



Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Distr.: Limited
5 August 2022

Original: English

Implementation Review Group

Thirteenth session

Vienna, 13–17 June 2022

Report of the Implementation Review Group on its thirteenth session, held in Vienna from 13 to 17 June 2022

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I. Introduction

1. The Implementation Review Group was established by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption in its resolution 3/1, entitled “Review mechanism”, as an open-ended intergovernmental group of States parties to operate under its authority and report to it. The Group is to have an overview of the review process in order to identify challenges and good practices and to consider technical assistance requirements in order to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

II. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

2. The Implementation Review Group held its thirteenth session in Vienna from 13 to 17 June 2022, in an in-person format with limited online participation.

3. The Implementation Review Group held 10 meetings, which were chaired by Hassan Abdelshafy Ahmed Abdelghany (Egypt), the President of the Conference at its ninth session; five of those meetings were held jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption.

4. On 13 June, the Implementation Review Group adopted the organization of work for the session, as annexed to the annotated provisional agenda ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/1](#)).

5. In his introductory statement, the Secretary provided an overview of the organization of work of the separate and joint proceedings of the Implementation Review Group at its thirteenth session and the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption at its thirteenth meeting.

B. Attendance

6. The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the session: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

7. The European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is a party to the Convention, was represented at the session.

8. In accordance with rule 2 of its resolution 4/5, the Conference decided that intergovernmental organizations, Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network may be invited to participate in the sessions of the Implementation Review Group.

9. The following Secretariat unit and other bodies of the United Nations system were represented by observers: Department of Peace Operations of the Secretariat, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and United Nations Development Programme.

10. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, International Anti-Corruption Academy, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Development Law Organization, League of Arab States and World Customs Organization.

III. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

A. Drawing of lots

11. Lots were drawn for the review of Suriname for the first and second review cycles. For the first review cycle, Grenada and New Zealand were drawn as reviewing States for Suriname. For the second review cycle, Belize and Afghanistan were drawn as reviewing States for Suriname.

12. At the request of States parties under review, several redraws of reviewing States were carried out. In addition, provisional redraws were carried out in cases where reviewing States could defer acting as reviewers in accordance with the terms of reference of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and could not be reached for immediate confirmation of their readiness to conduct the reviews.

B. Progress made in the conduct of country reviews

13. A representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the progress made in the country reviews conducted under the first and second review cycles. So far, 184 of the 188 States parties under review in the first cycle had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 175 direct dialogues (comprising 161 country visits and 14 joint meetings) had taken place, and 173 executive summaries had been finalized. In reference to the progress made under the second cycle, the representative noted that 145 of the 185 States parties under review in that cycle had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 87 direct dialogues (comprising 81 country visits and six joint meetings) had taken place, and 62 executive summaries and 36 country review reports had been finalized. The finalization of several other executive summaries for both cycles was imminent. So far, approximately 95 per cent of country visits in the second cycle had involved other stakeholders.

14. Furthermore, the representative of the secretariat described the impact that the measures taken by States parties in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had had on country reviews under the Implementation Review Mechanism. He noted that, from the onset of the pandemic until late 2021, the duration of the pandemic and the effect that it would have on country reviews, including the organization of in-person country visits, could not have been anticipated. He informed the Implementation Review Group of the mitigation measures taken by the secretariat, such as focusing efforts on the desk-based elements of country reviews and conducting country visits online, and shared challenges and good practices in that regard. The representative further noted that despite those efforts, the measures taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 had caused delays in the organization of a considerable number of country visits and in the finalization of executive summaries and country review reports. Those delays had been compounded by delays at various

steps of the review process, such as the nomination of focal points and reviewing experts, the submission of responses to the self-assessment checklist, the scheduling of country visits and the provision of feedback on documents. He informed the Group that, accordingly, the projections regarding the finalization of reviews made in December 2019, just before the start of the pandemic, when the Conference had adopted decision 8/1 to extend the second cycle until June 2024, were no longer accurate, and that the completion of the second cycle was not going to be possible by June 2024. He underscored that the secretariat would keep the Group informed of developments and provide further analysis in a conference room paper, which would be prepared for the consideration of the Group at its first resumed thirteenth session. The representative also noted that those developments might warrant the consideration by the Group of a recommendation to the Conference to extend the second cycle by 18 months, until December 2025, to coincide with the eleventh session of the Conference.

15. In response, many speakers reiterated their countries' commitment to the Implementation Review Mechanism and underscored that it was a crucial tool in the prevention of and fight against corruption and in accelerating the implementation of the Convention.

16. A number of speakers underscored the importance of adhering to the guiding principles and characteristics of the Implementation Review Mechanism, including its intergovernmental, non-adversarial, non-punitive, non-intrusive, inclusive, impartial and technical nature, as well as the principles of equality and sovereignty of States parties. One speaker stressed that, in order to ensure the impartial functioning of the Mechanism, it should be funded from the regular budget.

17. Several speakers emphasized that the Implementation Review Group was a platform that contributed to the exchange of information on national measures taken during or after the completion of reviews. One speaker referred to training sessions on the Implementation Review Mechanism and expressed the readiness of his Government to continue to host such sessions, using funding provided for that purpose.

18. Speakers shared their countries' experiences as States under review and as reviewing States parties and provided information on measures taken after the completion of the reviews, including in implementing the recommendations emanating from them. One speaker noted that, owing to the supranational nature of his regional economic integration organization, which was a party to the Convention, the review involved consultations with several institutions from different States members of the organization. Several speakers informed the Implementation Review Group of the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had had on their reviews, including country visits that had been postponed.

19. Several speakers informed the Implementation Review Group of the adoption of national anti-corruption strategies to comply with the requirements of the Convention, as well as institutional reforms and amendments made to existing legislation, including criminal codes and legislation on preventing and criminalizing money-laundering and on protecting whistle-blowers. Furthermore, some speakers highlighted the adoption of new legislation on freedom of information and financial disclosure by their Governments. One speaker informed the Group that, in her country, an alliance for the implementation of the Convention consisting of government, civil society and private sector institutions had been created to implement recommendations emanating from the reviews. Another speaker noted that her country was in the process of finalizing a beneficial ownership register and had taken steps towards requiring the publication of contracts related to the extraction of oil and gas. Some speakers outlined measures that their countries were planning to take to ensure that national legislation complied with the Convention. The importance of fighting corruption for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was underscored.

