On the Pathway to UNGASS 2021:  
Innovative ideas to tackle corruption  
COSP 8 High-Level Ministerial Side Event  
Abu Dhabi  
16.12.2019

Let me take you back to CoSP7 two years ago when Norway together with Peru and Chile, tabled a resolution on combating corruption involving vast quantities of assets. As a follow up to that resolution UNODC arranged three expert meeting with an impressing turnout of more than 100 experts from all over the world. The meetings held in Lima, Prague and Oslo, resulted in 64 recommendations for follow-up. The statements from the meetings definitely deserves our consideration and action.

I would like to raise six major challenges identified.

First: The existence of safe havens – and the secrecy they offer. As long as there is a place where proceeds from crime and corruption find a safe haven, money will continue to flow where they can be hidden from the public eyes.

Second: The enablers must be held accountable for their actions. We need beneficial ownership registers so the real owners of legal entities are known and can be held responsible.

Third: The independence, integrity and impartiality of law enforcement, prosecution and the courts. Institutions must be properly resourced and have sufficient mandates to operate without any interference. This is a requirement to prevent impunity and maintain trust and support for the rule of law. They also need the necessary protection to carry out the work they are doing on behalf of society.

Fourth: The UNCAC country review process should not merely be a technocratic exercise. The review process would benefit from active participation by civil society organisations, the business community, the media, academia and the general public. This would create legitimacy, ownership and enhance implementation.

Fifth, we see a shrinking space for civil society and restricted access to information for the media. They deserve our recognition for revealing several
grand corruption schemes that may not have surfaced without their continuous efforts and the trust that whistle blowers put in them.

Sixth, preventing and combating corruption of a transnational nature require a broad and committed international coalition. We need to implement and enforce UNCAC. We also need to identify any gaps that may exist or elements to be strengthened.

I hope the recommendations from the expert meetings in Lima, Prague and Oslo will provide inspiration to a bold approach in the resolutions to be adopted at COSP8 as well as to our preparations for UNGASS 2021. We need to come up with innovative ideas to be translated into operative measures. Norway is a committed and consistent partner. We want to see and support ambitious international efforts to move the anti-corruption agenda forward.