

**14th INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE
RESTORING TRUST: GLOBAL ACTION FOR TRANSPARENCY**

Long plenary report

Plenary title:

Closing Plenary - Restoring Trust: Global Action for Transparency

Date and time:

Saturday 13th November, 16:00-18:00

Moderator: (name, position and organisation)

Andrea Mott, Broadcast Journalist

Panellists: (name, position and organisation)

Jorge Hage Sobrinho, Minister, Brazilian Office of the Comptroller General
Georg Kell, Executive Director, UN Global Compact
Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General, CIVICUS
Robert Greenhill, Chief Business Officer, World Economic Forum
Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and the Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economics at Oxford University
Dmitri Vlassis, Chief of the Corruption and Economic Branch, UNODC
Elena Panfilova, Executive Director, TI Russia
Cobus de Swardt, Managing Director, Transparency International

Rapporteur: (name, position and organisation)

Suzanne Mulcahy, Transparency International Secretariat

After four days of discussions and deliberations on every conceivable aspect of corruption, the closing plenary of the 14th IACC provided an opportunity for final reflections on the theme of the conference, '*Restoring Trust: Global Action for Transparency*' and a chance to look to the future of the anti-corruption fight. It provided a space for contributors from various sectors - civil society, international organizations, academia and the private and public sectors - to reflect on the current state of play and to map out and assess emerging trends and future scenarios in the fight against corruption.

Reflections on the current state of play in the fight against corruption brought many positive achievements to the fore. **Cobus de Swardt, Managing Director, Transparency International** gave a historical overview of the anti-corruption movement and noted that it had moved from awareness-raising in the 1990s to the stage of engaging citizens more fully in the fight, a priority for the movement today. He reflected on the IACC conference as a microcosm of the state of affairs in the anti-corruption fight. He noted that the 14th IACC demonstrated a more unified anti-corruption community across sectors and issues in contrast to other global issues where we see increased fragmentation and convergence to lowest common denominator solutions. He identified a substantial increase in the level of expertise – more technically detailed, strategically positioned and with a significant push towards empowering

people. He also emphasised the need for a dramatic increase in resources noting that the total investment in corruption fighting is dwarfed even by a single public works project in a medium-sized city. He commented that 'if we are serious about addressing corruption, we need to commit serious resources to the struggle against it'. This requires convincing stakeholders of the 'good governance dividend' that such an investment has been shown to achieve.

The panel agreed that never before have we seen so much attention on corruption-related issues and indeed never before have we seen so much analysis of the various inter-linkages of what corruption creates and feeds on. **Georg Kell, Executive Director of UN Global Compact** commented that the G20 outcomes of recent days had shown that governments are also increasingly sensitized to anti-corruption.

However as **Elena Panfilova, Executive Director of TI Russia** aptly noted, 'while commitments are growing, corruption is growing in parallel'. She attributed this seemingly contradictory trend to the anti-corruption fight becoming 'too political', allowing governments to use international commitments as a pretence for real action against corruption. This pretence, she observed, also fuels further mistrust among citizens. The need to make 'the transition from declaration to action, from words to deeds' in order to stem public apathy in the fight against corruption was echoed by **Dmitri Vlassis, Chief of the Corruption and Economic Branch, UNODC**.

Among the other challenges facing the anti-corruption community and all social activists is what **Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General of CIVICUS**, an international alliance of civil society organisations, called the 'systemic closing of the space for civil society'. In 2009 alone CIVICUS tracked 100 different legal changes in 75 countries that had the effect of narrowing civil society space. The growing 'intolerance for dissent' makes the task of fighting corruption all the more challenging.

Jorge Hage Sobrinho, Minister, Brazilian Office of the Comptroller General, gave a government perspective on the fight against corruption thus far and the challenges ahead. He spoke of successes in increasing transparency in the areas of public accounts, expenditures, procurement and stimulus for citizen participation and social control. He noted however that there are continued difficulties in the Brazilian context to convince other authorities that it is worth while to open up knowledge about the public accounts. There is a political price to be paid but he said the message to communicate to other public agencies is that transparency in public accounts immediately achieves a reduction of the irregularities and it creates a stimulus for citizen participation.