20. Some speakers provided information on technical assistance that their countries had received to support the implementation of the Convention and reiterated the need for continued international cooperation, in particular in relation to asset recovery. In that regard, other speakers highlighted the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building, including through sharing experiences and good practices. One speaker commended the work of the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in assisting practitioners through the development of knowledge products. The need for sufficient resources to allow for the provision of effective technical assistance was mentioned.

21. Reference was made to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, held in June 2021, and the resulting political declaration, which was entitled “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation” and provided a substantive framework for all States in preventing and fighting corruption.

22. One speaker confirmed the integral role that the supreme audit institution carried out during the implementation review process in her country and encouraged other States parties to the Convention to include their respective supreme audit institutions and oversight bodies in the implementation review process. She further encouraged States parties to enhance the role of supreme audit institutions and oversight bodies in preventing and fighting corruption in order to foster integrity, accountability, transparency, proper management of public affairs and property and the efficient use of public resources, in accordance with the Abu Dhabi declaration on enhancing collaboration between the supreme audit institutions and anti-corruption bodies to more effectively prevent and fight corruption, adopted by the Conference in its resolution 8/13, and with its resolution 9/3.

23. One speaker encouraged States parties to sign the UNCAC Coalition Transparency Pledge and informed the Implementation Review Group of her Government’s intention to publish all of the documents related to its review. Another speaker referred to the confidentiality of country reports and the right of States to exercise their prerogative in deciding whether or not their reports would be published.

24. One speaker stressed that corruption could not be fought without the support of civil society. He referred to recurrent attempts to block certain relevant non-governmental organizations from the work of the Conference on the basis of unfounded allegations. He noted that, at the ninth session, the Conference had decided to defer the decision on the participation of eight non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and he referred to the informal consultations on that matter, which were scheduled for the end of June 2022. He also noted that, should the consultations prove unfruitful, the matter would be brought up for a decision by the Conference in line with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure for the Conference.

25. Another speaker noted that his Government welcomed the participation of non-governmental organizations in line with rule 17 of the rules of procedure for the Conference, established practice and article 13 of the Convention. He also noted that there was no ambiguity with regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Conference in accordance with the rules of procedure, which had been adopted by consensus and should not be amended. He further noted that States parties had the right to object to the participation of non-governmental organizations.

26. Satisfaction was expressed with the current 95 per cent rate of participation of other stakeholders in the review process, which enhanced the quality of reviews.

27. In response to a question, the representative of the secretariat drew the attention of the Implementation Review Group to paragraphs 44 and 45 of the report on the ninth session of the Conference ([CAC/COSP/2021/17](#)), in which it was stated that the Conference had agreed to defer the decision on the participation

of eight non-governmental organizations not in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, to hold informal consultations and to continue discussions on the matter of objections to the participation of those non-governmental organizations during the intersessional period in order to facilitate consensus in the future and identify a long-term, institutional solution so as not to bring the issue to future sessions of the Conference, which might impair its ability to address other issues.

28. It was noted that, while the timely completion of the second review cycle was important, the need to analyse in detail any existing gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Convention also needed to be taken into account. It was also noted that accelerating that work would assist States parties in considering the next steps and would assist the Conference in making a decision on the next review phase. Some speakers suggested that the Implementation Review Group should start discussing that matter and that a detailed analysis should be prepared by the secretariat for the consideration of the Group at its next session, which, as noted by one speaker, should also take into account the findings contained in the report entitled “Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, in particular its second review cycle and the measures required for its completion” (CAC/COSP/2019/12). Appreciation was expressed for the efforts of the secretariat to draw on lessons learned by other organizations in the transition from the initial review to the follow-up phase, and the secretariat was invited to prepare a document on lessons learned for the consideration of the Group at its next session, with a view to informing the preparations and discussions of the next phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism.

29. One speaker mentioned the impact of unilateral and coercive measures on the work of his Government to prevent and combat corruption, which it was making efforts to overcome.

C. Synergies with the secretariats of other relevant multilateral mechanisms

30. A representative of the secretariat presented an overview of activities to enhance synergies with the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organization of American States as the secretariats of the four major anti-corruption peer-review mechanisms, in line with Conference resolution 7/4. She noted that UNODC, the Council of Europe and OECD had reiterated their commitment to enhancing synergies between their respective peer-review mechanisms in a joint message submitted to the Conference (CAC/COSP/2021/CRP.5). To further increase synergies in procedural matters, UNODC had invited the other secretariats to contribute to the newly relaunched legal library in the Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (TRACK) repository. In addition, UNODC had benefited from a briefing by representatives of OECD on the peer reviews under the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions. With regard to substantive matters, the four secretariats had engaged in joint events dedicated to whistle-blower protection, and UNODC had contributed to the 2021 Anti-Bribery Recommendation adopted by the OECD Council in November 2021. In addition, UNODC had assisted in the development and creation of the new review mechanism for the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, adopted at the fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, held in March 2022. The Office had also participated in the revision of the Financial Action Task Force recommendation and accompanying guidance on beneficial ownership transparency.

31. In the ensuing discussion, speakers welcomed the cooperation between UNODC and the secretariats of the other major anti-corruption peer-review mechanisms. In particular, speakers highlighted the work conducted in preparation for the new review mechanism for the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention, which had been created in cooperation with UNODC to complement existing anti-corruption peer-review mechanisms and bolster anti-corruption efforts across the League of Arab States. One

speaker expressed his country's willingness to support the new mechanism, including by holding training sessions and workshops for its members.

IV. Financial and budgetary matters

32. A representative of the secretariat provided information on the expenditure incurred for the operation of the first and second cycles of the Implementation Review Mechanism as at 28 February 2022 and on the current funding gap between the extrabudgetary voluntary contributions received and the resource requirements for the functioning of the Mechanism.

33. With regard to regular budget resources, the representative highlighted the implications of the liquidity challenges faced by the United Nations in 2021 in connection with the regular budget, which had negatively affected the Implementation Review Mechanism by precluding UNODC from filling a vacant post funded under the regular budget, thereby reducing the capacity of the secretariat to support the Mechanism. He also informed the Implementation Review Group that, in view of the recent improvement of the liquidity situation, the Secretary-General had decided to remove the restrictions on the filling of posts funded from the regular budget in 2022.

