

**Conference of States Parties
to the
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**Statement by
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Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Members of the international community,

Excellencies,

Let me start by welcoming your and other officers on your election for this tenth Session of the UNCAC Conference of States Parties.

I would like to assure you the full support and cooperation of the Portuguese delegation during our deliberations along this week.

Let me extend our sincere gratitude to the Government of the United States for hosting this session and to the Secretariat for the dedication and efforts devoted to the preparation of our works.

Portugal fully associates itself with the Statement delivered by the European Union.

Mr. Chair,

Twenty years passed from the opening to the signing of the Convention against Corruption, on December two thousand and three, in the city of Mérida, Mexico.

However, as already stated by previous speakers, corruption is still a threat to democracy, good governance, transparency, and fair competition.

It erodes trust in governments, weakens public institutions, fuels injustice, and jeopardizes the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It also entails an enormous loss of resources for States, compromising a better and equitable distribution of wealth, and discouraging accountability.

The existing scenario, with local and international wars and conflicts is a breeding ground for the emergence and multiplication of fake news and demagogic and populist narratives, a dangerous political instrument that can be a trigger for conflicts.

And, as we all know, as conflict rages, corruption prospers!

For all these reasons, preventing and combating corruption and related crimes, is therefore a moral imperative if we are to preserve the rule of law and the legitimacy of democratic States.

It is therefore fundamental that political and economic players act responsibly and with full transparency. This is a collective and multiple-front effort that must involve beyond any doubt, public authorities, the civil society, the private sector, and citizens in general.

Mr. Chair,

Let me highlight some of the measures taken by Portugal in recent years to address this scourge.

In the Programme of our Government a chapter on «*Undertake a resolute fight against corruption*» was included, and the operationalization of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy was launched, translating it into legislative acts that were approved by the Parliament.

On an organization level, the National Anti-Corruption Mechanism, an independent agency dedicated to preventing and combating corruption, was created.

The human and financial resources available to the Criminal Investigation Police were reinforced. The Central Criminal Investigation Court now has an enlarged panel of judges. Mechanisms have been established to prevent mega-proceedings and their inherent slowness. Incentives to collaborate with the justice system and a system to protect whistleblowers are in force.

The concealment of wealth by political office holders was criminalized, thus overcoming the constitutional obstacles and the years-long impasse surrounding the offence of illicit enrichment.

An Authority for Transparency was created, to supervise the single declarations of income, assets, and interests of holders of political office and high public office and to prevent corruption.

Mr. Chair,

We strongly believe that international co-operation, based on mutual trust between States, is key to tackling corruption.

Portugal is particularly active in all *fora* related to corruption, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OECD, and the European Union.

And it is particularly active at regional level, in the framework of the Ibero-American region and of the Portuguese Speaking Countries Community, where we promote efficiency, transparency and integrity.

The mechanism for assessing the UN-CAC implementation, which we have supported from the very beginning, with the recommendations set forth in the assessment reports, remains a particularly important tool for improving the national legal systems against corruption and for technical assistance and international cooperation.

To conclude Mr. Chair,

Fighting corruption is a collective mission and a duty of citizenship.

We all have a role to play, be it political decision-makers, civil society and NGOs, the private sector, and schools. The intervention of all these actors must be supported and encouraged.

I would like to reiterate Portugal's commitment towards the full implementation of the Convention, to continue to prevent and combat corruption, and to promote international cooperation through a multilateral approach.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.