

Thank you Mr President,

My name is Emin Huseynov, I am an anti-corruption activists and investigative journalist from Azerbaijan, living in exile.

We are grateful for the opportunity to address you and the Member States today, as well as other colleagues, to share our experience and practices in fighting corruption. Unfortunately, in many countries, this fight remains a matter of life or death.

In several nations, kleptocratic regimes aggressively target journalists and anti-corruption activists from civil society, putting them under relentless persecution and harassment. Despite all the challenges, these resilient individuals persist in their crucial work, often compelled to operate from abroad due to the oppressive conditions in their home countries.

Even if the international community ratified the UN convention against corruption, some countries show a distressing loss of political will and a refusal to implement its provisions. The space for civil society is shrinking, creating more challenges for activists operating in exile. In this 21st-century era dominated by technology, these individuals leverage digital platforms to continue their vital work, ensuring that the fight against corruption endures beyond borders.

However, sustaining these efforts in exile poses financial challenges, with a glaring lack of funding. Financial backing is essential for ensuring accountability in the face of adversity. Regrettably, some countries and donors are withdrawing support for anti-corruption programs due to dangerous circumstances faced by activists. In this critical moment, we appeal to the global community not to abandon those courageously working to combat corruption and to support anti-corruption exile-based communities. If anti-corruption investigations cannot be conducted in the country, it is imperative that exile-based communities lead these efforts outside. Possessing intimate knowledge of their respective countries, along with the necessary resources and contacts, these communities are uniquely positioned to conduct covert investigations that can expose corruption networks. And to strengthen the resilience of anti-corruption activism in exile, there is a pressing need to increase core funds. By bolstering financial support, we can empower these communities to persist in their essential work, safeguarding the values of transparency and accountability.

Dear delegates and colleagues. It is disheartening that these days some countries resort to the arrest of renowned journalists, hindering the fight against corruption. Some countries resort to poisoning political oppositioners whose whereabouts then remain unknown for days or weeks. Some countries imprison activists, renown economists and scholars under bogus charges, and these people further must fight for their lives in prisons. In solidarity with all these people who were not scared to give their lives for democratic values, we must collectively condemn such actions and strive to create an environment where journalists and activists can operate without fear of reprisal to fight corruption together.