermining football. The two bodies initially agreed to cooperate in 2020. Since then, FIFA and UNODC have collaborated to support the implementation of over 60 anti-corruption activities. One example of this is the collaboration between UNODC and FIFA to support the FIFA Women's World Cup Integrity Task Force, which was established to safeguard the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023™ from match manipulation and integrity-related threats.

October, Vienna, Austria
Corruption in the form of bribery poses a significant challenge in sport. The International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport (IPACS) launched a new guide entitled ‘Legal Approaches to Tackling Bribery in Sport’, jointly developed by UNODC and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Guide provides lawmakers, policymakers and prosecutors with practical approaches and good practices to effectively combat bribery in sport.
Protecting the people who stand up to corruption

Individuals who expose corrupt practices in their workplace or work environment play an essential role in a country’s anti-corruption efforts. By disclosing information about illegal and dishonest behaviour, these persons, who are often referred to as ‘whistle-blowers’, can stop activities that endanger public health and safety, divert public funds into criminal hands and infringe human rights. Yet most incidents of corruption go undetected, primarily because employees are reluctant to report their concerns for fear of retaliation.

As we strive to reduce corruption, we must encourage and protect those who disclose information about alleged cases of corrupt conduct. We do this through a wide range of tailored technical assistance activities, which help countries establish reporting systems, provide training on handling information and collecting evidence and develop appropriate policies and legislation to investigate the claims and protect reporting persons. Eight out of our nine anti-corruption platforms identified whistle-blower protection as a regional priority.

Highlights from 2023

Speaking up for ethical health care in South Africa

Corruption in the health-care sector puts patients at risk. A reporting mechanism for acts of corruption can prevent harm and save lives. Since 2021, we have been supporting the Health Profession Council of South Africa (HPCSA) to revise and update their internal whistle-blower protection policy using the methodology provided in our publication ‘Speak Up for Health – Guidelines to enable whistle-blower protection in the health-care sector’. In March 2023, the revised policy was validated by the management of HPCSA.

Our guidelines explain that an effective whistle-blower protection policy needs to determine what can be reported, where to report it, how the information will be processed and how the reporting person will be protected. It also provides information on training and raising awareness among staff and those who receive and investigate corruption claims.

In 2023, we also supported:

- Burkina Faso to draft a whistle-blower protection law
- Ecuador to formulate regulations for whistle-blower protection in the judiciary
- Brazil to include whistle-blower protection in the national anti-corruption strategy

Joining forces around the world

In 2023, we extended our cooperation with the network of organizations that are active in the field of whistle-blower protection. Our partners include:

- Group of States against Corruption, Council of Europe (GRECO)
- Government Accountability Project
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Organization of American States (OAS)
- Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF)
- Transparency International (TI)
Corruption in the private sector can involve fraud, bribery, embezzlement and other forms of unethical or illegal conduct that harm the public interest or distort fair competition. These corrupt acts undermine economic development, market competition, employee satisfaction and consumer welfare.

Promoting better business through integrity and ethics

We support companies to adopt anti-corruption measures and operate their business under the principles of business integrity.

This means they should:

- act ethically and responsibly
- prevent and counter corruption and fraud
- apply ethical principles and values to business activities and transactions
- be transparent, accountable and honest
- comply with national and international laws and regulations

Strengthening responsible business conduct

Throughout 2023, over 8,000 representatives from businesses, government, academia, civil society and youth were reached through our activities and made use of our vast online resources.

Over 4,900 of these were reached through our in-person and online trainings, workshops and university lectures in the 14 project countries, and over 3,100 were reached through our online global webinars, with participants coming from over 80 countries.

We supported the implementation of anti-corruption measures such as codes of conduct, compliance programmes, reporting and whistle-blowing protection mechanisms and collective action initiatives.
Instilling integrity in future leaders in Pakistan

Through our ‘Ethics Ambassadors Training Programme’, we equip young students and graduates with ethical mindsets and ethical decision-making skills from the outset of their careers. In Pakistan, more than 20,000 university students have engaged with lecturers and business executives as part of our ‘Global Integrity Education’ project. After the training, students are empowered to serve as Ethics Ambassadors in their workplaces. In 2023, 21 students became Ethics Ambassadors in Pakistan.

