

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS TO INAUGURAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION ACADEMY
Vienna, 2 September 2010**

Your Excellency Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs,
Your Excellency Ms. Maria Fekter, Austrian Minister of the Interior,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you for this important event in this historic setting.

The launch of the International Anti-Corruption Academy is a milestone in the efforts of the international community to fight corruption. It has great potential to advance the goals of the landmark United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Too often in the past, corruption was perceived as a fact of life. Too often, many people simply resigned themselves to it. Rarely did corruption cases come to trial.

Today, attitudes are changing. Across the world, intolerance of corruption is growing. The establishment of this Academy responds not only to this increasing sense of outrage and injustice, but also to an urgent need to train the experts we need to conquer this global menace.

The Academy will help build a culture of integrity.

It will nurture a new generation of leaders in the public and private sectors – a global network of talented, like-minded professionals. To date, anti-corruption training has lacked specialization.

It will lead to more effective implementation of the Convention's measures on prevention, law enforcement, asset recovery and international cooperation. Traditional methods are proving no match for new types of corruption, especially financial crimes.

And its curriculum and activities will complement the technical assistance provided in those areas by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, guardian of the Convention.

The Academy is the product of collaboration between Austria, UNODC and the European Anti-Fraud Office. It has been designed by professionals, for professionals. I hope it will enjoy universal support, not only from Governments but also from stakeholders at every level of society.

We are all grateful to the Government of Austria for generously providing the state-of-the-art-premises that will house the Academy.

Although we have come to understand more about the causes and effects of corruption, combating it has proved difficult.

One major handicap is that we don't know how to measure it – a crucial need in our fight against an unseen foe. The best we can do right now is to gauge public perception of corruption. But gauging perception is like measuring smoke rather than seeing the fire.

The creation of a precise body of knowledge about a poorly researched and little-understood subject will shed more light on murky deals. If we can calculate inflation and GDP, it should not be beyond our abilities to develop an effective and scientific measure for corruption.

As knowledge deepens and spreads, it will create the conditions for change, enabling Governments and other stakeholders to make evidence-based policies.

Knowledge will also empower communities to become part of the solution rather than mere victims of corruption. Armed with know-how, citizens can claim their rights and shape their own destinies.

Fighting corruption is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation among many stakeholders. Policymakers, prosecutors and police; judges and journalists; regulators, investigators and scholars all have a role to play.

Among those partners is the private sector. Anti-corruption is now firmly established as one of the principles of the United Nations Global Compact – the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world and one of the Organization's main interfaces with the business community. I have been encouraged by the many private companies that are establishing ethics and compliance programmes. But of course, there is far more to do.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am optimistic about the future of this Academy. It demonstrates a common will to stamp out corruption with a coordinated, coherent and united response. We have a valuable new tool at our disposal -- ambitious, yet rooted in real life and focused on the people and institutions it intends to serve.

I look forward to its becoming a fully-fledged international organization next year, and to its close collaboration with the United Nations.

We all know the heavy toll taken by corruption.

More than a trillion dollars stolen or lost, every year – money badly needed for the Millennium Development Goals.

Democratic institutions, undermined.

The rule of law, subverted.

Terrorists and other criminals, emboldened.

And as ever, the poor and vulnerable suffer most.

We must continue to fight back. We must never ease up in our quest for justice.

If we are serious about tackling corruption, we will use the Academy to the fullest.

I pledge my full support to the Academy, and urge you all to do your part.

Thank you.