34. With regard to extrabudgetary expenditure, the representative explained that the COVID-19 crisis had significantly reduced cost-generating activities, such as travel of governmental and UNODC experts for the purpose of conducting country visits. As a result, only \$280,200 had been spent in support of operating the Implementation Review Mechanism since the previous financial report, presented to the Implementation Review Group in 2021 ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2021/5](#)). In total, therefore, \$9,785,200 and \$3,994,500 had been spent in support of operating the first and the second cycles of the Mechanism, respectively, as at 28 February 2022. The representative expressed appreciation for the voluntary and in-kind contributions made by States to support the Mechanism and informed the Group that the extrabudgetary contributions provided to the Mechanism had totalled \$18,423,200 as at 28 February 2022. He noted that that amount covered the total estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements for the first cycle and the first four years of the second cycle, so that the overall funding gap had been reduced to \$736,500.

35. One speaker noted that the Implementation Review Mechanism was made possible through the mixed funding model that drew on both the regular budget and extrabudgetary contributions. She expressed appreciation for the report of the secretariat on financial and budgetary matters and highlighted that transparent and regular reporting to States parties on the expenditure and estimated costs of UNODC was essential to ensuring that the funding model continued to work effectively. She stressed her country's continued support for the Mechanism through voluntary contributions and encouraged other donors to consider providing additional funding to the Mechanism in order to close the funding gap. She expressed her Government's optimism that the budgetary shortfall for the second review cycle could be closed imminently now that the funding gap was under \$800,000.

36. In response to questions raised by the speaker, the representative of the secretariat informed the Implementation Review Group that a potential extension of the second cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism would not lead to an increase of extrabudgetary resource requirements to cover the projected expenditure for its completion. He noted that the staff costs of operating the Mechanism and the costs of servicing the sessions of the Group would need to continue to be covered through the regular budget of the United Nations.

V. State of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Thematic discussion

Panel discussion on best practices and challenges in ensuring effective cooperation at the domestic level among anti-corruption and law enforcement authorities

37. In her introductory remarks, a representative of the secretariat noted that the collaboration of public authorities and officials with investigating and prosecuting authorities was essential to overall anti-corruption efforts. She recalled the joint commitment in the political declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its special session against corruption to enabling effective domestic cooperation among, as appropriate, anti-corruption authorities, police, investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities, as well as financial intelligence units, administrative and oversight bodies, in corruption investigations and proceedings at the national and international levels, in accordance with domestic law. The speaker noted that data from country reviews showed that most States parties had taken measures to encourage and foster such cooperation, as provided for in article 38 of the Convention, through a variety of mechanisms, such as spontaneous reporting obligations for public officials, measures to encourage or prescribe cooperation and information exchange, and laws granting enforcement authorities powers to demand and collect information. She also referred to the important role of the country reviews in enhancing national coordination among public authorities and law enforcement bodies.

38. In presenting his country's experience, a panellist from Italy spoke about the important role of cooperation and coordination among national authorities in corruption investigations and prosecutions in his country. One feature that distinguished the investigative activity of the Milan Public Prosecutor's Office in the fight against corruption was its focus on specific crimes in the corporate and tax fields. Over the years, a close synergy between the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Guardia di Finanza, the Italian law enforcement body with specific competence for economic and financial matters, had led to an improvement of investigative methodologies. The Public Prosecutor's Office had signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Anti-Corruption Authority to allow for effective exchange of information, files and documents relating to investigations and criminal and administrative proceedings. The authorities also cooperated during investigations. Beyond that, the fight against corruption was advanced through cooperation between the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Bank of Italy and the Italian financial intelligence unit, based on two memorandums of understanding. Within that framework, since 2009, the Public Prosecutor's Office had availed itself of a judiciary support unit made up of four experts who were specifically tasked with supporting criminal investigations. Overall, close cooperation and coordination had proved critical to following the money trail and to combating broader economic crime and corruption, in addition to organized crime.

39. A panellist from Peru delivered a presentation on inter-agency coordination among anti-corruption and law enforcement authorities in his country. Highlighting the different forms of corruption and their impact, he elaborated on the Peruvian anti-corruption system and inter-agency coordination. He referred to the establishment of the High-level Anti-Corruption Commission, which is responsible for coordinating the institutions in charge of investigating and prosecuting corruption. The panellist highlighted several important institutional and legislative developments in his country, such as the establishment of the National Authority for Transparency and Access to Public Information and the National Authority for the Control of the Judiciary and Prosecution Services, the enactment of the Law on Non-Conviction-Based Confiscation and the ratification of the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. He provided examples of institutional cooperation in preventing and combating corruption, including cases of high-level corruption. The cooperation of

the Comptroller General's Office with civil society through the publication of reports and the development of programmes, as well as online public hearings, was also noted. Lastly, he presented ways to enhance domestic cooperation in the fight against corruption.

40. A panellist from the Republic of Korea presented her country's experience in fighting corruption through domestic inter-agency cooperation. She started with an overview of the institutional anti-corruption framework in the Republic of Korea, noting that the main organization responsible for the prevention and deterrence of corruption was the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, while the main law enforcement organization responsible for the investigation and prosecution of crimes was the Korean Prosecution Service. The Korean Prosecution Service and the Korean National Police Agency cooperated as partners in fighting corruption and in investigations. In addition, the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials had been established in January 2021 with a view to targeting corruption cases involving high-ranking officials and could exercise prosecutorial authority in cases against judges, prosecutors or high-ranking police officers. In elaborating on the cooperation mechanism, the panellist explained that when the Commission received a report of alleged corruption, it assessed the veracity of the report and referred the case to the investigating authority if warranted. The authority was required to conduct an investigation within 60 days of referral and to notify the Commission of the result within 10 days of completing the investigation. During the investigation, the law enforcement authorities used the information provided by the Commission as a starting point, consulted with the Commission and requested additional information if necessary. The responsible prosecutor had the ultimate authority to decide whether to prosecute the case. Close cooperation between the Commission and the Korean Prosecution Service had begun in June 2013, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding for mutual cooperation. The panellist provided two examples of good practice in the cooperation between the Commission and the Korean Prosecution Service. Before concluding, the panellist highlighted some of the challenges relevant to domestic cooperation in the Republic of Korea, including the need to further enhance cooperation during investigations and criminal proceedings and the need for exchanges of information between the Commission and other law enforcement authorities.