Robert Greenhill, Chief Business Officer, World Economic Forum identified the 'systematic decline in levels of social trust as major challenge in the anti-corruption fight'. Ironically, he said, this comes at a time when there is a growing recognition of the value of trust. He cited Switzerland, Sweden and Singapore as countries which have been shown to have high levels of trust and low levels of perceived corruption. He also emphasized global trends which are changing the context in which we work. In particular, he commented that ten years ago the majority of global growth was occurring in the countries which rested in the top-25 countries in terms of perceived lowest levels of perceived corruption. This is no longer the case and from a private sector perspective, this changing context means that if a company wants to do business on a global scale, they will have to engage on corruption and anti-corruption issues.

Paul Collier, Professor of Economics and the Director of the Centre for the Study of Africa Oxford University, focused on the trend of the rising price of natural resources and the implications that this has for developing and developed countries. He hoped that history

would not repeat itself in terms of resource curses in the developing world but noted that the battle against corruption will be central to avoiding history repeating itself. He posited that avoiding repetition of history starts with rebuilding ethics. Crucially, he noted, 'there is no substitute for building a critical mass of informed citizens, who understand what is at stake and what the key decisions are to avoid history repeating itself'.

Looking to the future, for the anti-corruption community to make progress, Elena Panfilova argued that there is a need to keep up as 'corruption unfolds its different faces'. She referred to the 'non-traditional forms of corruption' - corrupt extortion and state capture – which she sees as significant global problems yet to be adequately addressed by the anti-corruption community. She also expressed concern about the double-standards in the treatment of kleptocrats in her own country, Russia. She cited prosecutions of companies and bribe-givers (usually low or mid-level public servants) but noted that when it comes to the big time grand corruption, bribe-takers have impunity. She posited that this issue of impunity should now be the priority for corruption fighters globally.

Another message which emerged was the importance of engaging more fully with the private sector. One of the key challenges identified by Georg Kell was that markets still have not internalised the idea of punishing negative aspects (corruption) and rewarding positive aspects (anti-corruption measures and disclosure) in relation to companies. He emphasised the continued short-term perspectives of financial markets. He suggested that including investors in such conferences as the IACC may raise awareness among them of anti-corruption issues.

The panel agreed that one of the keys to strengthening the impact of the fight against corruption is to engage the youth. Here the general consensus was that removing barriers to participation and using the younger generation's clear advantage in new technologies has potential for success. As part of the 14th IACC 'Youth Challenge', in the lead up to the conference, young people were invited to submit questions and recommendations via online videos 'to tell the people in power what really matters when it comes to fighting corruption'. The winner of the youth challenge was Ms. Nghiem Thi Loan of the Foreign Trade University, Ha Noi and her video was screened in front of the closing plenary. Her question to the panel was 'How can you engage the next generation in the fight against corruption?'. The responses from the panellists were diverse and covered a range of interesting perspectives and ideas.

Jorge Hage Sobrinho, Minister, Brazilian Office of the Comptroller General, outlined a number of initiatives to engage the youth that were already taking place in the Brazilian context and was particularly interested in the power of social media and new technologies to engage the young generation. Georg Kell of UN Global Compact urged Ms. Nghiem Thi to 'stay a child as long as possible and maintain your sense of justice and fairness'. He suggested that if we all retained 'the sense of right and wrong' that we have as children, the world would be a better place. Ingrid Srinath of CIVICUS responded by urging the youth 'to seize the anti-corruption fight' and struggles for social justice and to claim the power themselves. She reminded the audience that young people can bring new perspectives, hope and crucially, that they lack the baggage that adults have! Robert Greenhill of the World Economic Forum highlighted the crucial point of giving voice to the youth and listening carefully to what they have to say. Paul Colliers pointed out that when it comes to the natural resources which have been plundered by this and previous generations, time is running out. He noted that young people are increasingly becoming aware that they have been robbed of these resources and are becoming angry about this, thus feeling compelled to join the anti-corruption fight. He argued that young people have a huge advantage in that 'they know technology'. For the anti-corruption movement to engage the youth, we need to harness that advantage which 'can rip through the six degrees of separation to connect anyone on earth to another'. Cobus de Swardt commended all of the suggestions for engagement but added a note of caution to

