



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

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Report of the Implementation Review Group on its second resumed thirteenth session, held in Vienna from 7 to 11 November 2022

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 second resumed thirteenth session in Vienna from 7 to 11 November 2022, in a hybrid format (in person and online).

3. The Implementation Review Group held 10 meetings, which were chaired by Amr Adel Hosny (Egypt), President-designate of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and Aftab Ahmad Khokher (Pakistan), Vice-President of the Conference. The Group considered items 2, 3 and 7 of the agenda for its thirteenth session. In addition, the Group considered items 4, 5 and 6 of its agenda jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery and the open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

4. On 7 November, the Implementation Review Group adopted the organization of work for the session, as contained in the annotated provisional agenda ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/1/Add.2](#)).

5. In her introductory statement, the Secretary of the Conference provided an overview of the organization of work.

6. The representative of Qatar reported on his Government’s offer to host the eleventh session of the Conference, to be held in 2025.



B. Attendance

7. The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the session: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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

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

10. The following Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme network and specialized agencies of the United Nations system were represented by observers: Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Basel Institute on Governance, Department of Peace Operations of the Secretariat, Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), University for Peace, World Bank and World Food Programme.

11. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, Commonwealth of Independent States, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Council of Europe, European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), International Anti-Corruption Academy, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), International Development Law Organization, Interparliamentary Assembly of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Inter-Parliamentary Union, League of Arab States, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative.

12. The following observer State was also represented: Andorra.

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

13. In response to a request by Kazakhstan for a redraw of its other reviewing State, China was drawn.

14. A representative of the secretariat provided an update on the performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. In the first cycle of the Mechanism, 185 States parties had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 176 direct dialogues (162 country visits and 14 joint meetings) had been held and 174 executive summaries and 164 country reports had been finalized. In the second cycle, 155 States parties had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist and 99 direct dialogues (including 92 physical, online and hybrid country visits and seven joint meetings) had been held, of which approximately 95 per cent had involved other stakeholders. To date, 64 executive summaries and 43 country review reports had been completed, and an additional 15 executive summaries were in the final stages. He noted that the secretariat would continue to make every effort to ensure that the reviews progressed as quickly as possible, including by sending letters and holding meetings to address current delays, but that the Implementation Review Group might wish to recommend that the Conference extend the second cycle by 18 months, to December 2025.

15. The representative further briefed the Group on developments relating to the next phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism since the first resumed thirteenth session, held in September 2022. He noted that the conference room paper presented in September had been updated to reflect the views shared by delegations at the first resumed thirteenth session and had been made available in all official languages of the United Nations as document [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/9](#). The secretariat had begun preparing the questionnaire that would serve as a basis for the collection of views of States parties on the review process and would circulate it before the end of the year, with a view to presenting the results to the Group at its fourteenth session, in June 2023. He also recalled that the role of reviews under other mechanisms could be explored during the design of the next phase of the Mechanism. Based on the discussions at the first resumed thirteenth session, the document contained a proposal that the Group might wish to invite the Bureau to schedule informal consultations, chaired by a member of the Bureau or by another facilitator, and to ensure regular reporting to the Group on any progress made.

16. In the ensuing discussion, many speakers emphasized the value of the Implementation Review Group as a platform for the exchange of experiences, good practices and challenges in implementation. They also underscored the positive impact that the Implementation Review Mechanism had had, including through the identification of good practices, challenges and technical assistance needs. Many speakers reiterated their Governments' commitment to the Mechanism, which served as a crucial tool for accelerating the implementation of the Convention. In particular, the Mechanism had promoted legislative and institutional reforms, contributed to strengthening anti-corruption cooperation between competent authorities and a range of non-governmental stakeholders, and made it possible to objectively assess progress achieved, to identify challenges and to seek the best ways to address them. A number of speakers shared their countries' experiences in conducting reviews, both as States parties under review and as reviewing States parties, and emphasized the importance of country reviews in strengthening preventive measures, law enforcement and mechanisms for international cooperation and asset recovery, and thus in contributing to the enhancement of overall capacities to address and respond to corruption risks and foster sustainable development.