41. A panellist from Angola presented her country's experience in domestic coordination in the conduct of country reviews under the Convention. In October 2019, an anti-corruption working group comprising 20 institutions had been created and tasked with the national implementation of the Convention. The group's main objectives included studying and proposing a national anti-corruption strategy, coordinating the country review process at the national level and presenting and proposing domestic legislation in line with the Convention and other international instruments. The panellist explained that Angola had started the review process with an online training session involving national experts and UNODC, followed by several national meetings that had included further training activities. In terms of the division of responsibilities, the working group had been divided into subgroups, and each member of those subgroups had been assigned two articles (one from each chapter of the Convention) to develop responses to the self-assessment checklist and examples related to implementation. Following the nomination of reviewing countries, the focal points had increased their contact with UNODC and the national institutions and bodies involved in the review. Challenges in coordinating the review process included difficulties in engaging national institutions and bodies, insufficient domestic information regarding previous assessments under the Convention, insufficient statistics, conflicts with the full-time jobs of working group members, logistical issues in the preparations for the country visit and COVID-19-related restrictions. The panellist concluded by recommending that States parties make an effort to benefit as much as possible from UNODC training and the participation of reviewers in the review process.

42. During the ensuing discussion, a number of speakers emphasized the critical importance of coordination among anti-corruption and law enforcement authorities as a key measure in enhancing the effectiveness of anti-corruption interventions and strengthening preventive and anti-corruption policies. Speakers shared their national experiences in coordination, cooperation and information exchange among relevant authorities and the impact of those efforts in enhancing coordinated responses to corruption, including in cases involving high-level corruption and related offences of money-laundering and infractions involving public funds. Speakers highlighted, in particular, the important role of financial intelligence units in the rapid exchange of information and intelligence among competent authorities in criminal investigations and proceedings, as well as in cases related to asset recovery, and the impact of joint investigations on the strengthening of coordinated action and the building of evidence. Several speakers also highlighted the importance of adequate independence and autonomy on the part of judicial bodies and public institutions involved in preventing and countering corruption.

43. In response to a question, panellists emphasized the importance of joint investigative measures in producing solid evidence admissible in judicial proceedings and in overcoming obstacles to inter-agency coordination. The panellist from Angola emphasized that joint investigations in her country brought together relevant authorities and were especially useful in producing information that could be provided to the prosecution and used to build evidence. The financial intelligence unit in Angola had received technical assistance to enhance the use of joint investigative teams, and many of the major corruption cases in Angola had involved the use of joint investigations. The panellist from Italy referred to a law adopted in Italy in January 2019, known as the anti-corruption law, that had strengthened the prevention, detection and repression of crimes against the Italian public administration and focused on the use of special investigative techniques, including undercover operations and wiretapping.

44. In response to a question on how coordination contributed to the development and implementation of national policies and strategies against corruption, panellists emphasized the role of dedicated institutions, departments and offices that coordinated national anti-corruption policy and action and provided for enhanced coordination in the prevention and fight against corruption. In that context, the panellist from the Republic of Korea noted that more in-depth information from the prosecution or police could be useful in helping the relevant authorities to formulate better policies to prevent corruption. The panellist from Angola noted that authorities in her country were using the results of the implementation review process to update the national anti-corruption plan and national strategy against corruption.

45. In response to a question on whether coordination among domestic authorities had had an impact on the implementation of national strategies or policies and on the overall fight against corruption, the panellist from Peru referred to the specific legal and institutional measures that had been taken to strengthen the anti-corruption framework in his country, which had led to enhancements in the criminal legal and institutional framework and allowed for criminal cases to be handled more swiftly. Looking ahead, he emphasized the importance of prevention and the need to allocate adequate resources to strengthen collective action against corruption.

46. In response to a question, panellists emphasized the importance of access to various databases in strengthening coordination in the fight against corruption. The panellist from Peru explained that his country had seen significant improvement in that area in recent years. The Comptroller General's Office now managed approximately 25 databases containing information from open sources held by different public organizations. Updating those sources regularly and managing interoperability were crucial to enhancing anti-corruption efforts. The Italian panellist referred to the database of the financial intelligence unit, which provided critical information about financial transactions.

47. Several speakers highlighted the important role of involving other stakeholders in collective and concerted action against corruption, in particular civil society, as well as citizens, the private sector and the media. In response to a question, the panellist from Peru referred to strategic partnerships involving civil society in providing relevant information and cooperation in the fight against corruption. Online hearings led by the Comptroller General's Office allowed civil society to be involved in the fight against corruption and to report corruption to the authorities. The large number of online meetings generated valuable alerts from citizens and proved effective in providing citizens with a channel for public reporting, monitoring and oversight.

48. In response to a question on alternative measures, besides criminal sanctions, that could be taken to hold intermediaries such as lawyers and accountants accountable in corruption cases, the panellist from the Republic of Korea referred to disciplinary sanctions for violation of codes of conduct, such as suspension, demotion and docking of salaries. The panellist from Angola noted the obligations of third parties to report suspicious transactions under her country's anti-money-laundering regime. The panellist from Peru referred to measures to prevent people who had been convicted from holding public office or standing for election, and to the importance of suspending or lifting parliamentary immunities.

49. In response to a question on how the use of information and communications technologies could be leveraged to produce legally acceptable evidence in corruption cases, in particular those involving high-level public officials, the panellist from the Republic of Korea noted the increasing importance of technological means and methods in collecting evidence and tracing assets in her country. She referred to the digital forensic centre that had been established in the Supreme Prosecutor's Office to facilitate the collection of evidence. Noting the high standard of evidence required in transnational corruption cases in particular, the panellist from Italy emphasized the significant role of techniques such as wiretapping in cases where no witness testimony was available.

50. One speaker shared a new practice developed in her country to improve cooperation between law enforcement, regulatory and legislative bodies and to enhance legislative and regulatory tools. An interministerial forum that included different departments in the Ministry of Justice had launched a pilot programme on lessons learned in the handling of corruption cases and had established a procedure for identifying flaws and strengthening coordination among authorities. The recommendations emerging from the pilot programme addressed possible solutions such as structural, regulatory and legislative tools for strengthening the prevention and identification of offences.

Panel discussion on bribery of foreign public officials and officials of public international organizations: addressing supply and demand

51. In her introductory remarks, a representative of the secretariat noted that the aim of the panel discussion was to explore practical measures to prevent and detect bribery. Given the difficulties faced in prosecuting bribery offences owing to their clandestine nature and practical obstacles such as a lack of capacity and resources, enforcement rates remained low and inconsistent around the globe. To ultimately improve enforcement, she invited panellists to discuss how the detection of bribery offences could be improved, in particular by using existing data sources and channels. In addition, she invited panellists to explore how public sector entities could better safeguard their public officials from bribery by putting in place practical, organizational measures. She further noted that the secretariat was conducting a global study on bribery that was based on Conference of the States Parties resolution 8/6 and would, in particular, explore measures that were cost-effective and lent themselves to adaptation and implementation by other States.

