

# Enhancement of the International Anti-Corruption Efforts



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Surely, corruption poses an international threat because of its terrible negative effects at the national level, which impedes sustainable development and leads to the exacerbation of crime worldwide. This is because the transnational networks of corruption practice looting, smuggling and laundering money and resources as well as facilitating and financing criminal and terrorist acts. These networks exploit any loopholes among the different national systems to avoid law and escape punishment.





Cross-border corruption causes incurring a huge economic cost. Some estimates indicate that it costs the world approximately three trillion dollars annually, with this huge amount of money seeping into the accounts of criminals and corrupt people instead of investing it in development and public services. Africa is a clear example that best reflects this situation, given that it is the continent most in need of exploiting its resources and wealth to achieve development. Africa loses more than eighty-eight billion dollars annually through capital flight, which is equal to the total amounts of the development support and direct foreign investment in Africa together and half the amount required for compensating for the deficit in financing the sustainable development goals in the whole continent.

The grave repercussions of corruption at the international level and the transnational nature of the operations of corruption networks require intensive and effective cooperation among countries to prevent corruption in a sustainable manner and protect the peoples' rights to benefit from their wealth and achieve their legitimate hopes and ambitions for development. The world countries have succeeded in establishing a comprehensive international framework for this cooperation, represented in the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which enjoys universal membership, with 187 countries having signed the convention. Despite the existence of a comprehensive, effective and broad-based international mechanism to combat corruption, the corruption movements and flows continue to drain the countries resources; and in many cases, the corrupt succeed in escaping punishment. This situation raises a question regarding the actions required for achieving more effective international cooperation and enabling governments to pursue and dismantle international corruption networks.

The year 2021 is considered an ideal time for answering this question, as this year has witnessed holding the first special session on corruption in the history of the United Nations General Assembly in June 2021. It has adopted an important political declaration that includes making a pledge by the world countries to intensify the existing measures for combating corruption and enhancing international cooperation. In addition, December 2021 will witness holding the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, at Sharm El-Sheikh, which will be a perfect opportunity for reviewing the developments and initiatives witnessed by the year regarding combating corruption as well as identifying the future features of the international cooperation in combating corruption.

The best way for achieving the appropriate level of international cooperation for fighting corruption worldwide is strengthening and developing efforts to implement the Anti-Corruption Convention, to materialize the Convention stipulations and objectives and the pledges provided in the political declaration issued by the special session of the General Assembly. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the body concerned with following up and supporting implementation of the Convention against Corruption works together with the United Nations member States and the international community to set mechanisms for facilitating the Convention implementation in a practical manner.

For achieving this goal, we should work on a number of pivots, namely:

**The grave consequences of corruption at the international level and the transnational nature of the corruption operations networks require rigorous and effective cooperation among all countries for preventing corruption in a sustainable manner and protecting the peoples' rights to benefit from their wealth.**



**Dr. Ghada Wali is honoured by the Chairman of the Administrative Control Authority**

**If the international community seizes the historic opportunity represented in the year 2021, this year will be a starting point for achieving a qualitative leap in the anti-corruption efforts worldwide and international cooperation for upholding the principles of integrity and transparency.**

Bridging the gap between the Convention stipulations and the implementation capabilities of countries:

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime continues to provide technical support to all countries for achieving this purpose. During the period June 2020 - January 2021, the Office provided training for more than 2,500 officials in 35 countries regarding the investigation and prosecution related to corruption cases; and it supported more than 12 countries in the revision of anti-corruption legislation and policies. In addition, the Anti-Corruption Convention review mechanism continues to identify the implementation drawbacks and the different countries needs for technical support. Such efforts depend on the positive and active interaction shown by the national authorities and bodies concerned with fighting corruption, which can best identify their own needs.

Facilitating the direct practical cooperation between the law enforcement and prosecution agencies:

The Anti-Corruption Convention stipulations lay a strong basis for the formal and informal cooperation related to combating corruption; but still there is a need for practical frameworks that activate such cooperation. From this point of view, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime created the he Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) concerned with combating corruption, providing an interactive platform for the instant exchange of information on corruption issues among national authorities in different countries. This procedure will complement and support the official legal cooperation procedures, which are considered difficult to complete because of the speedy movement of corruption networks. The network was launched during the



special session of the General Assembly on Corruption held in June 2021. In addition, the network's member bodies plan to hold their first meeting at Vienna in October 2021. This initiative discusses a huge challenge facing countries in implementing the Anti-Corruption Convention, as a complementary framework. However, the network's success is conditional to establishment of the largest possible number of anti-corruption and law enforcement institutions around the world through actively participating in them and making use of them in sharing information and expertise on a large scale.

