

**Committee of Experts on Public Administration
Twenty-third session, New York, 15-19 April 2024**

“New governance insights to advance the SDGs and eradicate poverty”

**Written statement by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),
Corruption and Economic Crime Branch**

Item 11. Dedicated consultation with observers

1. This written submission aims to provide highlights of recent efforts led by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in supporting States parties and other stakeholders to uphold standards enshrined in the Convention, as such efforts relate to the programme of work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration for its twenty-third session.

1. Addressing the negative impact of corruption on achieving the SDGs: An overview of UNODC’s anti-corruption work

2. 2023 marked the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) by the General Assembly. As the world’s first and only legally binding anti-corruption instrument, UNCAC enjoys near universal adherence by governments, with 190 parties. In the preamble to the Convention, Member States expressed concern about the seriousness of problems and threats posed by corruption to the stability and security of societies, undermining the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law.
3. In the political declaration adopted by the General Assembly in June 2021, Member States expressed their concern “about the negative impact that all forms of corruption, including the solicitation of undue advantages, can have on access to basic services and the enjoyment of all human rights”, and recognized “that it can exacerbate poverty and inequality and may disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged individuals in society”. They further pledged to “step up [their] efforts to promote and effectively implement [their] anti-corruption obligations and robust commitments under the international anti-corruption architecture”.
4. The Conference of the States Parties to the Convention held its tenth session from 11 to 15 December 2023 in Atlanta, USA, where it adopted twelve resolutions on a wide range of topics: promotion of integrity, accountability and transparency in the fight against corruption; implementation of UNCAC in small island developing States; prevention of corruption; beneficial ownership transparency; measures to address corruption involving organized criminal groups; international cooperation in civil and administrative proceedings; protection of reporting persons; public procurement; societal aspects of corruption; measuring corruption and the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks; corruption during times of emergencies and crisis response and recovery; and incentives for the private sector. The Conference also adopted two decisions, including on the extension of the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention until June 2026.

5. UNODC has supported the establishment of nine regional platforms to fast-track UNCAC implementation across the world so far, covering 70 countries. Regional platforms have been established in the Caribbean, Central America, East Africa, Southern Africa, South America and Mexico, South Asia, South-East Asia, West Africa and the Sahel as well as the Western Balkans. To facilitate the delivery of technical assistance, three UNODC regional anti-corruption hubs in Kenya, Mexico and Thailand and two subregional hubs in Colombia and South Africa were established.
6. Facilitating international cooperation is a core purpose of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. To this end, the Global Operational Network of Law Enforcement Authorities (Globe Network) was established in 2021 under the auspices of UNODC to facilitate informal cooperation and address the lack of a truly global network for anti-corruption law enforcement authorities. As of 5 April 2024, the Globe Network includes 200 authorities from 113 countries.

2. Institutions, climate action and environment (Item 5)

7. UNODC has developed a series of publications offering tailored guidance on managing corruption risks within authorities mandated to manage wildlife, fisheries and forest resources. UNODC has also been supporting authorities mandated to manage natural resources in strengthening their operational frameworks against corruption by implementing corruption risk management processes. These processes have initiated and accelerated the use of crucial anti-corruption tools within these institutions, including complaint intake and corruption reporting systems, codes of conduct, and operating procedures for issuing licenses and permits.
8. In Mozambique, UNODC supported the development of a code of conduct and a corruption prevention policy for the National Agency for Environmental Quality Control as part of the corruption risk management processes. In Bolivia, UNODC is supporting the Protected Areas Service to increase awareness of the role of corruption among rangers through an integrity essay contest. In the Solomon Islands, UNODC supports the Environment and Conservation Division to educate business traders on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) permit requirements and procedures.
9. UNODC is also collaborating with several partners to raise awareness of the impact of corruption on mitigation and adaptation initiatives intended to reduce climate change. The aim is to integrate anti-corruption considerations into the international climate policy agenda by highlighting the necessity to tackle corruption to reach international climate goals. UNODC, together with the World Bank, recently published a discussion document addressing the links between corruption and the response to climate change, highlighting corruption risks emerging from increased energy demand and the under-regulated carbon markets.