52. A panellist from Romania presented three national initiatives to inform the evidence-based development of anti-corruption policies. To understand what

motivated corrupt behaviour, Romania had carried out surveys and interviews with persons convicted of bribery or accepting bribes. The studies showed that corrupt behaviour was not necessarily motivated by greed or a lack of financial resources, and that the deterrent effect of possible detection and criminal, administrative or disciplinary sanctions was limited. Instead, the studies revealed that education, training and a work environment that promoted integrity were the most critical factors in preventing and deterring corrupt behaviour. Highlighting the importance of risk assessments, the panellist described a methodology that required public institutions to identify and describe risks, set up corresponding mitigation mechanisms and monitor, evaluate and update those measures as needed. Finally, Romania had designed a standard methodology for ex post assessments of integrity incidents. Whenever a corruption incident occurred, a thorough analysis had to be conducted with a view to determining the root causes of the incident, ascertaining the adequacy of, or weaknesses in, the policies and procedures involved, and assessing the impact of the incident on the relevant organization and the probability of reoccurrence. The analysis covered the behaviour of the public official involved, the *modus operandi*, the field of work and specific position of the official involved, the rules and policies in place and whether they had been broken, how the incident could be prevented in the future, how the incident had been discovered and how long it had taken to discover it, etc. The results of the analysis were subsequently used to implement risk-mitigating measures and strengthen existing policies and strategies for preventing and combating corruption, including bribery.

53. A panellist from Greece highlighted the establishment of the National Transparency Authority, an independent authority with administrative and financial autonomy in charge of detecting as well as preventing corruption, as a major structural reform in the area of tackling corruption. The national anti-corruption action plan for the period 2022–2025, which had been developed in consultation with major stakeholders, including civil society, and built on international good practices, was being implemented through a risk-based approach and prioritized targeted interventions in high-risk areas prone to fraud and corruption, such as large infrastructure projects, public procurement and foreign investment. Greece also relied on awareness-raising campaigns on business integrity and the implementation and monitoring of corporate compliance programmes against bribery. The panellist noted that the National Transparency Authority and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had developed guidelines for the country's diplomatic personnel on reporting bribery allegations published in foreign media, in order to allow authorities to systematically monitor and investigate foreign bribery cases. The panellist noted that the digitalization of a number of mechanisms had brought about significant improvements in the effectiveness of the prevention and detection of bribery. Reference was made to the upgraded national database for asset declarations (E-Pothen), the Transparency Registry, where all activities of lobbyists were recorded, including for public scrutiny purposes, and the establishment of secure reporting channels and protection measures for whistle-blowers. The panellist stressed the crucial role of international cooperation in curbing bribery given that corruption schemes were continuously evolving and becoming more sophisticated.

54. Two panellists from Israel jointly presented the measures taken by their country to improve the detection, investigation and prosecution of foreign bribery. The first panellist noted that Israel had designated specialized units in the police and the Tel Aviv District Attorney's Office as responsible for investigating and prosecuting foreign bribery offences. The investigation and prosecution of foreign bribery were conducted under the auspices of an interministerial team headed by the Deputy State Attorney. The team included representatives of relevant authorities, and one of its key functions was to obtain information regarding foreign bribery offences, including by monitoring all cases, issuing instructions on the course of action to take and following up on the provision of information in response to mutual legal assistance requests regarding suspected bribery. The second panellist highlighted the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in detecting foreign bribery, as officials of the Ministry were required to actively monitor local media at their duty stations and report any suspicion

of foreign bribery offences involving Israeli citizens. The panellist also highlighted the possibility of preliminary examinations as an option in cases where the evidentiary basis did not justify a formal investigation but public interest warranted looking into the matter. Without opening a formal investigation, a range of investigative measures, including mutual legal assistance requests, were available, while avoiding any negative impact on the office or public official involved. She described a case in which a preliminary investigation had been conducted following a media report.

55. A panellist from Rwanda presented the anti-corruption powers of the Office of the Ombudsman of Rwanda, which included verifying asset declarations, investigating potential misconduct, advising the Government on anti-corruption matters, promoting integrity values among citizens and acting as a reviewing authority for complaints against public institutions. The panellist referred to the added value of establishing electronic processes for verifying asset declarations, as they contributed significantly to detecting bribery and triggering investigations. The panellist highlighted the importance of the use of technological tools to develop trust in institutions and reduce opportunities for bribery. He mentioned that the Government of Rwanda had digitalized a number of key public services, such as the civil service portal, the procurement system, the case management system of the judiciary and the whistle-blower reporting system of the Ombudsman. He highlighted that the digitalization of the whistle-blower reporting system and corresponding awareness-raising campaigns had significantly raised the level of reporting to the Ombudsman, which had previously been low. The panellist also shared the experience of Rwanda in verifying asset declarations through implementing a mechanism that involved national coordination among the relevant authorities, including the land registry, the tax administration and the central bank.

56. In the ensuing discussion, one speaker noted the utility of hybrid meetings, highlighting that the format of the meeting had allowed practitioners who might not have otherwise joined the meeting to share good practices from their countries. The speaker further noted that addressing foreign bribery remained a priority for his country and that charges had been filed and convictions reached in about 20 cases in the previous year, in addition to fines and disgorgements that had amounted to more than \$200 million. The speaker commended Greece and Israel for engaging their diplomatic corps in the detection and reporting of foreign bribery cases and noted that his country also provided training to its foreign service officers on foreign bribery. He enquired whether the panellists' countries provided incentives for companies to voluntarily disclose suspicions of bribery to law enforcement, such as through mitigated sanctions, and whether programmes existed to incentivize the reporting of wrongdoing by employees of private sector entities. In response, the panellist from Romania explained that Romania had found that incentives for the voluntary disclosure of acts of bribery were indeed effective and helpful for criminal investigators. The panellist from Greece confirmed that mitigated sanctions could be offered to companies if they reported incidents and cooperated with investigations. With regard to incentives for internal reporting, the panellists from Israel referred to comprehensive protection measures for whistle-blowers to encourage reporting.

