



15th INTERNATIONAL
ANTI-CORRUPTION
CONFERENCE

MOBILISING PEOPLE:
CONNECTING AGENTS OF CHANGE

BRASÍLIA BRAZIL
7-10 NOVEMBER 2012

Summary of findings at the 15th International Anti-Corruption Conference

A recurring question at the IACC was whether we are any closer to ending **impunity**. The link to fragile states and weak rule of law was clear. Contributors called for administrative as well as criminal sanctions, yet stressed the need for a real threat and fear of public exposure for corruption. Situations need to be avoided where leaders hold on to power to avoid prosecution. More resources are required to train personnel, including local actors, in detecting grand corruption. It is essential to strengthen coordination of all relevant agencies, and the judiciary must be independent and well-resourced. Political finance and the increased sophistication of organized crime were also flagged as issues of global concern in weakening the fight against impunity. In all cases, political will and strong leadership were essential. Civil society pressure is also key.

Several sessions and contributions highlighted that curbing **illicit financial flows** is essential for tackling corruption, disrupting increasingly sophisticated corporate crime networks, preventing impunity of kleptocrats that plunder the public wealth of their countries and for ensuring that all participants in the economic system pay their due contributions. It was also emphasized that effectively curbing these flows requires concerted action at several levels, including targeted transparency initiatives on the information chain from beneficial ownership disclosure to sharing of taxation information. The multifaceted nature of illicit flows also requires collaboration between different agencies, different levels of governance, international cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships. Civil society the private sector engagement are all vital ingredients. More resources, more capacity-building and shared learning must underpin this joint action.

There was a strong recognition of the shared responsibilities of all jurisdictions to ensure adequate **transparency of financial systems** for the benefits of all. A clean financial system is a precious global public good that requires concerted action by many and affords important benefits to all. Yet complex international financial structures - such as anonymous shell companies registered in secrecy jurisdictions - continue to allow the corrupt to hide the funds they have stolen from their people. This conference generated concrete and simple recommendations that will cut through such opaque arrangements, including that every country in the world should have a publicly available register showing the beneficial ownership of



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the companies registered in that country, and every bank should be obliged to use these to identify the real owners of the accounts they manage.

While recognizing the legitimate role of **political lobbying** in open government, the IACC remained focused on risks of undue influence in the absence of proper regulation. Participants stressed that full transparency in lobbying public decision making bodies is the best way to ensure accountability in the decision-making process and avoid capture by vested interests. Ultimately integrity and transparency in lobbying contribute to citizen's participation in policy making and to mobilising people against corruption.

The IACC asserted that witnesses of corruption need safe havens where they can find trust, protection and expertise, allowing them to blow the whistle on corruption. Cross-border protection is essential in ending impunity. It was therefore proposed that a **whistleblower support** network could be established to more effectively connect whistleblower organizations, journalist organizations and wider civil society around the world. This should in turn connect to work of investigation units of relevant international bodies.

The **Rio+20 Conference** was a new starting point in demanding accountability in green governance, but the IACC stressed that transparency is not enough without a greater system of accountability. It was clear that a stronger public voice is needed to build up pressure for change, demanding participation of affected communities and other citizens, as well as adequate grievance mechanisms. Human rights should be the basis for regulating exploitation of the world's resources. Rigorous and independent measurement, reporting and verification procedures must be developed for deforestation and forest degradation, as well as of financial flows associated with future financing of the UN Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). Shared accountability must be embraced across all partnerships for environmental protection.

There was recognition that efforts to combat **corruption in sport** need to build public trust, and this has to start at the top through governance reform of international sports organisations. States also still need to acknowledge the seriousness of organized crime in sports. Efforts to tackle match fixing require new systems of cooperation among national sports associations, law enforcement agencies, betting regulators and players unions. Corporate sponsors must also play a greater role in pressuring for change. While new international regulatory frameworks are developing, states should consider the creation of an international



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agency to address match-fixing in sport, and strengthen trans-national regulation of the betting industry.

