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English only

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**Implementation Review Group****First resumed 11th session**

Vienna, 31 August–2 September 2020

**Briefing for non-governmental organizations in accordance with resolution 4/6 of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption entitled “Non-governmental organizations and the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption”****Summary**

1. At its fourth session, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption adopted resolution 4/6 entitled “Non-governmental organizations and the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption”. In that resolution, the Conference decided that briefings for non-governmental organizations would be convened on the margins of the sessions of the Implementation Review Group (hereinafter Group) on the outcomes of the review process, including technical assistance needs identified. The Conference also decided that those briefings would be conducted by the secretariat in cooperation with a member of the bureau and would be based on the reports of the Group, thematic implementation reports and regional supplementary addenda. The Conference requested States parties and signatories to use the briefings and to draw on the discussions and proposals of its fourth session to continue constructive dialogue on the contribution of non-governmental organizations to the Mechanism.
2. Moreover, in the same resolution, the Conference encouraged non-governmental organizations to report to it and/or the Group, as appropriate, individually or collectively, on their activities and contributions to the implementation of the recommendations and conclusions of the Group approved by the Conference, including those related to meeting technical assistance needs and advancing capacity to effectively implement the Convention. The briefings would serve to further promote constructive dialogue with non-governmental organizations dealing with anti-corruption issues and help build confidence in the role and contributions that non-governmental organizations can make to the review process.
3. The first briefing for non-governmental organizations, held in accordance with Conference resolution 4/6, took place in the margins of the third session of the Group on 20 June 2012, and subsequent briefings were held on 30 May 2013, 5 June 2014, 4 June 2015, 23 June 2016, 22 June 2017, 5 September 2018 and 3 September 2019, in the margins of the fourth to the tenth sessions of the Group.



4. The ninth briefing for non-governmental organizations was held in the margins of the first resumed eleventh session of the Group on 1 September 2020 and was chaired by Germán Andrés Calderón Velásquez (Colombia), the Rapporteur of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption at its eighth session. The Chair delivered introductory remarks, welcoming the decision taken by the Conference to involve non-governmental organizations in the work of the Mechanism.

5. At the start of the briefing, the Chief of the Conference Support Section of the Corruption and Economic Crime Branch of UNODC recalled Conference resolution 4/6 and reiterated the terms of the briefing for non-governmental organizations. The programme for the briefing was contained in document CAC/COSP/IRG/2020/CRP.14. In order to allow for a more interactive discussion, the participants were invited to ask questions after each of the three presentations by the secretariat, which covered the performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the thematic report by the secretariat on the implementation of Chapter II (Preventive measures) of the Convention ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2020/3/Rev.1](#)), an update on technical assistance needs emerging from the country reviews and on technical assistance provided by UNODC in support of the implementation of the Convention as well as on activities undertaken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. In the ensuing discussion, one speaker emphasized the continued commitment of civil society to the Implementation Review Mechanism. Speakers encouraged States parties to facilitate the access and contributions of a broad cross-section of society, including academia, media and the private sector, to country review processes undertaken in the framework of the Implementation Review Mechanism, including in instances when country visits take place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One speaker encouraged the secretariat to make an updated timeline of the review process available online and urged States to make their country review reports publicly available, while one speaker requested that the contact details for focal points be made publicly available in order to facilitate civil society engagement. In response, a representative of the secretariat noted that it was the prerogative of States parties to share the contact information for focal points and to include civil society organizations in the review of States parties' implementation of the Convention. The representative also noted that the secretariat was continuing to highlight the benefits of including civil society organizations in country review visits to States parties, in line with the Terms of Reference for the Mechanism, whereby States parties were encouraged to facilitate engagement with all relevant national stakeholders in the course of a country visit. The secretariat had also channelled information to focal points appointed by States parties who could then initiate contact. In this regard, the representative expressed the hope that the use of online country visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic would provide an opportunity for improved civil society participation in country reviews.

7. A number of speakers welcomed the voluntary publication of measures taken by States after the completion of country reviews, with one speaker suggesting that a template be developed, in consultation with the States parties, in order to ensure a degree of consistency in the structure and level of detail provided. He also proposed that such follow-up be made mandatory. In reference to the need to address delays identified in the progress of the second review cycle of the Mechanism, one speaker stressed that strong political will in addressing such delays was crucial.

8. Some speakers requested that States parties grant observer status to civil society organizations in the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference. One speaker reiterated his organization's interest in facilitating the widest possible participation of civil society in the ninth session of the Conference. He encouraged the secretariat and States parties to ensure that challenges in this regard could be overcome.

9. One speaker underscored the importance of addressing the corruption risks associated with the allocation by governments of the large amount of resources to

responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, reference was also made to emergency procurement procedures and restrictions placed on access to information. A representative of the secretariat highlighted that UNODC had prepared several policy papers that recommended measures to mitigate, manage and prevent corruption risks in emergency relief and rescue packages. The representative also mentioned that one of the panels organized during the first intersessional meeting of the Conference on preparations for the special session against corruption focused on challenges and approaches to the prevention of corruption during times of crisis.

10. A speaker requested that disaggregated information on country reviews be made publicly available – in response, the secretariat noted that such information was being provided in the documentation prepared for the consideration of the Implementation Review Group, which was available online. Similarly, one speaker sought further information on the technical assistance requests or the technical assistance provided pursuant to article 13 of the Convention, while another speaker sought information on the general performance of States parties with respect to implementing articles 6 and 9. A representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the main technical assistance needs identified under article 13 and also encouraged civil society organizations to review the executive summaries, which included the good practices and technical assistance needs identified for the States under review.

11. One speaker highlighted that civil organizations needed more resources and capacity-building in order to work in partnership with local governments and monitor anti-corruption efforts undertaken by States parties. Another speaker suggested that civil society organizations could support governments by providing relevant data to inform anti-corruption decision-making and strategies.

12. Highlighting victims of corruption, one speaker stressed that it was important to focus on the rights of victims to access appropriate treatment and justice, including restitution, and the need to ensure that anti-corruption activities encompass the goal of victim protection.

13. In response to a query on whether the secretariat to the Convention shared its experience with the secretariat to the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in the context of the establishment of a review mechanism under that Convention, the representative of the secretariat confirmed that this was the case.

14. One speaker called on States parties to include in the draft political declaration, to be adopted by the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, the topics of grand corruption, public registers of beneficial ownership and illicit party financing and related political integrity initiatives.

15. In conclusion, the Chair welcomed all statements made by participants and noted with appreciation that the briefing provided another important opportunity to strengthen collaboration and dialogue between civil society and the States parties to the Convention.

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