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GOPAC statement, CoSP7

Presented by John Hyde, GOPAC Secretary.

GOPAC (the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption) welcomes the focus on asset recovery and international cooperation in the agenda of CoSP this year. GOPAC, which officially declared its support for the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) at the signing ceremony in Merida, Mexico, in 2003, is delighted to welcome the Pacific nation of Niue as the most recent (November 3) signatory to UNCAC. GOPAC reiterates the importance of political will and the key role of parliamentarians in promoting integrity and enacting and implementing strong anti-corruption regimes nationally.

In 2006, the GOPAC Global Conference in Arusha, Tanzania, issued a resolution outlining a commitment to create the Global Task Force of the UNCAC (GTF-UNCAC) with the aim of enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to localize the Convention by adapting international standards to national needs and to play an important oversight role in the monitoring and review of the national effort to implement the UNCAC.

A Forum of Parliamentarians has been hosted in conjunction with every the Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC since. This Forum of Parliamentarians is one of GOPAC's flagship events.

This year's 7th Forum of Parliamentarians contains a major panel session on Oversight Matters and MPs Improving Development Effectiveness. We are pleased to receive collaboration from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through their Australian Aid (DFAT) funded United Nations Pacific Regional Anti-Corruption (UNPRAC) Project in the Forum which occurs on Thursday 9 November 2017, 9 a.m.–11 a.m. in Conference Room M07. Parliamentary oversight has been a key component of good practice UNCAC implementation. With the advent of measurable SDGs, parliamentarians have to ensure that oversight of the SDGs learns from UNCAC and follows good governance practices. The Forum aims to enhance the capacity of parliamentarians to localize the UNCAC by adapting international standards to national needs and to play an important oversight role in the monitoring and review of the national effort to implement the UNCAC. The Forum will also encourage parliamentarians and States Parties to the UNCAC to incorporate good practices from SDG16 to bolster accountability and transparency.

The Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) was founded in October 2002 as a result of a Global Conference in Ottawa, Canada, which brought together over 170 Parliamentarians and 400 observers dedicated to fighting corruption and improving good governance. GOPAC is unique in that it is the only international network of Parliamentarians focused solely on combating corruption. Its members represent more than 50 countries in all regions of the world. They are current or former legislators. GOPAC's vision is to "achieve accountability and transparency through effective anti-corruption mechanisms and inclusive participation and cooperation between Parliamentarians, government and civil society". To achieve this vision, GOPAC's mission is to "assist and support Parliamentarians in their advocacy and legislation to make governments accountable and transparent". Recently, GOPAC hosted its AGM in Bali, Indonesia, as part of the World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development and re-elected our chair, the Indonesia Parliament's deputy speaker, Hon Fadli Zon.

GOPAC's most recent biennial general assembly in Yogyakarta also prioritized our responsibilities as directly elected representatives of the peoples of the world to combat corruption in all its forms and actively work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 16 of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, access to justice for all, and effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

In 2013 GOPAC members unanimously mandated the organization to establish grand corruption as a crime of international law to enable international institutions and alliances to prosecute the guilty. Further to this end a bold Declaration emerged at the fifth Forum of Parliamentarians, held at the fifth Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, where GOPAC members resolved to encourage states, the United Nations, and international institutions to develop additional international

mechanisms to apprehend, prosecute, judge, and sentence those who have committed crimes of grand corruption. This commitment was strengthened at GOPAC's latest Global Conference in October 2015, where members resolved to recommend that the United Nations consider the establishment of a new UNCAC protocol to establish an international court on corruption for the prosecution of perpetrators and collaborators of grand corruption, and to endorse the use of legal actions to pursue perpetrators of grand corruption and stress the need to strengthen international cooperation in facilitating the return of stolen assets to those harmed by corruption.