



**STATEMENT OF THE G-77 AND CHINA AT THE 8TH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION, ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB
EMIRATES, 16-20 DECEMBER 2019 DELIVERED BY H.E AMBASSADOR
OMAR AMER YOUSSEF, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF EGYPT**

ABU DHABI, 16 December 2019

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it is my pleasure to congratulate you on your election as President of the 8th session of the Conference of the States Parties, as also to the other elected members of the Bureau. The Group also thanks the government of the United Arab Emirates for hosting this meeting in Abu Dhabi and for the warm hospitality and arrangements.
2. The Group commends the Secretariat for making timely preparations for the Conference, including useful background documents made available.
3. The Group welcomes those States Parties that have acceded to the Convention since the last Conference held in Vienna in 2017.

Mr. President,

4. The phenomenon of corruption continues to be one of the major challenges to security and stability, rule of law, and sustainable socioeconomic development of our societies. The Group reiterates the need for preventing and eradicating corruption more effectively by further promoting the full implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, and underlines the critical role of the Conference of the States Parties in this regard.
5. The Group also takes note of the ongoing efforts at different levels to implement the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, including its Sustainable Development Goals. Such efforts reinforce the comprehensive approach to substantially reducing corruption in all its forms and at all levels, including measures to address its underlying causes.

6. The Group wishes to recall the ‘Doha Declaration’ adopted by the 13th UN Crime Congress in 2015, in which the international community committed itself to making every effort to tackle corruption, including through implementing measures aimed at enhancing transparency in public administration and promoting the integrity and accountability of our criminal justice systems, in accordance with the Convention.
7. In this regard, the Group appreciates the achievements of the Thirteenth Crime Congress and the efforts to implement its outcome document, the Doha Declaration.
8. The Group looks forward to the 14th Crime Congress to be held in Kyoto in April 2020, and its outcome document, which should build upon existing commitments to tackle corruption, particularly in the context of efforts to achieve sustainable development.
9. The Group also looks forward to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Corruption that will be held in 2021. The Group welcomes the General Assembly’s timely decision to place special focus on the problem of corruption through this special session. We hope to see the session result in a focused and action-oriented political declaration that renews and strengthens the collective commitment to combatting corruption, sets the prevention and fight against corruption as a top priority in the international agenda, highlights the need for the full and effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption including prevention, asset recovery, technical assistance and international cooperation, as well as ensuring that there are no safe havens for the corrupt or the proceeds of corruption.

Mr. President,

10. The Group reiterates the importance of developing and promoting effective policies and practices aimed at prevention of corruption, and in this regard stresses the need to enhance efforts in accordance with chapter II (on Preventive Measures) of the Convention. The Group underlines the importance of the "Marrakech Declaration on the Prevention of Corruption" (Resolution 4/3) in encouraging the integration of prevention in anti-corruption national strategies. Accordingly, the group has tabled a resolution during the current session entitled “Follow-up of the Marrakech Declaration on the Prevention of Corruption”.

11. The Group deeply regrets that despite the very explicit articles of the Convention, barriers and challenges in the asset recovery process appear to be on the increase. The Group therefore underscores that the return of assets is a fundamental principle of the Convention as stated in its article 51, and States Parties shall afford one another the widest measures of international cooperation, in particular regarding implementing that article.
12. The Group emphasizes that the management, administration and utilization of returned assets is solely the responsibility of the requesting state and that recovered assets in all cases, shall be returned without conditionalities and in full respect of the sovereign rights of the states of origin and the Convention.
13. The Group expresses its serious concern that lack of political will, unnecessary delays, procedural complexities, bureaucratic hurdles and legal barriers in requested States as well as high cost of asset recovery continue to impede effective international cooperation in the area of asset recovery. The Group urges all States, in the spirit of the Convention and in line with its relevant provisions, to facilitate expeditious return of stolen assets, including assets that have not been accounted for and that are found in safe havens, to countries of origin, to assist the requesting States in identification, tracing, freezing, seizure and recovery of assets and to minimize the costs for the requesting State.
14. The Group calls on the States Parties, at the present session of the Conference, to commit to accelerating the development of international cooperation, in the area of asset recovery, and urges all States Parties to remove barriers associated with implementing article 46 of the Convention, on mutual legal assistance.

Mr. President,

15. The Group notes with satisfaction the effective functioning of the Implementation Review Mechanism of the Conference, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, and the guiding principles and characteristics of the Mechanism set out in Resolution 3/1, which should be fully and consistently respected throughout the review process.
16. The Group highlights the importance of providing States Parties with technical assistance, upon request, in meeting the technical assistance needs identified during the Review Process.
17. The Group remains of the firm view that Implementation Review Mechanism requires sustainable and predictable funding to ensure its efficient, continued and

impartial functioning. Therefore, the Group reiterates its position that the Mechanism should be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations in accordance with the Terms of Reference.

Mr. President,

18. Technical assistance is a crosscutting issue, and is crucial for effective and efficient implementation of the Convention, and thus needs to be given special attention. The Group appreciates the role of UNODC in providing, within its mandate and upon request, tailor-made technical assistance activities at the global, regional and national levels. The Group calls for sufficient and stable funding to develop and implement programs and projects for the purpose of capacity-building and technical assistance.

19. The Group also calls upon all States Parties to avoid unilateral actions and sanctions that weaken the international cooperation framework and impede States Parties' capabilities to fight against corruption.

20. In conclusion, the Group looks forward to fruitful deliberations during the current session.

I thank you Mr. President.