

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Please check against delivery

## **Opening Remarks**

**at**

### **The Asia Regional Meeting on Anti-Corruption Strategies**

**by**

**Michelle Gyles-McDonnough**  
**United Nations Resident Coordinator,**  
**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**  
**Resident Representative for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei**  
**Darussalam**  
**and**  
**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Representative for**  
**Malaysia**

**21 October 2013**  
**Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Honorable Senator Datuk Paul Low Seng Kwan, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia;

Mr. Shervin Majlessi, Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific;

Mr. Phil Matsheza, Practice Leader, Democratic Governance, United Nations Development Programme – Asia Pacific Regional Centre;

Distinguished participants and resource persons;

Selamat Pagi and a very Good morning.

On behalf of the United Nations in Malaysia, let me warmly welcome you to the ***Asia Regional Meeting on Anti-Corruption Strategies***. This meeting has been organised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Development Programme, supported by the Government of Malaysia, in particular the Performance and Management Delivery Unit in the Prime Minister's Department and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. I would like to thank the teams from the Government and the organizing partner institutions for bringing us together and so ably taking care of both the substantive content and the arrangements for this meeting.

Very specially, I would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Honorable Senator Datuk Paul Low Seng Kwan, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia for taking time from his busy schedule to join us and share his thoughts with us today.

As the Minister in charge of Governance and Integrity, and based on your previous and extensive engagement, Minister, as the past President of Transparency International Malaysia, I know this effort to develop effective Anti-Corruption strategies and see their full implementation is close to your heart. We very much look forward to your Welcome Address, and to your views on tackling corruption to prevent its corrosive effects on our societies.

Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the organizers, we are pleased that you are able to participate in this meeting; amid your busy schedules; to dialogue, collaborate and share experiences on Anti-Corruption strategies.

Over the course of this 2-day meeting, we will focus on: the *Process of Development of Anti-Corruption Strategies; their Design and Content; and also on the most effective approaches for Monitoring and Evaluating Anti-Corruption Strategies*.

Since the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) entered into force on 14 December 2005, 168 States, including almost all countries present in this meeting, have become Parties to the Convention. This demonstrates the commitment by States to support the first internationally agreed framework for combating and preventing corruption at global and national levels.

To make these commitments real in the lives of citizens, UNCAC requires a number of legal and institutional undertakings by the States Parties to the Convention, including development and implementation of “effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and [that] reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability.”

A national anti-corruption strategy is the most notable example of such policies. And as countries work to implement the commitments they assume under the Convention, we know there is no single model for anti-corruption strategies. So, reflecting the various approaches, strategies, institutional arrangements, and socio-economic and cultural contexts in which the fight against corruption is waged across the region, we are pleased to have more than 50 very experienced participants from 20 countries representing the various stakeholders engaged in the fight against corruption in the region, including officials at the front lines of the design, implementation, and monitoring of anti-corruption strategies.

Joining us in this meeting are representatives from anti-corruption authorities, national development planning authorities, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and a range of other Ministries, Attorneys General’s Chambers, Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees on Anti-Corruption, and also United Nations, World Bank and ADB colleagues from the region. We are also pleased to have with us anti-corruption experts and resource persons from around the region and the world to share their views and moderate the various discussions.

We look forward to an exciting 2-days of rich deliberations. To facilitate this, we have structured the meeting to include both plenary presentations, as well as hands-on break out group sessions for more detailed and focused discussions. We certainly hope that this arrangement will assist in informing your processes of developing, designing and implementing sustainable anti-corruption strategies across the region and meet other meeting expectations you may have.

As we begin to deliberate on these topics, I also would like to take this opportunity to underline the critical contribution of effective national anti-corruption strategies and their full implementation to the realisation of national development aspirations and to creating a better future for all. Effective national programmes and projects that meet their planned results in a truly and cost-effective manner to improve the lives of citizens, remains the key driving force and motivator for all of our tireless passions and commitment to this agenda.

The real costs of corruption are high. As the United Nations Secretary-General highlighted in his 2009 statement for the International Anti-Corruption Day, "*When public money is stolen for private gain, it means fewer resources to build schools, hospitals, roads, water treatment facilities [and other public goods] ... Corruption enables fake or substandard medicines to be dumped on the market, and hazardous waste to be dumped in landfill sites and in oceans. The vulnerable suffer first and worst.*"

World Bank data tells us that each year almost US\$1 trillion is paid in bribes and it is estimated that corruption can cost a country up to 17 percent of its GDP. And as we strive for more inclusive societies, a recent UNDP study also found that 76% of women surveyed think corruption has prevented them from accessing public goods and services.

Rebeca Grynspan, the United Nations Under Secretary-General and UNDP Associate Administrator, during her Opening Remarks at the side Event during the recent 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly on: Looking to 2015 and beyond - The role of anti-corruption and governance noted, that "*UNDP has learned from experience that what works best are specific anti-corruption measures integrated into basic service delivery systems – coupled with an increase in the engagement of civil society and other non-state actors in monitoring service delivery.*"

*"We have also learned that preventing the leakages of resources is equally important to achieve the sums needed to fund transformative and sustainable development. Revenues earned from natural resource windfalls or high growth rates must be invested back into better services and improvements in infrastructure which reach all people. It is after all healthy and educated people who drive their economies and create vibrant livable societies."*

Taking these points into account and to ensure an agenda suitable to country specific contexts, the objectives of this two-day meeting are to:

1. Take stock of country experiences in developing, implementing, and monitoring implementation of anti-corruption strategies;
2. Clarify the process of preparation of anti-corruption strategies;
3. Analyze the content and design of effective anti-corruption strategies;
4. Identify mechanisms to ensure effective implementation, monitoring, oversight and reporting; and
5. Agree on a set of guidelines or indicators to develop and implement an effective and successful national anti-corruption strategies.

As member States embark on improving existing anti-corruption strategies and designing new ones, the meeting also will seek to create the necessary resources and assistance to help States in carrying out their efforts. The meeting is also very timely on the eve of the upcoming Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC which will be held next month in Panama. We hope that discussions in this forum can be later shared with a broader global audience in Panama.

South-South Cooperation is essential to this process. On behalf of the organizers, we hope this platform will enable all of you to share your experiences, challenges, best practices and guidance as together we remove obstacles to create a more secure and better future for all of our fellow citizens: to create countries that grow, countries that care, and countries that work!

Finally, December 9<sup>th</sup> as you know is International Anti-Corruption Day. As part of a global campaign, this year our goal is to extend our reach even further and involve people from all sections of the society, with special attention to **the role of youth and women in anti-corruption movements and advocacy**. In line with this, we encourage you and all stakeholders to organize creative events to mark International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9<sup>th</sup> to raise public awareness on corruption, and promote multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnership in the fight against corruption. To support this, the UNDP Democratic Governance Group has allocated a modest fund to sponsor local campaigns based on successful of Expressions of Interests. More information on this will be shared during the course of the next 2-days.

With that I thank you once again for your participation here today and for your willingness to share your knowledge, expertise and experience. I wish you a successful and fruitful 2-days. Thank you.