“THIS PROJECT HAS EQUIPPED ME WITH THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO IDENTIFY AND PREVENT CORRUPTION RISKS AND TO PROMOTE A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. I HAVE GAINED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CORRUPTION ON SOCIETY, THE ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE. IN MY ROLE, I AM TRYING TO PROMOTE AND ADVOCATE FOR AN ETHICAL CULTURE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION.”

Mahnoor Ahmad, Ethics Ambassador at Daewoo Pakistan

Cooperation in Colombia reduces corruption risks

Since 2015, through our ‘On the Level’ project, we have been working with companies and the Government in Colombia to facilitate a dialogue between energy and health-care sectors. This has led to the reduction of opportunities for corruption, the improvement of the Government’s anti-corruption legislation, and an enhanced culture of integrity in the private sector.

“THE ON THE LEVEL PROJECT PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN HELPING STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFY AND MITIGATE CORRUPTION RISKS WITHIN THE ENERGY AND HEALTH SECTORS. ITS COLLABORATIVE APPROACH AND ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY SECTORS CONTRIBUTE TO THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO PROMOTE INTEGRITY AND COMBAT CORRUPTION IN COLOMBIA.”

Claudia Escobar Oliver, General Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Colombia.

Providing a forum for global cooperation

A successful year culminated in the Private Sector Forum held during the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (COSP 10) in Atlanta, USA. More than 200 participants, including business leaders, chief compliance and legal officers, sustainability, governance and business integrity experts and representatives from the public sector and international organizations took part in the first-ever forum of its kind at a CoSP. The event was co-organized with our key partner, the United Nations Global Compact.

Over two days, the delegates reviewed the milestones reached over twenty years of the UN Convention against Corruption and discussed the development of a future global business integrity agenda. During the Conference, the UN Global Compact presented a Call-to-Action signed by more than 500 companies across the globe urging governments to underscore anti-corruption and good governance as fundamental pillars of a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

“The enormous, ongoing fight against corruption requires targeted, sustained and collective action. Together, we must champion ethical business practices throughout business operations, including through partners and supply chains, and in the communities we serve. We must remain united against corruption.”

Sanda Ojiambo, CEO and Executive Director, UN Global Compact.

Uniting leaders for business integrity

In 2023, also in cooperation with the United Nations Global Compact, we launched our first-ever joint project aimed at promoting business integrity and fostering collective action to strengthen anti-corruption policies, legal frameworks and measures applicable to the private sector.
Building an impartial, independent and honest judiciary

Since 2018, UNODC’s Global Judicial Integrity Network has served as a platform “of judges, for judges”, assisting judiciaries worldwide in strengthening integrity by facilitating experience and knowledge sharing and identifying and addressing emerging challenges to judicial integrity.

International Day of Women Judges

The Global Judicial Integrity Network marked the 2023 International Day of Women Judges with a series of events and activities.

► A dedicated global webinar entitled ‘Promoting Active Participation of Women’ shone a light on the experiences of women judges from around the world and focused on the role and contributions of women judges to judicial integrity, gender equality and the rule of law.

► Four senior female members of the judiciary provided us with opinion pieces about the important role of women in their field of work and their efforts to achieve gender equality and parity.

■ Chief Justice of Malaysia, Hon. Tun Tengku Maimun b. Tuan Mat
  The significance of women judges and my contribution towards equality and the equality of access to justice

■ President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, Hon. Ivana Hrdlickova
  Women judges and women judicial leaders play an irreplaceable role in modern judiciary

■ President of the Supreme Court of Cassation of Bulgaria, Hon. Galina Zakharova
  Path towards fair gender representation in the judiciary of Bulgaria

■ Justice of the Court of Appeal of the Gambia, Hon. Amina Saho Ceesay
  Progress in the quest for gender parity in the judiciary of the Gambia

► At a special event held in Vienna, ‘Women in Justice for Justice’, UNODC Executive Director, Ghada Waly, highlighted the relevance of the Network’s contribution to improve gender representation across the spectrum of justice, and promote more gender-responsive justice systems.

Insightful feedback from our participants and partners

THE GLOBAL JUDICIAL INTEGRITY NETWORK’S REPORT ON GENDER-RELATED JUDICIAL INTEGRITY ISSUES HAS PROVIDED DETAILED INSIGHTS INTO THE CHALLENGES. IT’S TIME FOR LONG-TERM AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE INVESTMENT TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES. LET US SUPPORT THE WOMEN WHO DELIVER JUSTICE.

