

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, the UNCAC is the only global instrument to address corruption in a comprehensive manner. It is also the only instrument that has a full chapter on preventive measures. If implemented properly and honestly, the UNCAC has the capacity to truly help development efforts since it is the poor and the marginalized who will benefit most from the proper use of public funds. Imagine how education and health services aimed at the poor will improve if only 50% of money paid in bribes or looted by corrupt leaders and officials can be saved by proper preventive measures (TI estimates that \$390 billion were paid in bribes in 2007). We keep complaining and regretting how things went bad while little is being done to fix public management and public finances. Look at what happened in the global financial market as a result of the lack of transparency, monitoring and proper management. The rise of the price of oil a few months ago as a result of the greed of some speculators has probably done more damage to the poor around the world than any other single event in recent history. Thus the call to reinforce cooperation between different stakeholders cannot be more accurate at this moment in time.

Three years after its entry into force, there is almost unanimous agreement among UNCAC parties that the focus on prevention of corruption might be the way forward. Those of you who have attended the second COSP in Bali, Indonesia can testify to this from the overwhelming support that my proposal to submit a draft resolution on prevention to the third COSP in Doha has received from nearly all the delegations who attended the final session.

Let me know point to some elements of the Preventive Measures chapter of UNCAC that I think are detrimental to sustainable development efforts;

1. If the financial system of a country is loose and corrupt leaders and officials transfer millions and billions of dollars to their private accounts inside or outside their territory, the whole country will have to pay dearly to recover only fractions of that money.
2. If the public procurement system is weak and lacks transparency and competitiveness, corrupt officials can simply use that system to their advantage, resulting in misuse of public funds and squandering tax-payers money.
3. If the recruitment system to public offices in a country is not merit-based, citizens have to pay bribes and provide favors to employment officers, which hurts the poor on the one hand, and results in inefficient and ill-equipped civil service that will hamper the economy and development of that country in the long run, on the other hand.
4. When public administration of a country is not transparent and properly streamlined, decisions affecting everyday life of citizens cannot be checked properly by the public, resulting in biased and expensive decisions.

5. If the judiciary in a country is not independent and not known for its integrity, imagine what price that country has to pay, materially, morally and financially when ruling on economic and corruption matters.
6. If the private sector in a country is corrupt and escapes civil, administrative and criminal penalties due to its strong links and relations to corrupt leaders and public officials imagine how the future of that country will look like and what price the consumers, especially the poor, have to pay.
7. If civil society and the media in a country are not free to act and monitor the work of the government, and if the public is not properly informed and educated about how and why decisions are made, corruption cannot be prevented and fought in any significant manner, consequently the country and its citizens will have to pay dearly in the future, if not immediately.

Having said that, I will leave it to our distinguished panelists to elaborate and expand on these issues and I am sure that their presentations and your comments will help us develop a roadmap for proper prevention of corruption that is based on strong and effective public-private-civil society coalitions.