

OUTCOME STATEMENT

As representatives of nine Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and six Private Sector (PS) entities from Southeast Europe, at a meeting convened by UNODC on 1 February 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia, we want to affirm the fundamental importance of *active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector in the prevention of and the fight against corruption and raising public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption*, as stipulated by Article 12 and 13 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector are a valuable source of professional expertise, advocacy and assistance, and that their contributions need to be fully utilized in the Review Mechanism for the UNCAC and in national level review processes.

We also want to emphasize that addressing corruption is crucial for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

As main issues for concern in the region, we recognize weak justice systems, grand corruption and impunity and shrinking space for civil society and the media, as well as insufficient transparency and opportunity for civil society involvement in government decision-making and lack of accountability of political parties.

To address these fundamental weaknesses, we *commit* to actively participate in coordinated national and regional efforts between civil society, private sector, independent oversight agencies and the media, with a joint goal of supporting democratic institutions to fulfil their role and adequately address all forms of corruption and its enabling factors, including grand corruption.

We would take concrete and practical steps towards the strengthening of cooperation to make progress towards the achievement of the following recommendations in the coming years:

Proposed Action #1: Training and knowledge

Training and knowledge are pivotal for the fight against corruption. Knowledge and skills on promoting and implementing on accountability, integrity and compliance is crucial and needs constant application for both private and public sector. As such, it strengthens the integrity of the enables the business sector. Businesses have changed over the years, becoming more global in orientation and scope as well as more IT-savvy in practice; they are merging and operating across industries and physical boundaries. Lack of trust between the private sector and the government is also a problem to be addressed

- *Organize* education programmes and carry our awareness raising campaigns for current and future business leaders, starting at schools;
- *Promote* integrity as pivotal to the business community and a key observance among all in the business, government and civil society;
- *Explore* the creation of national and regional networks of private sector, national experts and civil society groups, to facilitate the exchange of information on corruption related issues and

discuss possible areas of cooperation, such as conducting joint anti-corruption and compliance workshops and trainings.

- *Utilize* the resources provided by UNODC and other technical assistance providers on promoting the integrity of the private sector and utilizing the regional CSO e-platforms, the regional CSO e-platforms¹ and others;
- *Promote* awareness among government partners, of the importance of anti-corruption in the Private Sector and the role of the Private Sector in combatting corruption.;

Proposed Action #2: UNCAC Country reviews

In relation to the UNCAC Review Mechanism, we commit to actively supporting and engaging in a transparent and inclusive second cycle and follow-up of the UNCAC review process. We jointly call on governments to support these efforts by ensuring an effective, transparent and inclusive UNCAC implementation review process, including by inviting groups and individuals outside the public sector to contribute, by sharing information about the review process, its schedule and the contact information of government focal points with the public, by publishing key documents including the self-assessment and the full country report, adhering to the standards of the Transparency Pledge², as well as by facilitating follow-up discussions after the release of the report. We also call on governments to support a continued UNCAC monitoring process beyond 2020, including to follow-up on previous recommendations and commit to:

- *Monitor* the implementation of the Convention and provide support to the Governments in Southeast Europe, especially by ensuring that good examples are given in the self-assessment checklist (SACL) on the implementation of the Convention;
- *Advocate* for a systemic approach to ensuring the transparency of the review process and the engagement of the Civil society, which is not dependent on the presence of political will in individual members of the Government by advocating for adoption or relevant rules, political statements and commitments³;
- *Advocate* for the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the first and second cycle of the UNCAC Implementation review and recognize the role of the non-state actors in the follow-up process;
- *Encourage* the development of independent reports, developed by the CSOs using the UNCAC SACL;

¹ The platform is hosted on the UNCAC Coalition's website and available at the following link:

https://uncaccoalition.org/en_US/anti-corruption-platforms/southeast-europe/

² See the UNCAC Coalition's Transparency Pledge and the Coalition's Guide to Transparency and Participation in the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism, available at https://uncaccoalition.org/en_US/uncac-review/transparency-pledge/

³ See the UNCAC Coalition's Transparency Pledge and the Coalition's Guide to Transparency and Participation in the UNCAC Implementation Review Mechanism, available at https://uncaccoalition.org/en_US/uncac-review/transparency-pledge/

- *Promote* trust-building measures between the Governments and CSOs in order to strengthen the interest of the Government in engaging the CSOs in the implementation review process.
- *Advocate* for UNCAC to become a part of the EU integration discourse;
- CSOs commit to being proactive in looking for information and promoting cooperation with the private sector and in formulating a single position towards the government positions in the Implementation review process;

Proposed Action #3: Collective Action

We agree that joint efforts by the business community are a precondition for the effective fight against corruption. Working jointly together contributes towards achieving recognition and involvement in the review process, subsequent policy development, and implementation of the Convention by bringing together the expertise, legitimacy and capacity of the civil society, private and public sectors.

- *Consider* the development of MoUs to detail the modalities of partnerships between CSOs and Private Sector;
- *Consider* the development of joint projects to combat corruption, including, *inter alia*, exchanging knowledge towards the implementation of a more effective training curriculum;
- *Encourage* leaders from different pillars of society to join in a common dialogue and enable new leaders to emerge;
- *Utilize and promote* good business practices to fight corruption, especially during relevant intergovernmental anti-corruption events, such as the sessions of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Endorsed⁴ by:

Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) (Albania)
Institute for Development, Research and Alternatives (Albania)
International Chamber of Commerce (Albania)
Optima Legal & Financial (Albania)
Initiative and Civil Action (ICVA) (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Transparency International (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Diners Club (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Center for the Development of Youth Activism (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity, and Equality of Women (ESE) (North Macedonia)
Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (North Macedonia)
Transparency International (North Macedonia)
Kosovo Law Institute (Kosovo*)
Centre for the Analysis and Prevention of Corruption (Moldova)
Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Moldova)
Association of Montenegrin Managers (Montenegro)
CAZAS (Montenegro)
CRNOGORSKI TELEKOM A.D. (Montenegro)
ASTRA (Serbia)
Drug Policy Network South East Europe (Serbia)
EUROBALKAN – Association for Research and Development (Serbia)
European Policy Centre - CEP Belgrade (Serbia)
PROTECTA (Serbia)
University of Belgrade (Serbia)

⁴ This Outcome Statement is not intended to have legal force and will not be legally binding on the individuals or their organizations, except to the extent voluntarily agreed to by the organizations, or any other signatories or parties signing on to the Statement. Involvement in the creation, finalization, and implementation of the principles or action items of this Statement remain on a voluntarily basis.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.