Jarpa J. Dawuni, Executive Director of the Institute for African Women in Law, Kenya

THE TRAINING TOOLS PROVIDED BY THE NETWORK HAVE AIDED JUDGES IN BOLSTERING JUDICIAL INTEGRITY THROUGH PRACTICAL CASES AND SHARED EXPERIENCES ON CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT, INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENCE AND IMPARTIALITY OF THE JUDICIARY. WITH THE SUPPORT OF THESE RESOURCES ON JUDICIAL INTEGRITY, WE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING TO COMBAT CORRUPTION IN ECUADOR.

Esteban Coronel, Anti-Corruption Judge, Ecuador

REGARDING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, THERE IS A NEED TO FIND A BALANCE BETWEEN THE VALUES INVOLVED, CONSIDERING THE RISKS BUT ALSO THE OPPORTUNITIES. JUDGES SHOULD HAVE A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHENOMENON OF SOCIAL MEDIA, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY USE IT OR NOT, AND SHOULD RECEIVE SPECIFIC TRAINING ON THE BENEFITS, DISADVANTAGES AND RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH THEIR PERSONAL USE AND USE BY THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, CLOSE FRIENDS AND JUDICIAL STAFF.

Gianluca Grasso, Justice at the Court of Cassation, Italy
Retrieving assets gained from corruption

The theft of public assets from and within countries is a criminal act of corruption and an immense development problem. The process of tracing and returning stolen assets to their country of origin or rightful owners is usually complex and long, involving multiple barriers and jurisdictions with different legislative frameworks related to asset recovery.

Through our Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative in partnership with the World Bank, we work with financial centres and requesting countries to facilitate the timely return of proceeds of corruption through improved legal and cooperation mechanisms. Our workshops around the world provide hands-on training on how to prevent assets from being stolen and conduct successful investigations. We assist in reviewing, drafting and improving legislation for identifying, tracing, freezing, preserving, seizing, confiscating, managing and returning stolen assets and contribute to the international efforts to end safe havens for corrupt funds.

**2023 achievements in numbers**

- Assisted 20 countries
- Trained over 600 people globally
- Contributed to 24 global policy events
- Published 5 knowledge products

### Highlights from 2023

#### Asset Recovery Action Series

A major step forward in international cooperation is our new Global Forum on Asset Recovery (GFAR) Action Series, which the StAR Initiative launched in July 2023. The aim of the GFAR Action Series is to make tangible progress by facilitating negotiations among requested and requesting countries in connection with specific ongoing cases. GFAR enables direct engagement between selected focus countries aiming to retrieve assets and the jurisdictions they identified for priority cooperation.

At the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC in December, the initial eight focus countries – Algeria, Honduras, Iraq, Nigeria, the Republic of Moldova, Seychelles, Ukraine and Zambia – participated in over 50 meetings with key officials from 20 requested jurisdictions to advance asset recovery cases.

“The Global Forum on Asset Recovery Action Series provides critical opportunities for investigators and prosecutors across the world to come together to build capacity, share expertise, and increase cooperation on specific asset recovery matters capacity”, Kevin Driscoll, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, United States.

The Action Series is hosted by the United States, with co-hosts France and the United Kingdom, and organized by StAR, in partnership with the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre (IACCC) and the International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR).

#### A database of asset recovery efforts

StAR updated the Asset Recovery Watch Database, which is the only public database that tracks efforts by country authorities to recover and return proceeds of corruption. This new version covers over 140 jurisdictions involved in international asset recovery cases and documents over 560 international asset recovery cases with a total value of USD 16.5 billion of assets either frozen, confiscated or returned.

#### StAR Day on Stolen Asset Recovery

The sixth StAR Day on stolen asset recovery took place in December at the Conference of the States Parties in Atlanta, USA. Organized by the World Bank, StAR initiative and other partners, the event provided a platform for discussions on various topics related to asset recovery and presented several new tools, publications and studies. Over 300 in-person and online participants from governments, regional and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector outlined the challenges and expectations for the future in the field of asset recovery. Thematic sessions addressed issues such as transparency and accountability in asset recovery and return, the participation of civil society in asset recovery, the interlinkages between corruption and tax crimes, beneficial ownership transparency and regional mechanisms for asset recovery and against illicit financial flows.
Harnessing data for measuring corruption

A thorough understanding of the prevalence, risks and trends of corruption paves the way for the design and application of effective anti-corruption measures. However, corruption is a hidden and illicit activity, making it difficult to assess.

