

## Fight Corruption - Save Development

VIENNA, 8 December (UN Information Service) - On International Anti-Corruption Day (9 December), the United Nations has warned that corruption kills development, and is one of the biggest impediments to reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

"When public money is stolen for private gain, it means fewer resources to build schools, hospitals, roads and water treatment facilities. When foreign aid is diverted into private bank accounts, major infrastructure projects come to a halt," said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. He warned that "the vulnerable suffer first and worst."

"Corruption undermines governments' ability to act and serve their people. It siphons off the finance intended to reduce poverty and discourages investment in economies," said the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Helen Clark.

The motto for the 2009 anti-corruption campaign is "Your 'No' Counts". "Corruption is not some vast impersonal force. It is the result of personal decisions, most often motivated by greed," said the Secretary-General. He encouraged everyone to make a pledge "to never offer or accept a bribe. Live by that motto, and the world will be a more honest place - and we will increase the chances of reaching the Millennium Development Goals."

The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, paid tribute to "heroes with integrity: anti-corruption officials who are not afraid to go after the big fish; whistleblowers who risk their jobs to expose cheating; journalists who risk their lives to investigate fraud and report the truth; prosecutors who defend justice, even when under attack from powerful forces."

The Secretary-General urged both the private and public sectors to make more effective use of the United Nations Convention against Corruption - "the world's strongest legal instrument to build integrity and fight corruption". This instrument has become even stronger with agreement on an implementation review mechanism at the recent Conference of States Parties in Doha.

"The private sector should not lag behind governments," said the Secretary-General. "I urge the private sector to adopt anti-corruption measures in line with the UN Convention. Companies - particularly those that subscribe to the 10th principle of the Global Compact, to work against corruption - should pledge not to cheat and should open themselves up to peer review to ensure that everyone is playing by the same rules."

For more on the UN anti-corruption campaign see [www.yournocounts.org](http://www.yournocounts.org).

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For further information, please contact:

Walter Kemp  
Spokesman and Speechwriter, UNODC  
Mobile: (+43-699) 1459-5629  
Email: [walter.kemp@unodc.org](mailto:walter.kemp@unodc.org)

Stéphane Dujarric  
Spokesman and Senior Advisor, UNDP  
Telephone: (+1-212) 906-5072  
Email: [stephane.dujarric@undp.org](mailto:stephane.dujarric@undp.org)