

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

9 December 2012

As the international community strives to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and forge an agenda for economic and social progress in the years beyond, addressing the problem of corruption becomes all the more urgent.

The cost of corruption is measured not just in the billions of dollars of squandered or stolen government resources, but most poignantly in the absence of the hospitals, schools, clean water, roads and bridges that might have been built with that money and would have certainly changed the fortunes of families and communities.

Corruption destroys opportunities and creates rampant inequalities. It undermines human rights and good governance, stifles economic growth and distorts markets.

Corruption also aggravates environmental problems, through the illegal dumping of hazardous waste and the illegal trade in animal and plant life facilitated by bribery and under-the-table incentives that determine who is awarded contracts, especially for highly lucrative, large-scale infrastructure projects.

Preventing corruption is critical to securing the rule of law. The UN Convention against Corruption has 164 States parties, but we need universal adherence. The General Assembly's historic High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law, held in September, stressed the importance of addressing and preventing corruption. Governments must play their part – and citizens must raise their voices.

Corruption is not inevitable. It flows from greed and the triumph of the undemocratic few over the expectations of the many. On International Anti-Corruption Day, I call on everyone to work towards a sustainable future where corruption is exposed and rejected, where integrity prevails, and where the hopes and dreams of millions are realized.