In 2023, UNODC, the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joined forces in hosting the first Global Conference on Harnessing Data to Improve Corruption Measurement. The Conference provided a forum for policymakers, scientists and practitioners from governments, civil society and academia to discuss experiences, good practices and challenges in measuring corruption.

In December 2023, in response to calls from the Member States for support in measuring corruption, UNODC launched a new tool to measure corruption on a national or subnational level. The ‘UNODC Statistical Framework to Measure Corruption’ - developed by the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch with the support of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch - is a result of two rounds of consultations with more than 200 experts from Member States and based on input from national statistical offices, anti-corruption and criminal justice authorities, as well as ministries, think tanks and civil society organizations across 81 countries.

Main objective of the framework

To enable countries to develop national systems to detect the presence, measure the magnitude and monitor trends involving different forms of corruption. States can adapt it to their needs to produce reliable and relevant evidence to inform policymaking and public debate.

The framework focuses on criminal offences such as bribery, embezzlement or money-laundering, as well as on preventive measures and an environment that enables the fight against corruption, such as public participation, access to information or whistle-blower protection. It provides a comprehensive list of indicators of these forms of corruption and provides guidance on how to collect and analyse the needed data. In 2024, we will be supporting countries to make use of this new measuring tool and several countries have already volunteered to pilot the framework.
Enhancing transparency in public procurement

When governments buy goods and services needed to run a country’s public services, large amounts of money are involved. This provides opportunities for unethical and corrupt practices. Corruption can occur at any stage of the procurement process, from sourcing suppliers to authorizing contracts and payments.

A procurement system that lacks transparency is the ideal breeding ground for corrupt behaviour. Therefore, we support States to establish procurement systems based on transparency, competition and objective criteria for decision-making.

One method of preventing corruption in procurement is ‘Beneficial Ownership Transparency’. This involves identifying the real individuals who ultimately benefit from the profits and assets of bidding entities, thus making it more challenging for corrupt officials to manipulate the procurement process for personal gain and launder illicit funds.

In 2023, we strengthened our cooperation and jointly organized activities with ‘Open Ownership’ and ‘Open Contracting Partnership’. These non-profit organizations work globally to ensure that expenditure on public contracts is transparent and fair.

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Highlights from 2023

Botswana, Ecuador, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Philippines and South Africa supported through sustained technical assistance to implement public procurement and beneficial ownership reforms.

In Ekiti State, Nigeria improved procurement processes resulted in 21 small businesses owned by women winning 47 contracts, mainly related to the renovation of schools and school furniture. In comparison, only seven women-led businesses won contracts in 2020.

In Assam, India in cooperation with the Indian initiative, CivicDataLab, we worked with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority to implement open contracting strategies for flood-related procurement.

Political support for action

The importance of our work was recognized in two resolutions at the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption in December 2023.

A resolution on enhancing the use of beneficial ownership information to strengthen asset recovery includes provisions such as the need to improve access to beneficial ownership data that contains historical records and is up-to-date and searchable.

The first-ever resolution on promoting transparency and integrity in public procurement was adopted in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The importance of procurement as a modern, digital open data public service was reflected in the resolution.
2023 was a productive year for the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch. Events to mark the twentieth anniversary of the UN Convention against Corruption were held throughout the year, culminating in the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP10) in December.

New regional platforms to fast-track the implementation of the Convention and increase interregional cooperation were created and our GlobE Network brought together over 200 anti-corruption law enforcement authorities to enhance transnational cooperation.

Here are some of our highlights.

22 February: Organized and chaired the UN Anti-Corruption Task Force’s first meeting of the year, attended by 17 UN entities in Somalia.

23 March: Launch of the UNODC, UN Women and the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI) South-Eastern Europe Women Good Governance at the Anti-Corruption Leaders Forum, Skopje, North Macedonia.

14-16 March: Regional Workshop on Enhancing Collaboration between Supreme Audit Institutions and Anti-Corruption Bodies for 21 countries of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, Bangkok, Thailand.

