



A RULE OF LAW APPROACH TO PROMOTING INTEGRITY AND REBUILDING TRUST

Special event at the ninth session of the United Nations Convention against Corruption Conference of States Parties (CoSP), Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

Monday, 13 December 2021 13:00-14:00 Sharm El Sheikh time

CONCEPT NOTE

The world is facing a crisis of confidence in public institutions at a time when we need them more than ever. Growing frustration with corruption and impunity is a key driver of discontent and instability, and has been further exacerbated by COVID-19. Effective and accessible justice systems that can fight corruption and help build a culture of transparency and accountability are key to promoting a more inclusive and just recovery, and getting back on track to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Special Event will highlight the key role of ethics and integrity standards for public officials, particularly in the justice sector, in countering corruption and rebuilding trust. It will bring together experts from diverse jurisdictions to explore ways to strengthen public integrity in the justice sector by sharing good practices and lessons learned.

Event Description

In his report *Our Common Agenda*, the UN Secretary-General identified citizens' loss of trust in the officials and institutions that are meant to serve them as one of the most pressing challenges facing the international community. He called for a renewed social contract to build back this trust, and cited countering corruption as an essential element of this process. Similarly, the landmark UNGASS Political Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2021, commits Member States to 'fostering a culture of accountability, transparency, legality, integrity and fairness in the public sector, including by applying anti-corruption obligations and measures, codes of conduct and other ethical standards for all public officials, including executives and law enforcement officers, as well as prosecutors and members of parliaments and judicial bodies, bearing in mind their independence, and those subject or exposed to high corruption risks.' Judicial and prosecutorial integrity (Article 11) and integrity of criminal justice institutions (Articles 7, 8, and 11) are foundational elements of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the basis of all international anti-corruption architecture.

And yet, integrity of justice sector institutions remains elusive. Indeed, the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index for 2021 found that, for the fourth year in a row, more countries (over 74%) showed a decline across key rule of law parameters than showed improvement.

When compromised, justice sector institutions can undermine the entire justice chain and, by extension, endanger progress towards all facets of political, social, and economic development. The selection, qualification, and disciplinary processes for these officials is therefore of crucial importance, serving as a foundation on which justice systems either travel in the direction of transparency, integrity, and adherence to the rule of law, or the opposite.

The goal of the Special Event is therefore to highlight the role of ethics and integrity standards for public officials, particularly in the justice sector, in preventing and countering corruption, and in turn, in building public trust.

The event will be held as an interactive dialogue between practitioners and policymakers, with a focus on best practices and lessons-learned in a range of jurisdictions in the development and implementation of ethics and integrity standards, particularly for prosecutors and judges.

Specific outcomes include:

- i) identifying the role that ethics and integrity standards can play in addressing corruption in the public sector, especially the prosecution and the judiciary
- ii) sharing good practices in the development and effective implementation of these standards
- iii) reflecting on challenges in implementing standards and how these can be overcome, and
- iv) advancing a community of practice around the development and application of ethics and integrity standards as key inputs for preventing and countering corruption

Through this discussion, the event aims to provide effective, substantial guidance to governments, anti-corruption authorities, and civil society in the development of a culture of accountability, transparency and integrity in the public sector, in line with countries' commitments in paragraph 6 of the UNGASS Political Declaration and their obligations under Articles 7, 8, and 11 of the UNCAC.

Moderators

Ms. Jan Beagle, Director-General, International Development Law Organization

Speakers

- H.E. Yvonne Dausab, Minister of Justice of Namibia
- Sir Anthony Hooper, Lord Justice of The Court of Appeal of England and Wales (retired), Honorary Professor at University College, London, and Honorary Fellow at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge
- Ms. Dian Novianthi, Director of the Anti-Corruption Education and Training Center, Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia
- Mr. Jean-François Bohnert, Chief Public Prosecutor, Head of the National Financial Prosecution Office of France
- Mr. John Brandolino, Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime