



World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz Video Address
GOPAC Global Conference
Arusha, Tanzania
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Let me first thank your chairman, John Williams, both for the invitation to speak and for briefing me on GOPAC and its work when we met last February. I am delighted to learn of your important work in promoting good governance and combating corruption.

Since I joined the World Bank a more than a year ago, I have traveled to nearly 30 countries, including Tanzania. In those travels, I have heard one consistent message from people of every culture, every economic background, and every religious affiliation. People need opportunity, and they want a better future for their children.

My experience in government has taught me that if nations are to develop, and if people are to receive the opportunities they need to improve their livelihoods, they need effective governments. They need parliaments that amplify their voices in the halls of government. An effective parliament ensures that a mother caring for an infant struck by malaria or a young graduate who demands a job are both heard.

We also know that corruption can stand in the way of opportunity. It drains resources that would otherwise be used to build roads so poor farmers can deliver fresh produce to market, or fund schools so the 100 million children out of school can enter the classroom for the first time. A nation weakened by rampant corruption cannot develop.

When I joined the World Bank Group last year, I was pleased to learn that the Bank, too, recognizes the importance of parliaments in development and fighting corruption.

I was delighted to further find a group of parliamentarians of all nationalities and from all regions who share the Bank Group's vision of strong, accountable parliaments and commitment to fight corruption.

The Bank has been stepping up its efforts to work in partnership with parliaments. At the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and IMF in Singapore this week, we released an enhanced governance and anticorruption strategy that recognizes the prominent role of parliaments.

In that strategy, we pledge to cooperate more closely with parliaments in our partner countries and with other development partners to ensure that parliaments have the tools and resources they need to meet their constitutional responsibilities.

Different constitutions may prescribe different responsibilities, but there are two functions that are universal. One is getting the right laws in place. The second is ensuring they are enforced. We believe both are essential for good governance, for combating corruption, and for development itself.

As you meet in Arusha to consider what parliaments can do in the struggle against the disease of corruption, one place to begin is the legal framework. Are acts like bribery and bid rigging crimes? Do the punishments match the severity of the offenses? Do prosecutors have the tools to bring corrupt companies and those they corrupt to justice?

John tells me that GOPAC has endorsed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). This is great news: the convention offers a detailed roadmap for laws that can help countries fight corruption.

The Bank recommends that all its partner countries ratify it. We are working with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes and other partners to provide whatever technical help parties need to comply with their obligations under the convention.

I am also pleased to note that GOPAC is collaborating with the World Bank in the global effort on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism. Corruption, as you know, is a predicate crime under anti-money laundering laws, and I commend GOPAC for its vital role in supporting laws and institutions that instill financial integrity.

For reasons this audience knows well, executives often shy away from stringent enforcement of anticorruption laws. And this is Parliament's second critical role: To apply all the oversight tools at its command—ministerial questions, committee hearings and reports, budget amendments, floor debates—so that the executive does not succumb to pressure and compromise on enforcement.

The Bank and other international development partners are prepared to assist you in a variety of ways to ensure effective oversight.

Let me close by pledging our unwavering support for your work. We seek to build a strong partnership with GOPAC on a shared commitment to fight corruption. I look forward to learning the outcome of your dialogue in Arusha.

Thank you.