11 April: 6th anniversary of the Global Judicial Integrity Network.

25-27 April: Launch of the Regional Platform for Central America, Roatán, Honduras.

13-17 June: 14th session of the Implementation Review Group (IRG) and 14th session of the Working Group on Prevention (WGP), Vienna, Austria.

19-20 June: Dialogue on regional and global efforts to advance the anti-corruption agenda in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya.

11-14 July: 4th Plenary Meeting of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities Network (GlobE Network), Vienna, Austria.

22 August: Integrity Task Force, including UNODC, concludes monitoring of FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023 for suspicious match manipulation.

31 August-1 September: UNODC - IACA, OECD and UNDP first Global Conference on Harnessing Data to Improve Corruption Measurement, Vienna, Austria.

4-8 September: Resumed 14th session of the Implementation Review Group and 17th session of the Working Group on Asset Recovery (WGAR) Vienna, Austria.

18 September: UN General Assembly adopts declaration to accelerate SDGs with strong links to preventing and combating corruption.

26-27 September: Visit of the African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC), Vienna, Austria.

5 October: 2nd European Union-UNODC Anti-Corruption Dialogue, Vienna, Austria.

9-11 October: Launch of the Regional Platform for the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

16 October: Participation of the UNODC Executive Director, Ghada Waly, in the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

31 October: 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Vienna, Austria.

2-3 November: Launch of the Regional Platform for Central Asia, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.


11-15 December: Tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (CoSP10), Atlanta, USA.

11-12 December: Private Sector Forum organized jointly with the UN Global Compact at CoSP10, Atlanta, USA.
One United Nations

The attainment of peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet is the goal of the United Nations. However, corruption undermines the core values and principles of the UN and everything it aims to achieve. As the guardian of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, UNODC and its Corruption and Economic Crime Branch perform an essential role in the fulfilment of the UN’s mandate.

CORRUPTION NOT ONLY ROBS RESOURCES, IT ROBS PEOPLE OF HOPE. CORRUPTION UNDERMINES DEVELOPMENT. CORRUPTION SUBVERTS SOCIAL COHESION AND EXACERBATES INEQUALITIES. CORRUPTION FUELS DISTRUST IN INSTITUTIONS. TODAY, THE WORLD MUST LEVERAGE THE UNIVERSAL GOALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION TO ADVANCE ACCOUNTABILITY, INTEGRITY, AND TRANSPARENCY.

António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations

EVEN DAY, WE SEE HOW CORRUPTION IMPAIRS ACCESS TO EDUCATION, TO SANITATION, TO DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. CORRUPTION ALSO DEEPENS THE RIFTS OF INEQUALITY, DEPRIVING VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED PEOPLE OF OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES, AND ROBBING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF RIGHTS AND POSSIBILITIES. THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES HAS BUILT A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION. YET CORRUPTION REMAINS A FACT OF LIFE AND A POWERFUL FORCE IN OUR WORLD.

Ghada Waly, Executive Director, UNODC

Further examples of a united front against corruption can be found in our close cooperation with other United Nations system entities.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
UN Development Programme (UNDP)
UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
UN Global Compact (UN Global Compact)
UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

In 2023, UNODC joined the ‘Human Rights 75’ initiative to celebrate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contribute to meeting the needs of our time by advancing the principles of freedom, equality and justice for all. The Corruption and Economic Crime Branch pledges to:

► Develop a brief on the interlinkages between human rights and corruption by 2025
► Include human rights as part of the agenda of capacity-building activities in 50 countries in the next three years

As an integral part of UNODC, we contribute to accelerated, comprehensive efforts to make the world safer from drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism.
A diverse, committed and global team

Corruption is global, and so are we. Meet some of our colleagues:

MARIA ADOMEIT, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Pretoria, South Africa

I first joined UNODC as a consultant for what was supposed to be a short period of time. That was 17 years ago! At that time the UN Convention against Corruption had only been in force for two years. Since then, the anti-corruption discourse has evolved a great deal. I take pride in having been part of that journey for such a long time. Before joining UNODC, I worked with the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs on issues related to good governance and human rights. In my current role, I provide advisory services and technical assistance for Southern African countries in their efforts to implement the Convention against Corruption. I also coordinate UNODC’s global work on corruption related to the protection and management of environmental resources. One highlight of 2023 was the Regional Conference for the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that was held in Angola. I’m always inspired by the dedication, energy, innovation and courage of the corruption fighters in Southern Africa.

