

II MEETING OF EXPERTS ON CORRUPTION INVOLVING VAST QUANTITIES OF ASSETS

Oslo, 12-14 June 2019

Excellency Ms. Ine Marie Eriksen Soreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway;

Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia;

Excellency Dr. Harib Al Amimi, President of the State Audit Institutions of the United Arab Emirates;

Ms. Brigitte Strobel- Shaw, Officer in Charge, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Ambassador José Salinas, Ambassador of Peru in Norway.

Distinguished participants,

I would like to thank the Kingdom of Norway for hosting the II Meeting of Experts on Corruption involving Vast Quantities of Assets, as well as UNODC for organizing this important event as a follow-up to the one that took place in Lima, in December 2018.

As we know, corruption is a global scourge that weakens democratic governance and citizens' trust in institutions, eroding the social pact and the rule of law. It has many dimensions and appears differently in the economic, political and social scenario and concerns society as a whole.

Corruption exacerbates poverty and inequality and demeans human dignity. According to the World Bank, about 2% of the global GDP is intended yearly on the payment of bribes (1.5 trillion dollars) and 5% in corruption in general (2.6 trillion). This amount is ten times larger than global funds for development assistance; or, in other figure, it is the double of the total income of the people living on poverty in the world.

Peru attaches a fundamental importance to the fight against corruption at the national, regional, and global levels and has an active participation in forums

and initiatives that provide tools and guidelines for this purpose. In this regard, my country recognizes the great importance of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the global instrument that offers a comprehensive conceptual and legal framework for both internal implementation and international cooperation. At the regional level, we are also part of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (ICC), the first treaty of its type.

That's why the subject of the VIII American Summit held in April 2018 in Peru was "Democratic Governance against Corruption". The 33 States adopted the Lima Commitment with 57 mandates to combat corruption. Peru has endeavored the creation of a shared online platform, managed by an office of the Organization of the American States, where the States are currently registering their progress of the accomplishment of the mandates. The follow-up mechanism is also conceived to promote the exchange of good practices, technical capacities and measures focused on strengthening prevention and fight against corruption in our hemisphere. Also one of their goal is to identify cooperation possibilities, resources and to create synergies with other regional and international mechanisms.

Internally Peru has taken steps to ensure the use of best practices for achieving compliance with those mandates including the creation of the Secretariat of Public Integrity, attached to the Prime Minister office and adopted a renewed National Plan for Integrity and Fight against Corruption 2018-2021.

On the other side, in Peru, prosecutors and judges investigate and condemn acts of corruption, involving, as it is already well known, high level authorities including former Heads of State. Those are important steps towards changing the idea of corruption as business as usual. However, dismantled networks and such shameful practices is not a one round fight. It takes time and it needs the support of the society as art of a process to recover confidence on public and private institutions as well as to affirm the rule of law.

Returning to the international agenda in December, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution submitted by Peru, Colombia, Norway and other States, in order to have a Special Session of the General Assembly against Corruption in 2021 (UNGASS).

On the same month, we hosted in Lima the I Global Expert Group Meeting on Corruption Involving vast Quantities of Assets, organized by UNODC, in partnership with the Norwegian government. Its purpose is the implementation of the resolution 7/2 adopted in November 2017 in the Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the UNCAC, that both countries support.

Allow me now to remember you some of the outcomes of the Lima Statement adopted in that meeting:

- + Experts recognized that corruption involving vast Quantities of Assets has a negative impact on economic development, peace and security, the enjoyment of human rights, climate change and biodiversity.
- + They raised concern about the impunity that reigns in many cases, the difficulty of investigating such cases and the persistent challenges in the recovery of stolen assets. They noted the complexity of combating such corruption, notably where corrupted authorities are able to control all branches of power as well as several vulnerable sectors. Most of the time, investigations had occurred only after political authorities change.
- + The experts stressed the importance of fighting impunity and ensuring that crime does not pay. It was also highlighted the importance of building trust in public institutions, ensuring democratic governance, and the usefulness of independent, effective and efficient auditing, including social audits of mass entitlement programs.
- + The document highlights the need to ensure and strengthen the independence and security of tenure for investigative and prosecution authorities as well as judiciary ones, and to ensure adequate resources for anti-corruption institutions.

+ With regard to international cooperation and asset recovery, the experts noted the critical importance of building trust and understanding of different legal systems to further investigations and sustain subsequent requests for mutual legal assistance and asset recovery.

Also they agreed to have a second meeting to focus on innovative ways to tackle the drivers and enablers of corruption involving vast quantities of assets. That's why we are pleased to be in Oslo for those coming three days. The qualified experts that have been conveyed for this meeting, which is not exactly my case, have the opportunity to analyze and recommend a set of principles to better prevent and combat corruption in a comprehensive and concrete way.

Our view is that the outcome should provide solid elements for the discussions regarding UNGASS in order to achieve the best possible results. The mandate of the Special Session is the adoption of a concise and action-oriented Political Declaration that strengthens international cooperation on this outstanding issue.

Other meetings and sessions will also contribute to this purpose. It's the case of this year's 8th Session of the Conference of the State Parties to the UNCAC, to take place in December, in Abu Dhabi, where we expect also to adopt a resolution of procedures to UNGASS 2021. As you know UNCAC States parties will negotiate the Declaration, within its almost universal membership, and counting on the substantive expertise of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna.

Next year the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, convened in April 2020, in Kyoto, Japan, under the subject "Promoting crime prevention, criminal justice and State of Law: Towards the 2030 Agenda" provide an opportunity to get recommendations to UNGASS 2021, including on the issue on the Principles on the Independence of Judiciary. We look forward to the inputs and proposals that could come from regional or

specialized *fora* that have a consolidated work on fighting against corruption like the Follow up Mechanisms at the OAS level, the OECD or the G-20, to mention only a few that my country pursues.

Two final points. Even though we don't have a precise measure to define what exactly means corruption involving vast quantity of assets, it seems to be a parallel in the international field to the huge dimension of the global economy and its difficulties to limit the power and the dominant positions of some actors. Corruption at such vast amounts is a challenge that demand us to confront firmly in a strong and cooperative manner for the prevention, the prosecution, the enforcement and the recovery of assets. The result of such strong and effective cooperation must be that nobody should think there is a safe haven on Earth to enjoy their loot.

On the other side, we consider it is important on this cross cutting theme that conventions, treaties and laws, should be distinguished by their accuracy and simplicity, as possible, in order to have efficient mechanisms to prevent corruption in a transparent way. As some studies have put into evidence complex legislations, overloaded procedures and requirements gives wrong incentives to corruption instead of avoiding it. A real change requires ethical behavior in all citizens, regardless their private or public nature: effective, accurate, transparent and simple as possible norms will enable a fair environment for honest conduct and better, just and free societies. For that reason, we encourage that the recommendations, on the different issues experts will discuss on those days, be considered in this approach.

Thank you.