57. In response to a question on the importance of verifying asset declarations, the panellist from Romania stressed the value of public scrutiny in checking asset declarations but noted that, ultimately, the responsible institutions needed to ensure adequate verification of declarations, including investigations into unexplained wealth and sanctions for wrongful disclosures. The panellist from Rwanda explained that the Office of the Ombudsman had two months to review asset declarations, for instance by comparing them with previous declarations and highlighting inconsistencies. He provided examples of successful investigations leading to the conviction and imprisonment of public officials for illicit enrichment, as well as to the confiscation of their assets. He stressed the importance of inter-agency collaboration on those matters.

58. One speaker shared the experience of his country in dealing with a case involving an official of a public international organization who had leaked

procurement-related information in return for a bribe. He explained how the lengthy process of requesting the lifting of the immunity of the international organization's staff member had ultimately prevented the authorities from charging the perpetrator, as he had fled the country.

59. Another speaker noted that foreign bribery was a matter of collective action, and that States needed to move at the same speed to create a more level playing field. He pointed to the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions as a robust mechanism for curbing foreign bribery that was open to all major exporting countries. With regard to measures aimed at addressing the demand side of bribery, he referred to the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization, which helped States parties simplify administrative procedures at borders. He encouraged States parties to consider making use of that instrument. Another speaker expressed interest in hearing States' experiences in implementing the International Organization for Standardization standard 37001 on anti-bribery management systems or any other relevant standards that assisted public administrations in establishing a culture of integrity, transparency and compliance.

60. Several speakers noted the importance of anti-corruption education and outreach activities. One of the panellists from Israel explained that the Ministry of Justice had launched a new website aimed at raising awareness about corruption, including about obligations and recommendations for private companies under the 2021 Recommendation of the OECD Council for Further Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. Lectures for investigators, prosecutors and companies on the subject were also given. In response to a question on how to assess the impact of education programmes aimed at reducing foreign bribery, the panellist from Greece shared his country's experience in developing and implementing surveys to measure impact. Prior to introducing a new measure, a survey was used to assess perceptions and, following the introduction of a measure, a follow-up survey was conducted to assess the extent to which the perceptions changed. He pointed out that measuring the impact of anti-corruption policies was a lengthy, challenging process, which needed careful and accurate design and implementation.

VI. State of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption

Exchange of information, practices and experiences gained in the implementation of the Convention

61. A representative of the secretariat presented an update on the most common good practices and challenges identified in the thematic report on the implementation of chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention against Corruption ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/3](#)) and in the report on the implementation of chapter II at the regional level ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/4](#)), with a focus on: (a) the promotion of education, training and awareness-raising; and (b) the use of information and communications technologies in relation to asset declarations, financial disclosure systems and public procurement. She informed the Implementation Review Group that both reports were based on the 58 executive summaries that had been finalized at the time of drafting.

62. With regard to the thematic report, the representative noted that the trends regarding both challenges and good practices had remained largely consistent with those identified in previous thematic reports, but that new nuances had been identified. In addition, good practices were specifically highlighted in the thematic report. Noting the increased amount of data and information emanating from finalized country reviews, she also noted that, in the future, the secretariat would present relevant information in three separate thematic reports: (a) a report focusing on

chapter II, articles 5 to 13, excluding cross-cutting issues that overlapped with chapter V; (b) a report focusing solely on the issues that overlapped between chapters II and V; and (c) a report focusing on chapter V, excluding cross-cutting issues that overlapped with chapter II. Regarding specific trends in challenges and good practices, the provisions with the largest numbers of recommendations were articles 7, 8 and 12, while the number of recommendations issued on article 11 remained low. The representative noted that the largest number of good practices had been identified in relation to articles 5, 13 and 14, while article 11 continued to be the provision with the smallest number of good practices identified.

63. With regard to the report on the implementation of chapter II of the Convention at the regional level, on the topic of the promotion of education, training and awareness-raising, she explained that the Group of African States had the highest percentage of States that had received recommendations on article 6, paragraph 2, and article 9, paragraph 1. The largest number of States receiving recommendations on article 7, paragraph 1, and article 13, paragraph 1, belonged to the Asia-Pacific Group, while the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and other States had not received any recommendations on article 9, paragraph 1, and article 13, paragraph 1. Regarding the use of information and communications technologies in relation to asset declarations, financial disclosure systems and public procurement, she noted that the Group of African States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and other States all had similar percentages of States that had received recommendations on article 8, paragraph 5. With regard to article 52, paragraphs 5 and 6, the representative noted that the Group of African States had the highest percentage of States that had received recommendations. In closing, she indicated that further analysis of trends and findings would be presented in future thematic reports and regional addenda once additional country reviews were finalized.

64. In the ensuing discussions, several speakers referred to measures taken by their countries to implement the Convention, including amendments to existing legislation or the adoption of new legislation, the enhancement of institutional frameworks and the development of various anti-corruption strategies and policies, with a view to promoting transparency, integrity and accountability.

65. During a panel discussion organized during a joint meeting with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, the use of information and communications technologies for the implementation of the Convention was discussed.

VII. Technical assistance

66. A representative of the secretariat made an opening presentation on the new regional approach of UNODC to its delivery of technical assistance in line with Conference resolution 9/4, entitled “Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption at regional levels”, and on the needs emanating from the Implementation Review Mechanism. The representative explained that, although six regional platforms to fast-track the implementation of the Convention had been created to date, they were limited in geographical scope. He went on to underscore that States parties had called for an expansion of the approach, which had resulted in the creation of regional anti-corruption hubs. The hubs would further facilitate the delivery of technical assistance by moving expertise closer to the countries in need of assistance, and would allow for the overseeing, coordination and support for the delivery of technical assistance in the different regions. A first hub had been established in Mexico to cover Latin America and the Caribbean, and a second hub was to be established in South Africa in 2022 to cover Africa.

Panel discussion on lessons learned in setting up frameworks for the protection of reporting persons and reporting systems

67. In her introductory remarks, a representative of the secretariat highlighted that the protection of reporting persons under article 33 of the Convention was an effective tool for preventing, detecting and prosecuting corruption, including in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery. In that regard, she noted the importance of effective reporting systems and safe whistle-blowing mechanisms. She emphasized that the reluctance of individuals to report alleged wrongdoing or suspected acts of corruption continued to be identified by States parties as one of the main challenges in the implementation of the Convention. In that regard, she referred to Conference resolution 9/4, in which the Conference had requested that UNODC continue to provide technical assistance to States parties regarding the protection of reporting persons. UNODC had delivered support to that end and had recently issued a publication entitled *Speak Up for Health! Guidelines to Enable Whistle-blower Protection in the Health-care Sector*.