3. Principles of effective governance for sustainable development (Item 6)

10. In its resolution 9/2, the Conference requested UNODC, as the lead entity in the United Nations system on countering corruption, to continue coordination and cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the wider United Nations system to foster anti-corruption measures that enable the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to incorporate anti-corruption measures in the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

11. Greater accountability can significantly increase transparency. For this reason, UNODC works with countries to strengthen whistle-blower protection frameworks and systems for reporting, partnering with civil society, sports organizations and journalists to raise awareness of corruption risks and monitor key processes such as procurement, and supporting youth engagement and ensuring business integrity are integral components of our global anti-corruption programme that can and does have a significant impact on sustainable development:
 - a. Advancing the inclusion of youth in anti-corruption efforts and strengthening anti-corruption, integrity and ethics education worldwide and youth empowerment continues to be a priority of UNODC's Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment (GRACE) initiative, with the launch of two publications: the "Acting for the Rule of Law" Theatre Guide, and the "Policy Guide for National Anti-Corruption Authorities on Meaningful Youth Engagement in Anti-corruption Work".
 - b. UNODC undertakes work on research, capacity-building, and the development of knowledge to combat corruption in sport, particularly in relation to manipulating sports competitions. This includes the recent development of practical guides on the investigation and prosecution of competition manipulation and tackling bribery in sport.
 - c. UNODC also enhances the capacity of the private sector to prevent and counter corruption in 17 beneficiary countries globally by strengthening legal frameworks, fostering public-private partnerships and collective action, strengthening internal corruption prevention capacities of companies and educating future business leaders about anti-corruption and integrity.

4. Public financial management (Item 8)

12. One of the main purposes of UNCAC is to "promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property". As the guardian of the Convention, UNODC supports States parties in implementing article 9 on public procurement and the management of public finances.
13. UNODC supports the efforts of the States parties to UNCAC to promote good public financial management and to establish procurement systems, based on the principles of transparency, competition and objective criteria in decision-making. To that end, UNODC has supported the capacity of procurement authorities and anti-corruption bodies to detect and prevent corruption and fraud in procurement, also in the context of the above-mentioned corruption risk management process. That support includes training delivery and developing tools to be further used by governments and civil society to enhance the integrity of public financial management and procurement processes. As government procurement accounts for a significant percentage of GDP around the world, procurement is an area where anti-corruption improvements can have a significant impact, resulting in the transparent and effective use of public resources across all sectors.
14. UNODC also promotes the role of supreme audit institutions in the prevention of and fight against corruption and supports the strengthening of their collaboration with other anti-corruption bodies and stakeholders, publishing the Practical Guide on Enhancing Collaboration between Supreme Audit Institutions and Anti-Corruption Bodies. Following its publication, UNODC delivered a series of regional workshops that fostered collaboration among supreme audit institutions and anti-corruption bodies across member countries of each of the seven regional organizations of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions.

5. Digital government (Item 9)

15. In its resolution 10/9, the Conference highlighted the use of technology as a means of preventing and countering corruption, and encouraged States parties to adopt digital policies, where appropriate and consistent with their domestic legal system to promote transparency and public reporting in areas such as public procurement, the management of public finances and asset and interest disclosure with a view to facilitating the reporting and detecting of acts of corruption in public procurement and in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration and international cooperation, as well as enhance accountability, transparency, integrity and public participation.
16. In the field of digital government, UNODC has focused on enhancing public procurement and beneficial ownership transparency by supporting countries in developing electronic systems, improving data collection and quality, and facilitating the sharing of such information to inform anti-corruption efforts across national institutions.
17. Since 2021, UNODC has worked in cooperation with Open Contracting Partnership to support data-driven, multi-stakeholder procurement reforms, reaching 30 jurisdictions around the world.
18. UNODC has similarly had a long-term cooperation agreement with Open Ownership since 2022, providing in-depth support to countries on the design of beneficial ownership registries, data use and verification, as well as supporting emerging research on how beneficial ownership information may be used in different sectors and the development of new tech-based tools. UNODC's strategic approach to beneficial ownership transparency is to outline how such data may be used to achieve anti-corruption objectives, including as a preventive measure in the field of procurement and in the identification and management of conflicts of interest, as an integral part of investigations and for international cooperation (to share and verify beneficial ownership information) and asset recovery purposes.

6. Institution-building in fragile and conflict-affected areas (Item 10)

19. In the aforementioned resolution 9/2, the Conference requested UNODC to increase coordination and cooperation with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the Secretariat with a view to strengthening the rule of law and anti-corruption measures in United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. To this end, UNODC has been working closely with DPPA, DPO and other partners to finalize joint guidance for the United Nations on engaging strategically to address corruption in conflict-affected and fragile settings, including through internal and external consultations. The guidance will emphasize the role of anti-corruption tools and approaches that can contribute to institution-building in these complex environments.
20. UNODC has been providing tailored technical assistance to national authorities in fragile settings, at their request, including in capacity-building and skill development in the past year:
 - a. In Ukraine, by bolstering the anti-corruption capacity and expertise of the National Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development and delivered the first of a series of trainings on financial investigations and asset recovery for investigators and analysts of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau.
 - b. In Haiti, by supporting criminal justice actors in combating illicit financial flows by strengthening their capacity to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of corruption and economic crimes, while improving international cooperation and information-sharing with foreign investigators.