

Global Expert Group Meeting - Corruption involving vast quantities of assets  
12 – 14 June 2019, Oslo  
Final remarks  
State Secretary Marianne Hagen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ladies and gentlemen

I greatly appreciate this opportunity to address this important expert group meeting one more time.

I understand that you have had open and frank discussions about important challenges such as:

- the widespread occurrence and enormous quantity of large scale corruption,
- the devastating consequences and close links to environmental degradation, climate change, human rights violations, and conflict,
- the difficulties associated with investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption in contexts where the institutions are neither independent nor well resourced,
- gender differentiated impact of corruption on communities.
- and the hurdles of non-cooperative institutions when assistance is needed in efforts to effectively handle transnational corruption cases.

Aruna Roy from India spoke about the vicious circle of corruption, injustice and the perversion of democracy when money buys votes, licenses and contracts. Others referred to the erosion of the rule of law.

Arguments have been made for

- using the full range of tools offered by UNCAC to hold governments accountable,
- strong international institutions, such as an International Anti-Corruption Court, to deal with transnational corruption,
- public registers of beneficial owners,
- transparency and integrity in political party financing and electoral processes,
- measures to hold financial, legal and accounting intermediaries, enablers, service providers, facilitators responsible for their roles in corruption,
- measures to support and protect journalists, whistle-blowers and witnesses, as well as investigators, prosecutors and judges
- innovative international standards and guidelines
- increased focus on corruption related to natural resources as well as corruption affecting public services, such as health and education,
- more research, and finally
- a definition of “grand corruption”.

This Expert Group Meeting is important. Through real cases and experience you have shown how large-scale corruption and economic crime deprive the most vulnerable of their future.

You have also highlighted the cross-cutting issues in efforts to prevent and combat large scale corruption: Integrity, inclusion, transparency and accountability. These characteristics of good governance hold an enormous potential as drivers for sustainable development.

Nations have responsibilities and opportunities to prevent and combat corruption. But national efforts have limitations. Transnational corruption can only be effectively pursued through strong international cooperation among the public and private sectors, civil society, media and multilateral organisations. We need a broad and forceful international coalition to fight large scale corruption.

Norway supports technical assistance provided by the UNODC to developing countries in their efforts to implement the UN Convention against Corruption. We continue to support the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR) and the International Center for Asset Recovery (ICAR). We have also, for many years, supported the U4 Anti-corruption resource center at the CMI institute in Bergen and we will continue to do so.

We will carefully study the report and recommendations from this meeting. I am confident that this will be useful in our work in other contexts where decisions are made about norms, rules and operative measures to prevent and combat corruption, including large scale corruption.

Thank you so much for your contributions here in this meeting, and even more importantly, at home.

I hope all of you are encouraged to continue and strengthen the important work you are involved in to fight corruption.

I am fully aware of the personal risks many of you are facing every day, fighting this fight. Your bravery and fortitude is humbling – and an inspiration to us all.

Finally, let me again express my sincere gratitude to UNODC for the excellent organisation of the two expert group meetings. Together we highlight the character of large scale corruption, the drivers, the beneficiaries, the enablers, the counterforces, the consequences and the ideas that may move us closer to SDG 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

I hope you have enjoyed your stay in Norway. I wish you a safe return home after today's last sessions.