beware 'not to patronise' when we try to empower. For Dmitri Vlassis the key to engage the youth is to 'invest in education', embedding in the curricula ethics on transparency and anti-corruption and working with law schools and business schools to embed these values into those being trained to enter the private sector. Elena Panfilova agreed fully on the important of education. She also emphasised the 'need to invest in our own behaviour', namely '*not to lie to them* (don't promise and not deliver); *to listen to them* and to their brilliant ideas; *to challenge them* and remind them that nobody but them can do this and finally to *protect them* from the evil forces they want to fight with'.

The plenary discussion provoked questions from the floor on a number of issues, including the role of gender in the anti-corruption fight, the role of youth and particularly how to engage them in the fight against corruption, connections between corruption, development and poverty, the role of parliaments in fighting corruption. Further discussion was provoked about party political financing and UNCAC implementation. Questions about the definition of corruption were also raised.

The general message from civil society, government and international organizations representatives was that there is a need for a significant increase in resources in the fight against corruption. Cobus de Swardt, Managing Director of TI, commented that 'if we are serious about addressing corruption, we need to commit serious resources to the struggle against it'. This requires convincing stakeholders of the 'good governance dividend' that such an investment has been shown to achieve.

Concrete recommendations and follow-up actions

From the plenary discussion the following key recommendations emerged:

The need to involve youth more in IACC in particular, and the anti-corruption fight in general was strongly emphasised. Ideas for having a youth wing to the IACC conference were mooted. The use of new technologies, including social media, was seen as a potential area for engagement. The education system was also identified as a key avenue to engage with the younger generation on anti-corruption issues.

The need for the anti-corruption movement to engage more with other civil society organisations working on other social issues, including human rights amongst others, also emerged from the discussion.

From a private sector perspective, it was suggested that markets still have not internalised the idea of punishing negative aspects and rewarding positive aspects in relation to companies and corruption. A suggestion put forward was to include investors in such conferences as the IACC may raise awareness among them of anti-corruption issues.

The discussion brought out the need for a significant increase in resources in the fight against corruption.

Interesting quotes

Elena Panfilova, Executive Director of TI Russia aptly commented, 'while commitments are growing, corruption is growing in parallel'.

The need to make the transition 'from declaration to action, from words to deeds' in order to stem public apathy in the fight against corruption was noted by Dmitri Vlassis, Chief of the Corruption and Economic Branch, UNODC.

Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General of CIVICUS, highlighted the 'systemic closing of the space for civil society'. She stated that 'in 2009 alone CIVICUS tracked 100 different legal changes in 75 countries that had the effect of narrowing civil society space'.

Elena Panfilova argued that 'there is a need to keep up as corruption unfolds its different faces' and pay more attention to what she called 'non-traditional forms of corruption'.

On engaging the youth in the anti-corruption fight, Elena Panfilova emphasised the 'need to invest in our own behaviour', namely 'not to lie to them (don't promise and not deliver); to listen to them and to their brilliant ideas; to challenge them and remind them that nobody but them can do this and finally to protect them from the evil forces they want to fight with'.

Ingrid Srinath urged the youth 'to seize the anti-corruption fight' and to 'claim the power'.

Cobus de Swardt, Managing Director of TI, commented that 'if we are serious about addressing corruption, we need to commit serious resources to the struggle against it'.