The IACC cautioned that development should not be equated only with economic growth, but with the overall well-being of all people. It therefore stressed the need to place governance and human rights squarely at the centre of discussions on the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** after 2015, and as cross-cutting and mutually reinforcing issues that must be mainstreamed across all future goals. The future process needs to ensure broad-based participation, but must be cost effective. National budgets should be better targeted and managed in a participatory, accountable and inclusive manner. Corruption risk assessments can be integrated as preventive tools for the achievement of MDGs in detecting loopholes and ensuring that funds are not siphoned off.

The IACC addressed the high impact of corruption in **education** on the most vulnerable citizens, and at the same time highlighted the risks related to pro-poor incentives to realize education for all. Much needs to be done in building trust to improve transparency in education, and there are good examples of how this is being done, including through shortening and simplifying resource allocation flows, engaging youth organizations in data collection on corruption practices especially at higher education level, utilizing new technologies in mapping corruption, and institutionalizing citizen platforms to facilitate exchanges between users of the system and public authorities. The importance of teaching integrity was also stressed, and the IACC recognized that much needs to be done in the advancement of anti-corruption curricula in higher education, including business schools.

The IACC continued to draw attention to the importance of **land rights** in achieving efficient economic allocation of resources, and contributing to the eradication of poverty, to political and social stability and to reducing corruption and conflict. Governments and companies must work with citizens to find tailored solutions that fit each context. The IACC highlighted the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests as a new resource for governments and other actors to address transparency and anti-corruption measures in the tenure sector.

The IACC drew attention to the importance of understanding **corruption as a human rights issue**, the potential strength in framing corruption in terms of States legally-binding human rights obligations, the importance of respecting human rights in the fight against corruption, and the need for increased engagement between the



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anti-corruption and human rights communities, including through the use of international and regional human rights mechanisms. In the context of gross human rights violations, it was recommended to further explore the possibility of grand **corruption as an international crime**. The IACC also supported new initiatives to strengthen legal enforcement of anti-corruption efforts, including the use of civil actions and public interest litigation.

Session upon session, example upon example has clearly emphasized one thing: at the heart of the struggle against corruption are **people**, as the primary victims, but also increasingly as agents of change. The power of people was most dramatically demonstrated in the geopolitical shifts that have swept through the Arab Spring and beyond, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. A reinvigorated sense that change is possible and individual citizens can make a difference has featured in many conference contributions, exemplified by the many successes that citizen pressure has achieved in pushing through institutional reforms, asserting individual rights in the face of powerful bureaucracies, or helping to disclose and punish corrupt acts.

The IACC focused on social media and a growing repertoire of **information and communication technologies** in expanding the ability of citizens to organize and mobilize, to monitor track and hold to account. Yet it has become clear that many reform agendas remain unfinished, and progress in some key areas from UNCAC to financial integrity is far from guaranteed. Further, the IACC found that citizen engagement can be difficult to sustain and target effectively, while new corrupt work-arounds and repressive measures are on the rise.

Taking citizen engagement to the next level will thus be essential for the future of fighting corruption, but it is not something that can be planned or programmed. Its organic growth can be nurtured through shared learning and cross-national solidarity, and dissemination of positive examples that serve as an inspiration for others. It can also open **new coalitions, networks and fronts for action**, from reaching out to social innovators, technology experts and community organizers to working with sports clubs, artists or urban planners to seed new u coalitions against corruption. The immense diversity of IACC participants and the many joint initiatives from Hackathons to new networks with investigative journalists bode well for this push.

The future of citizen power and the future of the fight against corruption rests upon a new generation of **young leaders** and the commitment and ingenuity that they bring to the anti-corruption struggle. Supporting a new generation of anti-corruption reformers involves a focus on education, inclusion and openness to new



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ideas. This commitment and creativity was on full display during the IACC. Young journalists, young technology activists and other youth participants have given us an insight into future fight against corruption, and the IACC believes that our future is in good hands.