

On the pathway to UNGASS 2021: Innovative ideas to tackle
corruption

Opening remarks

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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Abu Dhabi, 16/12/2019, side-event at the 8th session of the CoSP to
the UNCAC

Good afternoon everyone,

Your Excellency, Ms. Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of Colombia,

Your Excellency, Mr. Eric Anderson Machado, Permanent
Representative of Peru to the United Nations (Vienna),

Ms. Latheefa Koya, Chief Commissioner, Malaysian Anti-Corruption
Commission,

Your Excellency, Ms. Kjersti Ertresvaag Andersen, Permanent
Representative of Norway to the International Organizations in
Vienna,

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honour to be your moderator today
for this very distinguished panel which will discuss the
pathway to UNGASS 2021.

We are delighted to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs for
Colombia sitting with us today, as well as the Minister of
Foreign Affairs of Peru, the Chief of the Malaysian

Anticorruption Commission and the Ambassador of Norway to the UN in Vienna.

I would like to start by thanking the Governments of Colombia and Peru for their leadership in tabling resolution 73/191, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018, deciding to convene a Special session of the General Assembly against corruption in the first half of 2021.

This first-ever Special session of the UN General Assembly against corruption will provide the international community with a unique opportunity to shape the global anti-corruption agenda for years to come.

There have only been a small number of UN GA Special Sessions during the course of the UN's history, so it is indeed a notable event.

As far as process, the General Assembly tasked the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC with “leading the preparatory process” by “addressing all substantive and organizational matters in an open-ended manner.”

The General Assembly also tasked itself with adopting “a concise and action-oriented political declaration, agreed upon in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations under the auspices of the Conference of the States Parties...”

The preparations for the UNGASS will likely take a number of forms between now and 2021 – and some of that detail will be filled in by Member States this week in a resolution on the topic.

We know that Member States and other stakeholders will be asked to share substantive ideas for UNGASS.

Any written contributions will be distributed publicly on a dedicated website created for UNGASS 2021 (<http://www.ungass2021.org/>)

There will likely be other Vienna-based meetings relating to preparations, including negotiations that will start in 2020 on the political declaration to be adopted.

This week's conference is really the global kickoff for preparations and for substantive thinking relating to the UNGASS.

At this session – on this first day of the Conference – we are pleased to hear the perspectives of four Member States active on anticorruption issues sharing their initial perspectives relating to the UNGASS.

Just a qualifier – that UNODC as the Secretariat of the COSP is here to facilitate ideas, process and consensus, and is not taking a position on any substantive ideas shared at this stage.

That being said, I will note that the Secretary General has created a UN-system Task Force on Corruption, chaired by

UNODC, DPPA and UNDP, that, among other things, has been tasked to do some internal coordination and thinking about the UN's work on corruption generally as well as the UNGASS 2021.

We will see how that initiative develops.

Now that you have the background on UNGASS 2021, I will, without further adieu, introduce our first distinguished speaker of our session:

- (1) Her Excellency Claudia Blum de Barberi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia,
- (2) His Excellency, Mr. Eric Anderson Machado, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations (Vienna),
- (3) Ms. Latheefa Koya, Chief Commissioner, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission,
- (4) Her Excellency, Ms. Kjersti Ertresvaag Andersen, Permanent Representative of Norway to the International Organizations in Vienna,