ISATOU BATONON, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, Anti-Corruption Hub for Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

I was interested in expanding my governance expertise and applying my past experience in the area of transparency and accountability to the anti-corruption field, and this is what motivated me to work for UNODC Before this, I served as a Social Policy Specialist with UNICEF Somalia where I worked to ensure that local government service delivery was responsive to the rights of children and their families. I also served as a Governance Technical Advisor with the International Rescue Committee, based in Nairobi, where I supported citizen empowerment and social accountability initiatives across the continent. In my current role, I identify and respond to the technical assistance needs of States parties to the UN Convention against Corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes strengthening anti-corruption legislation, building institutional capacity, and supporting fundraising efforts. In 2023, I helped secure funding for a small, but strategic, regional peacebuilding and corruption risk management project.

CESAR AUGUSTO DE LA FUENTE RIZO, Anti-Corruption Hub for Latin America Assistant, Mexico City, Mexico

I used to work with the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in Mexico. During this time, I was able to work with local, national and international counterparts and different UN agencies. This provided me with the training for inter-agency coordination and the use of UN procurement guidelines. Through this work, I also had close contact with UNODC colleagues and their areas of work. When I saw this job position with UNODC advertised, the regional aspect of it seemed like an opportunity to use my interests. As the Anti-corruption Hub for Latin America Assistant, my work consists of supporting in the planning, execution and monitoring of operational, financial and administrative tasks, with special focus on the organization of missions and events and monitoring of financial and material resources.

JUAN MARTÍN ORTIZ GÓMEZ, National Anti-Corruption Advisor, Assunción, Paraguay

Before I joined UNODC, I worked in the public sector where I was responsible for conducting investigations into allegations of fraud, corruption and violations of civil servants’ regulations. I was also the Coordinator of the Ethics Committee at the Ministry of Finance, and I represented the Ministry on the National Transparency and Integrity Team, which was coordinated by Paraguay’s Anti-Corruption Secretariat. Working in an international organization such as UNODC, I can offer support beyond my own country. In my work, through the Anti-Corruption Hub, I’m responsible for providing technical assistance in topics related to anti-corruption, public procurement, beneficial ownership transparency and administrative investigations to different institutions of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

MARIE PEGIE CAUCHOIS, Officer in Charge UNODC Pacific, Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser, Suva, Fiji

Since starting my career as a UN peacekeeper, I have been deeply inspired by UNODC’s approach to tackling global issues, with a particular focus on corruption. Seeing how corruption fuels serious crimes, this motivated me to work towards creating tangible impact. Joining UNODC gave me the chance to support a wide variety of stakeholders to develop and use practical strategies to help communities fight back against these crimes. I joined the UN in 2012 in Peace Keeping Operations in South Sudan. This was followed by deployments in Afghanistan, Central African Republic and Somalia. Before joining the UN, I worked in Vanuatu as a Legal Advisor to a Vanuatu Police Force project operated by the Australian Federal Police. I focused on issues relating to human rights. Also in Vanuatu, I worked for Transparency International and the Prime Minister’s Office. In my current role, I manage UNODC’s anti-corruption programme in the Pacific.
**JASNA PEXIC**, Regional Specialist, Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery, Sarajevo, UNODC Programme Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina

“My motivation for joining UNODC dates back to my university days at the University of Criminology in Sarajevo. I still remember seeing one of the UNODC billboards on drug control in the university hallways and thinking how amazing it would be to work for such an organization. I had joined the UN system earlier and worked on issues of war crimes and human rights, but when this opportunity arose almost three years ago, I was very enthusiastic. I’m a qualified project manager, and my professional experience includes employment at non-governmental organizations, international organizations, like USAID and OSCE, as well as in the Defence Section of the British Embassy. At UNODC, I work as a specialist for our anti-corruption and asset recovery portfolio, covering Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Our initiatives include regional strategic work on fast tracking the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption.

