



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release – 09 December 2005

# **STATEMENT**

## **On the Occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day**

OTTAWA, CANADA – On this 2<sup>nd</sup> International Anti-Corruption Day, The Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) recognizes that the fight against corruption is only beginning.

The Chair of GOPAC, John Williams, a Member of Parliament in Canada, made the following remarks.

The world is beginning to realize that corruption at the highest levels of governments is the greatest impediment to progress and development. More than half the world's population is destitute and millions of people, especially children, are needlessly dying every year from the ravages of disease and starvation. This tragedy is happening, not because we do not have the resources or the will, but from systemic corruption by people in power who steal the economic life blood out of their economies.

Corruption is a crime that steals from the poorest to pour billions of dollars into the bank accounts of the powerful who can avoid accountability. We see foreign aid given for programs such as HIV/AIDS reduction, clean water, education and health care enriching the powerful while the intended recipients die helplessly in need.

Foreign aid by itself can not address the development problems of the world. Without improved governance we will have little to show for the \$60 billion that is spent every year in development assistance.

The fight against corruption is now gaining global attention, as organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations start to develop action plans to fight corruption. The UN has introduced the UN Convention Against Corruption. Other organizations are also introducing anti corruption measures. We have anti money laundering initiatives. We have conventions against bribing foreign officials. We are starting to build on offensive against corruption.

Parliaments have a major role to play in fighting corruption. In healthy democracies, parliaments have the responsibility of supervising their governments. Parliaments are supposed to hold their governments accountable, but when they fail in their responsibilities or work in collusion with their governments to rape their economies, economic failure results.

GOPAC is an organization of parliamentarians committed to fighting corruption by making our institutions – parliaments – work better in their oversight of governments. We support those who are in danger because they are speaking out and tackling corruption head on. We recognize the need for education of parliamentarians in order for them to perform properly, and we also recognize that talk is not sufficient, but that we have a responsibility to take action to reduce and eliminate corruption in ourselves and in our governments.

On this International Anti-corruption Day, the Board and Executive of GOPAC encourage all, especially parliamentarians, who have the opportunity to stand up against corruption to do so.

-30-

Ce communiqué est disponible en français

For more information:  
Office of the Chair of GOPAC  
613-996-4722  
[www.gopacnetwork.org](http://www.gopacnetwork.org)