

Statement on International Anti-Corruption Day 9 December 2012

In our globalised, highly interconnected world, corruption represents one of our greatest challenges. There is no country or territory untouched by this threat, which erodes democratic institutions and undermines the rule of law. UNODC's response to corruption is founded on the United Nations Convention against Corruption that was opened for signature by Member States on 9 December 2003 in Merida, Mexico. It is both a blueprint, as well as our hope for a future without corruption.

With 164 States parties, UNCAC is close to universal adherence. Calls have been made by all major fora, including the UN General Assembly, the G8 and the G20, encouraging countries that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to do so. Today, I strongly urge the international community to maintain this momentum and the remaining 30 Member States of the UN to adopt the Convention as soon as possible. However, adoption is only the first milestone. If we are to be truly successful in the fight against corruption, every State must fully implement the Convention. Anti-corruption words, must be supported by anti-corruption deeds.

To achieve these goals, UNCAC has gone further than any other Convention by creating a peer-review mechanism to achieve its successful implementation. The Review Mechanism is a global and inclusive process without marginalization or rankings.

And the need is great. Our democratic societies are rooted in the promotion of lasting social and economic development; but while corruption exists, there can be no inclusivity, no opportunity, no equality. Bribery accepted is fairness declined. It is crucial, for this reason, that States and their partners undertake every necessary measure to confront and to eliminate corruption.

UNODC is also deeply involved in building the necessary partnerships against corruption. We are leading an educational project to build anti-corruption curricula and we are working with the private sector in accordance with the 10th Principle of the UN Global Compact. This means encouraging the private sector to work in partnership with States and UNODC and invest in the areas of the world that need assistance, thereby contributing towards a stronger anti-corruption regime and competitive, but fair markets for companies to do business.

Corruption also undermines the impartial use of natural resources and the fair distribution of wealth; both within and between countries. To combat this, UNODC supports Member States in the management of natural resources through initiatives such as the pilot project on countering illegal logging in Indonesia.

On International Anti-Corruption Day, I call on everyone, in every country, on every continent, to reject corruption. We need your help to assist the millions of people whose lives are affected by corruption.

Yury Fedotov
UNODC Executive Director