68. A panellist from South Africa presented an overview of her country's national whistle-blower protection system, including the Protected Disclosure Act and the specific pillar on whistle-blowing in the country's national anti-corruption strategy. The strategy included a recommendation on the establishment of a whistle-blower protection agency and called for greater provision of legal representation and assistance to whistle-blowers. She emphasized recent work undertaken to strengthen reporting mechanisms with the support of UNODC, such as efforts to pilot an internal reporting system within the Health Professions Council of South Africa and a survey assessing existing mechanisms for reporting corruption in the public sector.

69. A panellist from the European Commission provided an overview of directive 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law, which set out common standards to protect reporting persons and encompassed all persons who acquired relevant information in a work-related context. He highlighted that the directive permitted the reporting of a wide range of wrongdoings, required the establishment of confidential internal and external reporting channels in both the public and private sectors, and provided for the prohibition of and punishment for retaliation. Pointing to the benefits of a strong reporting system, he also highlighted a European Commission study that had revealed that an effective whistle-blower reporting system could save between 5.8 billion and 9.6 billion euros annually in the public procurement sector.

70. A panellist from Mexico presented the national system for protecting citizen "alerters" of corruption, which had helped to foster civic participation in the fight against corruption. Through the technological alert platform operated by the Ministry of the Public Service, internal and external whistle-blowers could anonymously and confidentially report alleged offences of bribery, embezzlement and the diversion of public resources. The Ministry had issued a protocol on the protection of whistle-blowers in 2020 and had thus far received and addressed more than 6,000 reports. She noted that reports involving multiple steps and requiring the collaboration of various authorities still proved challenging, including with regard to ensuring effective protection of whistle-blowers throughout the process.

71. A panellist from Switzerland presented her country's two whistle-blowing platforms, which had been established within the Swiss Federal Audit Office with a view to facilitating reporting by public officials as envisioned under article 8, paragraph 4, of the Convention. Those platforms had widened the scope of reportable wrongdoings to include sexual and moral harassment, sexual abuse or exploitation and any other abusive behaviour committed by personnel of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs or in relation to activities that took place abroad. Reports could be made anonymously and confidentially. She indicated that the number of reports had increased since the launch of the platform. She highlighted the need for additional efforts to protect whistle-blowers in the private sector.

72. In the ensuing discussion, speakers highlighted the importance of protecting whistle-blowers for the prevention of and fight against corruption, most notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several speakers emphasized efforts to develop new legislative frameworks and strategies, stronger reporting and protection systems and better protection of the identities of whistle-blowers. Guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity for whistle-blowers were deemed important by many speakers. One speaker noted the development of a network of ombudsperson's offices to promote the standardization of procedures for protecting whistle-blowers. Another speaker commended the panellist from South Africa on her country's extensive consultations with civil society on whistle-blower protection.

73. Speakers noted the good practice of using technology and secure online portals that supported two-way communication to facilitate the reporting of corruption, including anonymously. Such two-way communication allowed exchanges between receiving institutions and reporting persons to continue, while maintaining the anonymity of whistle-blowers. One speaker highlighted the importance of greater transparency and open data as means of facilitating stronger reporting mechanisms.

74. A question was raised as to whether the whistle-blower protection policies and practices in the panellists' countries took into account the concept of good faith and, if so, whether that concept presented challenges in the protection of reporting persons. In response, the panellist from South Africa noted that her country's legislative framework included a sanction for intentionally making false reports. Reference was made to the European Union whistle-blower directive, according to which a report must be made with reasonable grounds to believe that the information was true.

75. Several speakers highlighted the need to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers from retaliation in the private sector.

76. Speakers reported on strategies that also included considerations regarding whistle-blowers. Speakers raised the issue of how to balance a large number of disclosures while seeking to ensure reliability and usefulness for corruption prosecutions. The panellist from Switzerland underscored that complaints were assumed to be made in good faith, and while they were rarely malicious, some reports had been used to instrumentalize the reporting systems against officials. She agreed that the quality of complaints was important, and noted that the use of multidisciplinary teams and the centralization of complaints had facilitated the handling of reports received.

77. Questions were posed as to whether whistle-blowers received feedback or were informed of the outcome of their reports. The panellist from South Africa noted that feedback should be given to the reporting person; however, cases of anonymous reporting with limited details were referred to the Special Investigating Unit, other law enforcement agencies or the Auditor General for the provision of feedback. The panellist from the European Commission noted that persons who submitted anonymous reports received the same treatment as other reporting persons, including the right to receive feedback and an acknowledgement of receipt. In the event that the whistle-blower's identity was revealed, the person would be afforded protection. The panellist from Mexico highlighted that whistle-blowers were provided with a password that enabled them to track the status of their complaints. In Switzerland, the extent of communication was challenging, but feedback was provided on whether the complaint had been addressed.

78. The possibility of exoneration for self-reporting persons in national systems was noted.

Panel discussion on tools and resources for identifying and mitigating potential corruption risks

79. In her introductory remarks, a representative of the secretariat noted that States parties had committed to establishing effective and efficient systems of risk management and internal control, in line with article 9, paragraph 2 (d), of the

Convention. The representative referred to Conference resolution 9/6, in which States parties had been encouraged to incorporate and implement corruption risk management processes. The representative made reference to the UNODC publication entitled *State of Integrity: A Guide on Conducting Corruption Risk Assessments in Public Organizations*, which provided guidance on corruption risk assessments and was aimed at supporting States parties in their efforts to identify and mitigate corruption risks. She noted that UNODC had been supporting States parties in their corruption risk management efforts since 2015.

80. A panellist from Indonesia noted that a considerable part of the budget of her Government was spent through public procurement. As a large number of reports of alleged corruption and investigated corruption cases were related to public procurement, her country had developed a procurement fraud detection system with the support of UNODC. The panellist elaborated on the process of developing the system, which had included conducting an assessment of the public procurement system, using big data analytics to develop aggregate formulas, improving the reliability of analysis, conducting stakeholder consultations and analysing specific “red flag” indicators to establish an alert system for ongoing tenders. She noted that the process was still ongoing, and she presented some examples of how the fraud detection system currently functioned. In concluding, the panellist noted that the Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia was in the process of assessing the current fraud detection system with a view to expanding its use by the National Public Procurement Agency and other institutions.

81. A panellist from Paraguay presented the corruption risk management system that his country had developed in order to identify, analyse and address corruption risks. The panellist underscored the importance of internalizing risk management culture and addressing internal vulnerabilities. He highlighted the differences between general risk management and corruption risk management and described specific techniques and tools for the latter. In addition, he elaborated on the corruption risk matrix and mitigation plan as effective tools for the prevention of corruption.