Societal participation in the prevention of corruption:

The first defense against corruption is promoting the integrity and transparency principles in societies and among individuals alike. In this regard, one of the essential pillars of prevention is the role of young people who can initiate societal change through their dynamism and innovation. In this context, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is currently working on the "Youth for Integrity" initiative, with its main objectives being empowering young people as essential partners in combating corruption as well as integrating the topics of integrity and corruption refusal in educational curricula. It also aims to promote integrity through sports, being an important field witnessing effective cooperation between the Office of Drugs and Crime on the one hand and both the International Football Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee on the other hand. The "Youth for Integrity" initiative will be launched during the Conference of the Parties planned to be held at Sharm El-Sheikh in December 2021. It will be a special event including a competition among young people for developing new ideas and tools for combating corruption through utilizing modern technology. In fact, it is a model of activities, which can be implemented worldwide for achieving the youth and societies engagement in confronting corruption and promoting integrity.

Effective Partnership with the Private Sector

In fact, companies and banks have a great communal responsibility in combating corrupt practices, as well as monitoring and preventing illegal financial flows and any crime-related proceeds. The private sector interest requires working within a fair system allowing free and transparent competition, which in turn requires the

private sector's participation in international cooperation activities and initiatives against corruption. A prominent example is the "UN Global Compact", which comprises a number of private sector companies working in partnership with the United Nations through conducting private business while taking into account supporting sustainable development and societal goals, with the prevention and combating of corruption being the most important goal.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is also responsible for supporting and following up principle No. 10 of the Compact principles, concerned with combating corruption in the private sector. It is also significant to take advantage of the private sector's expertise and resources to implement the integrity supporting activities and training the private sector workers regarding corruption prevention. A good example is the Siemens initiative implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which financed the capacity building activities by investing about 5 million dollars in African, Latin American and Arab countries, including integrity-training activities in the private sector, which are being implemented in Egypt.

Monitoring the links between Corruption and other Forms of Crime, particularly transnational organized Crime:

Corruption is one of the most dangerous factors, which facilitate terrorist and criminal operations, because it allows networks of financing and money laundering to conduct such activities, through facilitating smuggling prohibited goods across borders, and causing economic and social problems, which lead to crime and terrorism. It is therefore necessary to face these challenges from a comprehensive perspective through monitoring illegal transnational money flows, as well as

identifying their origin and destination and prosecuting both the involved people and the beneficiaries for identifying the links among all such crimes and allow pursuing them in a unified manner. In this regard, we here refer to the significance of cooperation among the financial investigation units in all countries for monitoring and dismantling the terrorism funding networks in addition to the vital role to be played by central banks in those countries in monitoring such funds.

The "Covid-19" pandemic has increased the corruption

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**Dr Ghada Wali & Thomas Bach, head of the Olympic committee after signing MOU on combating sports corruption**

**The sports field witnesses effective cooperation among the Office on Drugs and Crime on the one hand and both the International Football Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee on the other hand. In addition, the "Youth for Integrity" initiative will be launched at the Conference of the Parties to be held at Sharm El-Sheikh in December 2021.**





**Dr. Ghada Wali meets with Counselor Amr Marwan, Egyptian Minister of Justice to discuss aspects of cooperation with UN**

risks, and intensified the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality, being the main factors behind corruption. In fact, some individuals resort to corrupt practices, seeking to meet their material needs, which criminal groups exploit to achieve their interests through the illegal means availed by corruption. In addition, we have witnessed new forms of corruption specifically related to the pandemic, such as corruption in the procurement of medical tools in the public health sector, as well as in the distribution of vaccines and the manufacture of counterfeit medicines. Such developments stress the importance of international cooperation against corruption for developing sustainable

frameworks for achieving coordination during the crisis and the rebuilding phase alike.

In this regard, the Conference of the Parties to be held at Sharm El-Sheikh will represent a unique opportunity, because it is the best occasion to develop an international road map for combating corruption during the coming period. The political declaration to be approved by the Conference will address corruption in the framework of crises, which can be utilized to activate the pandemic role in achieving corruption prevention. The conference will also allow following up on the important steps taken recently in connection with the international commitment regarding corruption prevention, as well as activating practical cooperation and youth participation, together with other elements, which can be grouped in a comprehensive perspective.

In this context, I would also like to point out the pivotal role of national supervisory and anti-corruption agencies in pushing international efforts forward. International endeavors will succeed if they are based on solid foundations in individual countries. Therefore, the first step for the success of international cooperation is supporting the supervisory national bodies and protecting their ability to implement their work independently, with complete freedom and in line with the principles of human rights and justice. Integrity in the world, in countries and in societies is derived from integrity in the bodies responsible for protecting them from corruption.

When supervisory bodies play their national role in developing the necessary policies for corruption prevention at all levels and in all sectors, as well as in raising institutional and societal awareness and coordinating with other national bodies, particularly accounting bodies, they contribute to achieving corruption-free societies and enhance the prospects for cross-border cooperation. Successful national mechanisms are a prerequisite for effective international cooperation.

If the international community seizes the historic opportunity represented in the year 2021, this year will be a starting point for achieving a qualitative leap in the anti-corruption efforts worldwide and in international cooperation for upholding the principles of integrity and transparency.

