

Press Release

United Nations looks to bolster anti-corruption, promote integrity and independence among the judiciary

UN meeting to create world's first Global Judicial Integrity Network opens in Bangkok

Bangkok, 15 November 2016 – The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) today held its preparatory meeting for the creation of a Global Judicial Integrity Network. The Network, which will go live in 2017, aims to connect judges to support each other in upholding judicial integrity and preventing corruption within the justice system. By bringing together Chief Justices, members of judicial disciplinary bodies and judicial training institutions as well as other stakeholders inside and beyond the justice system from across the world, it will create the first ever global platform dedicated exclusively to this issue.

"We are proud to host this week's event which brings together Chief Justices and other senior judicial officials from across the Pacific, South Asia and Southeast Asia", noted the Honorable Chief Justice Veerapol Tungsawan, President of the Supreme Court of Thailand. "The Network will be a significant mechanism for strengthening judicial integrity as it can be a forum for exchanging our experience and best practices and effectively support us in dealing with new challenges. The establishment of a judicial integrity network among us is, therefore, an effective response to these challenges with the aim of guaranteeing the confidence of people in judicial power."

This was echoed by UNODC Regional Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Jeremy Douglas, who spoke on the context of the Global Judicial Integrity Network: "Assessments we have conducted in different regions of the world have time and again confirmed that many countries' citizens perceive their justice systems as opaque, difficult to access and prone to corruption. UN Member States have recognized this challenge and established standards to strengthen judicial independence and integrity. Most notably, Article 11 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption – or the UNCAC – stresses the importance of taking measures to strengthen integrity and to prevent opportunities for corruption of the judiciary and prosecutors".

The crucial importance of judicial integrity for achieving sustainable development was most recently highlighted by the 13th United Nations Crime Congress, held in Qatar in 2015. In its final declaration, the Congress emphasized the importance of preventing and countering corruption, and promoting integrity and accountability in criminal justice systems. Since then, UNODC – with the financial support of the State of Qatar – have launched a wide-ranging Global Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration under which the work on judicial integrity is situated.

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