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**Conference room paper submitted by members of the
Global Network for Anti-Corruption Transparency and
Accountability in Health (GNACTA): Promoting
multistakeholder and multisectoral action against
corruption in the health sector**

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Promoting multi-stakeholder and multisectoral action against corruption in the health sector – Joint message from members of the Global Network for Anti-Corruption Transparency and Accountability in Health (GNACTA)

World Health Organization, Health Systems Governance and Stewardship Unit

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

United States Agency for International Development

United Nations Development Programme

The World Bank Group

UN Global Compact

U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre

Transparency International Global Health

Corruption undermines the human right to health by compromising the functioning of health systems and denying patients access to quality health services. It contributes to severe financial waste, which exacerbates the growing cost of health care, and it also undermines public trust in health systems and national institutions. It most impacts those populations that are already disadvantaged. It should therefore be unsurprising that corruption is a major barrier to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage to which States have committed in Sustainable Development Goal 3.8.¹ Paragraph 37 of the most recent 2023 Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage recognizes “*that fighting corruption at all levels and in all its forms is a priority and that corruption is a serious barrier to effective resource mobilization and allocation and diverts resources away from activities that are vital for poverty eradication and sustainable development, which may undermine efforts to achieve universal health coverage*”. This builds on paragraph 56, of the 2019 Resolution on Universal Health Coverage calls for States to prioritize the fight against corruption in order to build effective, accountable, transparent and inclusive institutions to enable health for all.

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic response practically demonstrated how unprepared health systems, regardless of income level, are to prevent, detect and respond to corruption. In order to protect against similar future shocks and to improve health system functioning more broadly, it is fundamental to integrate anti-corruption, transparency, and accountability (ACTA) measures. Effective ACTA directly contribute to building the needed institutional arrangements and capacities to govern and monitor health systems in ways that protect them against corruption. However, to date, ACTA efforts in health have been largely fragmented and disparate, and marked reductions in health sector corruption have yet to be achieved.

Through better ACTA in health systems there can be greater health system efficiency, less financial and material resource waste, heightened public trust in health systems and broader governance institutions, and more assurance that health financing leads to better health outcomes. To effectively address corruption, it is necessary to engage diverse stakeholders across the health, anti-corruption and other relevant fields to ensure that cutting-edge, effective ACTA approaches are adapted and tailored to the

¹ Sustainable Development Goal 3.8 sets out to “achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all”.

unique needs of health systems in order to maintain agility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, while upholding the ultimate aim to improve human health outcomes.

The World Health Organization (WHO), as the global public health authority, has a clear mandate to work towards strengthening countries' health governance capacity for improved transparency, accountability, responsiveness and community empowerment. In response, the WHO, through the Health Systems Governance and Stewardship Unit, leads the Global Network for Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability in Health (GNACTA). The GNACTA is a consortium of United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral organizations, academia and civil society. Since its inception, GNACTA has made considerable strides in bridging the gap between the health and anti-corruption communities. Jointly they apply a multisectoral approach to forge strategic alliances and drive thought leadership focused on ACTA in health issues to ensure efficient, transparent and accountable health systems, across all levels of care, that support improved health for all. The Network also works to generate new evidence on the efficacy of ACTA in health solutions through research and implementation, and it builds the capacity of global health practitioners on how to integrate ACTA into broader health systems strengthening. GNACTA strives for efficient, transparent and accountable health systems in which people can equally access affordable quality health services without encountering corruption. The approach and ethos of GNACTA is further aligned with the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to health, including health-in-all policies with a strong focus on equity to ensure that no one is left behind.

As members of the GNACTA, within our respective mandates, rules of procedure and terms of reference, we are committed to:

- Advocate for increased attention to and action against corruption in the health sector by both the health and anti-corruption communities, as well as other relevant sectors
- Strategically engage with relevant decision and policymakers at global, regional and country levels
- Consolidate the collective experience, expertise and knowledge of GNACTA members with a view to support the development and implementation of evidence-based, effective and sustainable ACTA solutions at country level
- Develop normative guidance, standardized frameworks, common language and definitions relevant for ACTA in health as part of overall generation of new evidence and research
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of the health and anti-corruption communities, as well as other relevant sectors, about corruption in the health sector, its impact and relevant ACTA approaches, through the development of standard curricula and training
- Provide GNACTA members with opportunities to learn from one another and exchange knowledge and expertise to foster a dynamic, effective and relevant multi-stakeholder Network

We also welcome cooperation with the other interested stakeholders and will continue to expand our partnerships and membership base to include other relevant sectors. Furthermore, we pledge to continue to maximize impact, towards our common goal of sustainably addressing health sector corruption in all its forms for the betterment of human health outcomes across the globe.