82. A panellist from Ghana presented an overview of his country’s efforts to conduct corruption risk assessments in public sector organizations and to implement the corresponding mitigation measures. He explained that, with the support of UNODC, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice of Ghana had conducted corruption risk assessments in the public health and fisheries sectors, both of which were prone to corruption. The panellist highlighted the importance of thorough planning, adequate funding and regular communication with relevant institutions. He noted that working groups established for corruption risk assessments should be composed of persons with knowledge of the sectors concerned. He also noted that Ghana planned to ensure monitoring and evaluation once the implementation of the corruption risk mitigation plans commenced, and that the country would also implement corruption risk assessment in other public sector institutions following “training of trainers” workshops provided by UNODC.

83. A panellist from Kenya presented his country’s efforts to assess and manage corruption risks related to wildlife management and protection, with the support of UNODC. He highlighted that corruption risk management was an ongoing process and that, as a result, it was important to have oversight structures in place to accompany risk mitigation and corruption prevention activities. Some key risk-mitigation outcomes in the Kenya Wildlife Service included a corruption prevention policy and code of conduct, an improved internal integrity management system, a corruption experience survey, improved mechanisms for reporting suspected corruption, and awareness-raising among staff. He noted that corruption risk management had led to a reduction in poaching in national parks and had improved the overall performance of the Service.

84. In the ensuing discussion, several speakers noted the importance of context-specific and targeted technical assistance, in line with the needs and priorities identified by countries, and stressed that such assistance formed the basis for effective

anti-corruption efforts. One speaker highlighted the importance of national anti-corruption strategies and underscored that corruption reporting platforms were effective tools for preventing corruption.

85. Several speakers reported on their countries' efforts to assess and manage risks of corruption in public sector institutions. One speaker noted that such assessments had become mandatory for all ministries, departments and authorities, as well as parastatal entities, in his country. He noted that the assessment system had nonetheless faced challenges in terms of financial resources and capacity.

86. Speakers highlighted the importance of information and communications technologies as a means of combating the evolving modalities that criminal organizations used in order to engage in corruption. Some speakers noted that criminals were using information and communications technologies at a speed and level of complexity that challenged national authorities. They pointed to a need for technological equipment in order to be able to address those challenges, together with capacity-building in areas such as data analysis and financial investigations, including in relation to money-laundering and the recovery of stolen assets.

87. One speaker highlighted his country's efforts to harness and build anti-corruption programmes around the findings of the Implementation Review Mechanism. In addition, he noted the importance of addressing the gender dimensions of corruption. He emphasized efforts to enhance public access to information, beneficial ownership transparency and the targeting of illicit financial flows. He noted that a future priority area of assistance would be a focus on the nexus between climate change, crimes that affect the environment and corruption.

88. One speaker highlighted the relevance of satisfaction surveys with regard to anti-corruption efforts and the importance of open government initiatives and supervision systems. He stressed the need for awareness-raising, education programmes, the involvement of the private sector and continued efforts to improve legal and supervisory frameworks against corruption.

89. Several speakers expressed appreciation for the technical assistance provided by UNODC and other providers. In response to a question on the types of technical assistance received from UNODC, the panellists stated that their countries had received capacity-building support, technical and evidence-based expertise, examples of international good practices, and equipment identified through corruption risk assessments as crucial for preventing and countering corruption.

VIII. Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation

90. Agenda item 6, entitled "Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation", was discussed together with item 3, with the same title, of the agenda for the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption at the joint meetings of the two groups held on 16 and 17 June 2022.

91. Speakers highlighted that the political declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its special session on corruption was a renewal of the international commitment to preventing and countering corruption and a road map for global anti-corruption efforts. The need to implement the declaration effectively was emphasized by all speakers. The importance of collaborating with stakeholders outside the public sector, including civil society and the private sector, in the follow-up to the political declaration was highlighted.

92. One speaker welcomed the fact that the Implementation Review Group had been the first subsidiary body to include a specific agenda item on the follow-up to the

political declaration. The need for guidance and concrete action points in order to build upon and effectively follow up on the political declaration through subsidiary bodies was emphasized, as was the need to make concrete steps in order to take full advantage of the agenda item. Another speaker noted that the existing Implementation Review Mechanism and the voluntary information provided by States parties through the subsidiary bodies of the Conference were sufficient to follow up on the implementation of the political declaration. He also noted the importance of using the Implementation Review Group as a platform for expert dialogue.

93. One speaker emphasized that all anti-corruption activities must begin with prevention, and highlighted several national efforts to curb corruption in line with the political declaration, including a proposed rule on addressing corruption vulnerabilities in the real estate sector and a new national anti-corruption strategy. Efforts to increase the transparency and reporting of beneficial ownership information in order to mitigate the abuse of legal entities for the concealment of proceeds of corrupt and criminal acts were also mentioned.

94. Speakers noted the importance of international cooperation and the recovery of assets as outlined in the declaration, including the need to cooperate in denying safe havens for the proceeds of corruption. In line with that commitment, the use of visa restrictions and financial sanctions to hold corrupt actors accountable and deny safe haven to officials who engaged in corrupt acts and their families was noted.

IX. Other matters

95. The Chair informed the Implementation Review Group that a civil society briefing would be held on 15 June 2022, on the margins of the current session, in accordance with Conference resolution 4/6, and that, after the conclusion of the session, a summary of the briefing would be made available as a conference room paper on the web page for the session.

96. No issues were raised under the item.

X. Provisional agenda for the fourteenth session of the Implementation Review Group

97. At its 2nd meeting, on 13 June 2022, the Implementation Review Group adopted the provisional agenda for its fourteenth session (see annex).

XI. Adoption of the report

98. On 17 June 2022, the Implementation Review Group adopted the report on its thirteenth session ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.1](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.2](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.3](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.4](#) and [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.5](#)), as orally amended.

Annex

Provisional agenda for the fourteenth session of the Implementation Review Group

1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Opening of the session;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
 2. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.
 3. Financial and budgetary matters.
 4. State of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption:
 - (a) Exchange of information, practices and experiences gained in the implementation of the Convention;
 - (b) Thematic discussion.
 5. Technical assistance.
 6. Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation.
 7. Other matters.
 8. Provisional agenda for the fifteenth session of the Implementation Review Group.
 9. Adoption of the report of the Implementation Review Group on its fourteenth session.
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