17. Several speakers informed the Group of progress made in their reviews and described measures that had been taken to address the review findings and results, such as the amendment of legislation, the establishment or strengthening of institutions and

operations, including in the judiciary, and the conduct of training and capacity-building activities. Specific areas highlighted included national anti-corruption strategies and amendments to criminal codes and laws preventing and criminalizing corruption and money-laundering and protecting whistle-blowers, as well as access to information, plea bargaining and beneficial ownership transparency. In addition, speakers referred to strengthened coordination and information exchange among national institutions, including in the preparations for the review exercise, and to the development of implementation action plans to address the outcomes of reviews. Some speakers urged the secretariat and other technical assistance providers to continue to provide sustained and targeted capacity-building to support countries in their efforts to implement the Convention and to address the outcomes of country reviews.

18. A number of speakers referred to delays encountered in the country reviews, in particular in the nomination of governmental experts and the completion of the self-assessment, which had been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Some speakers noted that an extension would make it possible to complete ongoing reviews and at the same time ensure the continued high quality of reviews. In that regard, many speakers supported the suggestion that the Implementation Review Group propose to the Conference an extension of the Implementation Review Mechanism by 18 months, until December 2025. Several speakers noted that they supported an extension, but that it would be important to ensure that there were no additional extensions thereafter. In that respect, some speakers noted that 2025 might be too early given the current completion rate and suggested that States parties agree on a threshold at which the second cycle would be considered to be concluded, such as the 70 per cent threshold set by the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto.

19. With regard to the second phase of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, several speakers welcomed the preparation of a questionnaire to collect the views of States parties on the review process and noted the importance of conducting a comprehensive analysis of the first and second cycles. Several speakers shared concrete proposals on aspects of the review process to be considered for the second phase, such as simplifying and streamlining the self-assessment checklist and country review reports, considering the use of an online platform with restricted access to gather and submit responses to the self-assessment checklist and continuing to provide opportunities for the training of focal points and governmental experts, including online training. One speaker expressed the view that the second phase should not be limited to follow-up and could entail a more tailor-made approach. Several speakers noted the importance of continuing to adhere to the guiding principles of the Mechanism, in particular the intergovernmental nature of the Mechanism and respect for the principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States parties. Many speakers highlighted that, while virtual and hybrid country visits had ensured that the work of the Mechanism could continue to progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person country visits offered enhanced opportunities for dialogue and the exchange of good practices, including with other stakeholders, and should therefore be maintained in the second phase. Several speakers underscored the critical role of non-governmental stakeholders in the review process.

20. Some speakers highlighted the importance of training focal points and governmental experts involved in the work of the Mechanism. Since 2012, officials from more than 60 countries had been trained through sessions organized by the secretariat.

21. With regard to the informal consultations on the next phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism, several speakers welcomed the idea of convening such consultations and expressed interest in participating. One speaker underlined that the discussion on the second phase of the Mechanism should be conducted in the Implementation Review Group rather than in the framework of

informal mechanisms that had no relevant mandate. He also stressed that it would be impossible to launch the second phase of the Mechanism before the implementation of key decisions made at the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, such as the organization of a special session of the Conference on all aspects of the asset recovery and return process, including exploring possible areas for improvement of the international asset recovery framework.

22. Speakers further stressed the importance of ensuring that the consultations were transparent, consensus-based, inclusive and open to all States parties, building on lessons learned from the current review phase, with all States parties' views being heard and taken into account. Some speakers underlined the importance of a clear mandate for the informal consultations, while one speaker noted that they should not be chaired by a member of the Bureau and that the influence of the Bureau should be limited. Several speakers supported the proposal that the Bureau take further action and schedule informal consultations in the run-up to and following the tenth session of the Conference, with one speaker noting that such action might be premature and another speaker asking for greater clarity on the modalities, format and intended outcomes of the consultations.

23. The Secretary of the Conference thanked States parties for continuing to provide the Group with updates on progress made in the implementation of the Convention and for the support expressed for the performance of the Implementation Review Mechanism. She stated that the secretariat had taken note of the proposals made on ways to improve the work of the Mechanism and expressed appreciation for the comments made in support of extending the second cycle.

24. With respect to possible informal consultations on the next phase of the Mechanism, the need for such consultations to be inclusive, transparent and open to all States parties was noted. At the same time, the secretariat took note of the concerns expressed with regard to the starting date of the informal consultations, in particular the concern that it might be premature at the present stage to task the Bureau of the Conference with launching them. In that regard, the Secretary noted that discussions on a possible draft decision to extend the current cycle would provide an opportunity to further elaborate views expressed during the present meeting and at previous meetings. She emphasized that it was crucial that any decision on a future phase of the Mechanism, owing to its very nature as a peer review process, be agreed upon by consensus and based on the "spirit of Vienna".

