

Joint statement by the high-level segment of the 18th International Anti-Corruption Conference, 22 October, 2018 in Copenhagen

1. We, the endorsing Ministers, high-ranking government officials, business leaders and leaders of international and regional organisations, met in Copenhagen on the **first day of the 18th IACC** at the invitation of the Danish government to: take stock of recent progress in fighting corruption in our respective countries and national and international organisations, to share our experiences and lessons learnt; and to discuss ways forward in our continued joint and individual efforts to fight corruption in its multiple manifestations at all levels;
2. **The 2030 Agenda** is an ambitious and comprehensive plan of action for people, the planet, prosperity and peace. The 2030 Agenda reflects our collective view that rule of law, equal access to justice for all, and capable, accountable public institutions together are a precondition for sustainable development. We share the conviction that corruption is a major challenge to peace and development and that corruption impedes the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. We want to highlight that long term, systemic and comprehensive anti-corruption efforts at local, national and international levels continue to be critical for progress;
3. **Corruption must be prevented, investigated, prosecuted, penalized and driven out.** A multitude of factors that may be linked to corruption must be addressed, including: tax evasion, money laundering, illicit financial flows from the proceeds of crime, and safe havens. A core focus must be on asset recovery: corruption must be remediated through the transparent and accountable recovery and return of assets. Large-scale corruption in political spheres, the public sector and private businesses is particularly detrimental to sustainable development, international security and human rights. Solutions may have political, legal, institutional, technological and ethical aspects on the national as well as the international level;
4. We acknowledge that the flow of proceeds of corruption can disturb the international economic and financial order and undermine rule of law and social justice. We acknowledge the difficulties of recovering assets from the proceeds of corruption that are outside the jurisdiction of the country affected by the acts of corruption. We commit to working together against corruption and supporting measures to **deny safe havens** to corrupt actors and their proceeds of corruption. We are committed to strengthening law enforcement cooperation against corruption, consistent with the UN Convention Against Corruption (the UNCAC). We reiterate that the return of assets is an important principle of the UNCAC and we call on States to provide extensive cooperation and assistance in these processes in a cost effective manner. We will also continue efforts aimed at the confiscation and recovery of corruption proceeds, while maintaining our commitment to due process, consistent with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
5. We appreciate the growing global commitment from all sectors of society to building **open, effective, and accountable institutions for inclusive growth and development** and that SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is integral to this. The UNCAC and other legal instruments are essential to fight corruption. The G20s efforts to fight corruption are welcome. At local and international levels, we will strive to measure and monitor the levels and types of corruption to provide reliable evidence to inform country-specific policy solutions and track progress on SDG 16;

6. Implementation at greater pace is now urgently required. Enforcement of anti-corruption measures will require sustained work by monitoring bodies that have a role to promote and review the implementation of anti-corruption instruments. **Implementation by national governments** is critical. They must put in place the necessary legislation, policies, and institutions to implement these commitments, enforce and apply their laws, and ensure non-government actors can advocate for and support these efforts. We call on all State Parties to criminalize the bribery of domestic and foreign public officials, consistent with the UNCAC, the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and other relevant regional agreements to which we may be parties.
7. We reiterate that combating corruption is a **shared responsibility** of both developing and developed countries and that public, private, and civil-society actors all have a role to play. We call on all private and public sector actors, as well as civil society, media and academia, to expand and strengthen collective action, create new alliances, and search for innovative joint solutions to the shared challenges. We will create or use opportunities to facilitate such action and share good practice on anti-corruption partnerships across countries, sectors, and actors. The media has a distinct and critical role to play. We stress that access to information, a vibrant and independent media, civil society and public participation in decision-making are vital elements in the fight against corruption;
8. Corruption transcends borders and **international cooperation** is an essential prerequisite for success in the fight against corruption. Coordinated action in different jurisdictions is needed to fight corruption, as corruption challenges are interlinked;
9. We stress the importance of **increased international financial and technical support** for anti-corruption efforts, particularly in developing and middle-income countries. This can include: sharing good practice and peer support, providing technical and financial support to countries. This will be enhanced when there is stronger cooperation and collective action between national and international anti-corruption and development efforts;
10. We acknowledge that there is a particularly urgent need to work with **fragile and conflict-affected states** to find new and strategic ways of combating corruption as the poor and vulnerable in these countries are often the most affected by corruption;
11. We also acknowledge **the correlation between poor governance and the rise of violent extremism** in both developed and developing countries; and we call on countries to include the fight against corruption in their National Action Plans on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, as recommended by the UN Secretary General;
12. We acknowledge that effective **ethical leadership** is a key catalyst for change and that as political leaders, senior governmental officials, civil society leaders, regional representatives, leaders of multilateral organisations and business leaders, we have a responsibility to change norms and expectations, not only through the design and execution of public and corporate policies, but also through our leadership example;
13. We acknowledge that anti-corruption measures are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda to promote **sustainable development and growth**. We acknowledge that corruption can undermine social trust in all societies, and that public authorities and private actors each have essential roles to play in developing a transparent environment free from corruption, levelling the playing field for all. We believe this will help to attract investment, sustain long-term development

growth, and build citizens' confidence and trust. The interfaces between the public and private sectors include customs, business licensing, public procurement and land acquisition. We will also endeavor to encourage regulatory and legislative actions to benefit the many, rather than the few, to support efforts to create sustainable development and growth

