

GOPAC DECLARATION ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION (UNCAC)

OTTAWA, CANADA – The Chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) John Williams, M.P., on behalf of the GOPAC Board of Directors, is pleased to issue the following declaration:

We, the more than 250 parliamentarians of GOPAC, coming from all continents and 72 countries, both large and small, and in every stage of development,

AWARE of the growing incidence of corruption and its disastrous effects in undermining the moral fabric of society, in reducing economic well-being and basic social services, and in weakening democratic self-government,

BELIEVING STRONGLY that parliamentarians can be an effective force in reducing corruption by engaging and educating citizens, by enacting effective laws, by working with the executive to ensure effective implementation, and in cooperating with colleagues in other countries to ensure access to the experiences and lessons in combating corruption,

AFTER having established the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and its several regional chapters to assist parliamentarians everywhere in fighting corruption,

NOW JOIN TOGETHER with others in supporting the UN Convention Against Corruption, while recognizing that many features of the Convention are not as strong as we would wish, but nonetheless a very important step forward, and

CALLING UPON PARLIAMENTARIANS around the world to work with their colleagues in GOPAC and in the executive branch of governments to ratify and effectively implement this Convention, to monitor its impact on corruption, and to seek to improve its provisions by taking the following steps:

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL to support the ratification and implementation of the Convention and the monitoring of its effectiveness, with particular attention to the:

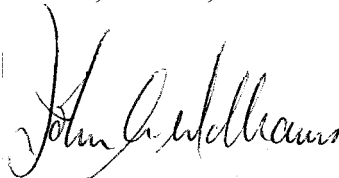
- scope of corruption and public officials covered,
- balance and complementarity between prevention and criminalization measures within their countries and cultures;

- balance between the precedence of international cooperation and domestic law;
- provisions for money laundering and international asset recovery mechanisms in view of their importance and complexity and the cost of the proposed procedures to seek to recover assets;
- mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on corruption, as well as parliament oversight;
- importance of the funding of political parties; and

AT THE GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS to support the world-wide implementation and monitoring by parliamentarians by working with GOPAC and its regional chapters to:

- support the briefing and training of parliamentarians on the nature of corruption, its incidence and impacts, and the mechanisms and tools available to parliamentarians to combat corruption,
- track implementation and effectiveness as observed by parliamentarians in their countries as well as the effective functioning of associated international mechanisms and report publicly each year to the UN on implementation and its effectiveness,
- share lessons and experiences and make these available to colleagues;
- examine the potential for corruption to be treated a crime against humanity in view of its extraordinary negative impact on large numbers of people; and
- participate actively on the UN mechanisms to oversee the implementation of this convention.

Ottawa, Canada, the 8th of December, 2003



John Williams, M.P.

Chair, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)

For more information, please contact Mr. Garry Keller – 613.996.4722.