25. The Secretary expressed gratitude to the Government of Qatar for its offer to host the eleventh session of the Conference.

IV. Financial and budgetary matters

26. A representative of the secretariat provided information on the expenditures incurred for the operation of the first and second cycles of the Implementation Review Mechanism as at 30 September 2022 and on the current funding gap between the extrabudgetary voluntary contributions received and the resource requirements for the functioning of the Mechanism. Focusing on extrabudgetary expenditures, he informed the Group that expenditures had increased significantly in 2022 in comparison with the years 2020 and 2021, when the COVID-19 crisis had led to a substantial reduction of cost-generating activities, such as the travel of governmental experts and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) experts for the purpose of conducting country reviews. As a result, and in comparison with the latest financial report (CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/5), the total extrabudgetary expenditures incurred in support of operating the Mechanism had grown by \$308,600 since 28 February 2022, meaning that a total of \$9.8 million had been spent in support of the first cycle and a total of \$4.3 million in support of the second cycle as at 30 September 2022. Noting a decline in new voluntary contributions since February 2022, the representative informed the Group that the extrabudgetary contributions provided to the Mechanism totalled \$18,443,200 as at 30 September 2022. He explained that the 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 \$716,500. In closing, he expressed his appreciation for the voluntary and in-kind contributions made by States in support of the Mechanism.

27. Some speakers thanked the secretariat for the oral update, reiterated their continued financial support to the Mechanism and encouraged other donors to consider providing additional voluntary funding for the Mechanism. One speaker noted that the Mechanism was made possible through the mixed funding model 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.

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

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

28. A representative of the secretariat presented an overview of the findings contained in the thematic report on the implementation of chapter V of the Convention ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/7](#)) and in the new thematic report on the implementation of provisions of a cross-cutting nature in chapters II and V ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/8](#)), which for the first time had been prepared as a third thematic report to allow for comprehensive analysis and additional country examples. She also introduced conference room paper CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/CRP.6, which contained a list of all good practices identified under chapter V and the cross-cutting provisions. She noted that the trends observed in previous thematic reports had stayed consistent and that articles 52, 54 and 57 remained the provisions with the largest numbers of challenges identified, such as inadequate legislation and/or procedures for mutual legal assistance, insufficient institutional arrangements and ineffective inter-agency coordination, complicated or inadequate asset recovery procedures and a lack of capacity on the part of competent authorities. Good practices had been identified, inter alia, in the active engagement in international cooperation, in particular on asset recovery, in robust institutional arrangements, including sound inter-agency coordination and the deployment of specialists and officers in other countries to facilitate international cooperation, and in the issuance of guidance for asset recovery. The representative further indicated that, regarding the cross-cutting provisions, a total of 453 challenges had been identified in relation to articles 14, 52 and 58, and that interlinkages between chapters II and V in terms of challenges and good practices were noticeable. She further elaborated on certain correlations between the provisions reviewed in the first and second cycles, noting that the main challenge continued to be the allocation of adequate resources to further strengthen the efficiency and capacity of international cooperation mechanisms.

29. In the ensuing discussion, speakers welcomed the preparation of the thematic report on chapter V as well as the new thematic report on cross-cutting provisions. Several speakers highlighted their countries' continued commitment to the Convention and the Implementation Review Mechanism. Many speakers highlighted measures taken by their Governments to bring their institutional and legislative frameworks into line with the Convention and noted positive effects of changes made following their respective country reviews. Many speakers also noted the importance of technical assistance in aligning domestic systems with the Convention.

30. The measures reported included legislative amendments, such as new laws on preventing and combating money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism or laws designed to improve the ability to trace, seize or freeze, confiscate or return assets. One speaker reported on a new unexplained wealth act, as well as on a bill on civil asset recovery that could also apply in cases of cross-border asset

recovery and would complement the criminal confiscation regime. Several speakers described improvements to their countries' domestic financial disclosure regimes. One State had conducted a national risk assessment to improve its anti-money-laundering regime and had subsequently implemented changes regarding, inter alia, beneficial ownership transparency, legal persons and arrangements and virtual currencies.

31. Several speakers referred to preventive and cross-cutting measures, such as those related to personal and financial conflicts of interest, the establishment of anti-corruption strategies and codes of conduct, the protection of reporting persons and the participation of civil society and academia in anti-corruption initiatives. Some speakers highlighted measures to enhance the oversight of public procurement and finances, strengthen inter-agency cooperation and conduct risk assessments.