14. **Tax evasion** undermines domestic resource mobilisation and sustainable development and disadvantages the law-abiding. We support decisive action against tax evasion and actions to explore coordination between anti-corruption and tax enforcement activities.
15. We acknowledge that shell companies can facilitate corruption and we welcome measures that improve **transparency in the beneficial ownership of companies**, consistent with the principles of the Financial Action Task Force on combating money laundering and terrorist financing (FATF). We encourage all countries to prepare adequate laws and enforce these, and ensure that competent authorities have access to adequate, accurate, and timely beneficial ownership information. We commit to exploring ways to improve the implementation of the FATF guidance on beneficial ownership, which may include public registries.
16. We encourage cross-border collaboration to **prevent the laundering of the proceeds of corruption** as well as agency-to-agency cooperation and mutual legal assistance to facilitate more systematic and timely detection, investigation, and prosecution of stolen assets with a view to recovering them in line with Chapter V of UNCAC. We further encourage countries to share good practices and case experience and provide technical assistance to facilitate the transparent and accountable **return of recovered stolen assets**, consistent with Chapter V of UNCAC.
17. We acknowledge that **small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) constitute a growing majority of companies in many countries and are a critical component of the global supply chain; and we consider it important to address corruption-related challenges that prevent SMEs from thriving and becoming competitive, domestically and globally. We realise that especially smaller companies all over the world feel the pressure to take greater risks in entering new markets and competing for business, while having fewer resources to implement robust internal controls. We will support initiatives that provide SMEs with the tools and resources they need to act with integrity;
18. We acknowledge that **state-owned enterprises** (SOEs) often play critical roles in developing, protecting and managing many nations' wealth and essential services. We also recognise that SOEs may have specific vulnerabilities arising from their status and governance structures, the scale of assets they control, the considerable value of the public contracts they award, and the challenges of the markets and sectors in which they operate. We will act or support appropriate action to ensure that SOEs follow integrity standards, including those recently developed by the G20;
19. We believe that **the 2030 Agenda, including the 17 SDGs**, constitutes a framework of positive opportunities for both the public and private sectors to engage in sustainable development. We encourage the private sector to engage on the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 16, and we encourage companies to consider a standardized system based on common norms and standards to report on their performance and operations. We also call on the private sector, especially the financial sector, to be proactively engaged in support of the efforts of countries to prevent and fight corruption and the efforts of the international community to promote and strengthen the implementation of anti-corruption measures and agreements, including the UNCAC;

20. We appreciate that **new and innovative technologies**, such as e-governance, block chains and artificial intelligence, and commitments such as open data, all have created a new frontier for greater transparency and accountability and have the potential to accelerate and revolutionize anti-corruption efforts. Technological innovations are potential enablers of trust and integrity. We will promote or support multilateral initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership that aim to enhance civil society, business and government cooperation, increase public participation and harness new technologies to enhance transparency and accountability.
21. We underline the importance of transparency in **public contracting**, specifically when relating to the description of the process for transferring or awarding a license, in compliance with applicable laws and the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative Standard. Building better data infrastructure is a critical enabler of transparency in public contracting and we will support initiatives that empower people and institutions to collect, analyse and use relevant and reliable data;
22. We acknowledge the important role that **civil society and media** play in exposing and confronting corruption and engaging citizens to create inclusive, participatory and accountable societies, and we note with concern the challenges for civil society and journalists to engage in efforts to uncover and fight corruption. We call on governments to protect civil society and media and ensure there is not only increasing transparency and access to public data but also expanded emphasis on data literacy and data protection regulation. We also acknowledge the importance of protecting **whistle-blowers** both in the private and public sector, and the role they may play in revealing corruption and other integrity violations;
23. To ensure that women do not suffer disproportionately from corruption, we emphasize **gender equality** and the empowerment of all women and girls to ensure equal rights in accordance with SDG 5;
24. We welcome the **national and organisational statements** by the participants in the High-Level Segment, including the commitments and steps to ensure that intentions expressed in joint and individual statements are translated into concrete outcomes. In this context, we acknowledge and welcome the anti-corruption commitments made in various fora, domestic as well as international, and call for their effective implementation. We will enhance our focus on such implementation to achieve results, without losing sight of the ever-changing challenges that require new solutions, the rethinking of strategies, and new alliances and partnerships;
25. We encourage countries to **effectively implement their existing international anti-corruption obligations**, including under UNCAC and other relevant legal instruments, and to support transparent review processes. We welcome civil society monitoring efforts to hold governments accountable to implement commitments made under relevant anti-corruption conventions and political fora, including the High-Level Segment of IACC 2018. This could also build on final reports and active participation in the in-depth review of SDG 16 at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019. We also welcome parties' efforts to use Open Government Partnership National Action Plans to embed relevant commitments in implementation plans and to report on progress to enhance accountability for implementation of commitments made at this global forum;

26. We acknowledge **the importance of continuity** and sustained emphasis on preventing and combating corruption among decision-makers in all sectors. We welcome the intention of Transparency International and the next host of the IACC, Republic of South Korea to follow the example of Denmark and plan for a high-level segment. This high-level segment will allow for the follow up on intentions and commitments in this joint statement and the complementary national and organisational statements.