*All references to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).*

**ARTEM SERGEEV**, Associate Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer, UNODC, Vienna, Austria

“I’m currently based in Vienna, Austria and am originally from the Russian Federation. Before joining UNODC, I worked for the Asian Institute of International Financial Law, which is located in Hong Kong. I was a specialist in the field of financial regulation and sustainability, examining ways to use financial regulation to promote economic inclusion and growth. What attracted me to UNODC was the opportunity to work with a diverse range of jurisdictions and support domestic efforts to prevent and address the impact of economic crime. In my current role, I facilitate reviews of domestic laws and policies to assess their adherence to the provisions of the UN Convention against Corruption. I also provide support for the work of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention. A key achievement in 2023 was facilitating the adoption of a resolution on civil and administrative liability during the tenth session of the Conference.”

**ROBERTA SOLIS RIBEIRO MARTINS**, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer (Asset Recovery), Washington, DC, USA

“Before I came to UNODC, I was a Federal Attorney in Brazil and was seconded to the country’s Anti-Corruption Agency for almost a decade where I held the position of Chief International Affairs Advisor. In this role, I was the focal point for the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption. In all my interactions, working directly with UNODC colleagues in Vienna, in Brazil and around the world, I was always amazed by the level of expertise, professionalism and true passion with which colleagues carried out their work. So, when the opportunity to join UNODC came, I didn’t think twice before applying. I’m currently based in Washington, DC, working in the secretariat of the joint UNODC and World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative, which supports international efforts to recover proceeds of corruption. I’m developing an e-learning course on the links between tax crimes and corruption based on a recent StAR publication.”

**KIRBEE TIBAYAN**, National Programme Officer for Anti-Corruption, Manila, Philippines

“Growing up in the Philippines, it became clear to me that the fight against corruption is inseparable from the struggle against poverty. My desire to make a tangible difference in these areas led me to UNODC. My role allows me to contribute to meaningful change, leveraging international frameworks to promote transparency, accountability and justice in the Philippines. Before joining UNODC, I was an investigator for the Office of Anti-Corruption and Integrity at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), where I focused on investigating allegations of fraud and corruption in development projects. This experience not only honed my investigative skills but also deepened my understanding of the critical need for integrity and accountability in fostering sustainable development. In my current capacity, I support the implementation of UNODC’s anti-corruption initiatives in the Philippines, aiming to strengthen the country’s commitment and capacity to address corruption in alignment with the UN Convention against Corruption.”

**WAI HONG VICTOR LEE**, Associate Expert, UNODC, Vienna, Austria

“I’ve always believed that through dedicating myself to the global fight against corruption, I’m pursuing a very meaningful career. Prior to joining UNODC in 2023, I was a Senior Investigator with the Independent Commission Against Corruption in Hong Kong, China. I spent more than 10 years focusing on frontline anti-corruption investigations. It was UNODC’s mandate that attracted me to join a diverse team of professionals who are committed to making the world a fairer and more just place to live. In my current role, I’m supporting projects to standardize the scope, methodology and materials offered by UNODC’s headquarters and field offices for training on topics relating to anti-corruption and financial investigations. Furthermore, I conduct in-person training to build the capacity of authorities and institutions in different regions of the world to effectively combat corruption.”
UNODC helps countries to develop and implement effective, accelerated responses to crimes. Acts of corruption can be complex, transnational and difficult to investigate and prosecute, and the anti-corruption community needs to make use of all available resources to stay up-to-date and ahead of the curve. In 2023, we released 20 new publications on trending topics. All publications can be accessed here.

Our new publications
Our work to prevent and counter acts of corruption would not be possible without the commitment of the many individuals, organizations and countries around the world who work alongside us to bolster accountability, transparency and integrity to reduce corruption. We would like to thank everyone who cooperated with us in 2023, amplifying our reach and impact, and look forward to strengthening our partnerships further in 2024.

We sincerely appreciate the contributions of our many donors, these include:

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Resources for further information

Alongside our technical assistance programmes, we maintain databases, provide a wide range of services and operate networks which countries can access, utilize or join free of charge.

More information about the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch
- Corruption and Economic Crime Branch website
- UN Convention against Corruption
- CEB Publications

UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism
- Country Profiles (unodc.org)

Courses and tools
- UNODC Anti-Corruption E-Learning
- TRACK: Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (unodc.org)

Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative
- Addressing Anti-Corruption, Money Laundering & Asset Recovery
- Asset Recovery Watch Database | Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) (worldbank.org)

RESOURCES FOR

Educators
- Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment

Private Sector
- UNODC Business Integrity Portal

Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities
- Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities

Judges and Judiciaries
- Global Judicial Integrity Network