32. At the institutional level, several speakers reported on national inter-agency task forces to better coordinate domestic responses to corruption and engage in international cooperation and highlighted the creation of dedicated authorities to manage seized or confiscated assets.

33. States also referred to the important role of other international instruments and organizations in their fight against corruption, such as the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention and the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. The Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network), the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, the International Centre for Asset Recovery and the Riyadh Arab Agreement on Judicial Cooperation were also named. Speakers also cited the political declaration entitled "Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation", adopted at the special session of the General Assembly against corruption, held in 2021 (General Assembly resolution S-32/1, annex), as an important instrument in overcoming challenges related to international cooperation and asset recovery.

34. Speakers noted challenges faced in international cooperation and asset recovery, including those arising from the lack of experience identified in the thematic reports, and reminded others of the commitments contained in the Convention against Corruption to afford one another the widest measure of cooperation and assistance.

35. Four panel discussions were organized during joint meetings with the open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Working Group on Asset Recovery. Two of those discussions were focused on the follow-up to Conference resolution 9/1, entitled "Sharm el-Sheikh declaration on strengthening international cooperation in the prevention of and fight against corruption during times of emergencies and crisis response and recovery". A detailed report on the discussions can be found in the report on the eleventh open-ended intergovernmental expert meeting to enhance international cooperation under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/EG.1/2022/3). In two further panel discussions, good practices and challenges with respect to beneficial ownership and the collection of information on international asset returns were discussed. Further information can be found in the report on the sixteenth meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery (CAC/COSP/WG.2/2022/4).

VI. Technical assistance

Panel discussion on chapter V of the Convention

36. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Implementation Review Group on the importance and role of technical assistance in the effective implementation of chapter V of the Convention, on asset recovery. She highlighted beneficial ownership as one of many elements relating to asset recovery that could also be of relevance to

other efforts to prevent and combat corruption. In addition, the representative briefly introduced the panellists and their countries or organizations and highlighted their respective partnerships with UNODC regarding the delivery of technical assistance for asset recovery.

37. A panellist from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation highlighted the importance of technical assistance and the transfer of knowledge and experience between countries. Noting the need for evidence-based interventions, she referred to a global knowledge bank established by the Agency that was aimed at strengthening competence and capacity in public institutions. Similarly, the knowledge products of institutions such as UNODC, the UNODC/World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative, UNDP, the International Centre for Asset Recovery and the UNCAC Civil Society Coalition formed a repository of knowledge that should be drawn upon in delivering technical assistance. Information gathered through the Implementation Review Mechanism was emphasized as essential to determining technical assistance needs and prioritizing responses to those needs. Four key means of achieving results were highlighted: (a) demand-driven technical assistance, with the agreement of beneficiary countries; (b) on-the-job training; (c) long-term engagement to build capacity; and (d) technical assistance supported by strong engagement at all levels. The panellist noted that the Agency was to sign a new partnership agreement with UNODC to accelerate the implementation of the Convention.

38. A panellist from Open Ownership, who was a member of the delegation of the United Kingdom, highlighted how beneficial ownership reform had seen a surge over the past year, noting that more than 20 countries had recently introduced legislation on the topic. The panellist noted that, in his experience, it was important to understand at the outset both the policy goals that Governments sought to achieve through such reform efforts and how the data generated were intended to be used. While recognizing that transparency was an important element and expressing full respect for the fact that some States had concerns about making information on beneficial ownership publicly available, the panellist noted that the sharing of such information among government institutions was essential for effective anti-corruption efforts. Several issues had been identified as important in considering the implementation of beneficial ownership reforms, such as whether countries defined beneficial ownership requirements on the basis of risk, the level of the threshold for beneficial ownership disclosures, which depended on the national context, the legal basis for information-sharing and data use among governmental institutions, the importance of effective internal and external consultations at the beginning of the reform process and the use of beneficial ownership information to strengthen integrity in public procurement.

39. Another panellist, a representative of the secretariat of the StAR Initiative, provided an update on the technical assistance activities carried out at the request of States parties in 2021 and the new knowledge products developed by the Initiative. She reported that StAR had provided support to 18 countries in 2021, including legislative assistance and support for international and national coordination mechanisms for asset recovery. In addition, the panellist highlighted the importance of knowledge products that allowed practitioners to obtain a more granular view of asset recovery in general and the topics that the products addressed in particular. As an example, she highlighted a forthcoming publication developed in partnership with the International Bar Association that would examine the avenues available for victims to obtain compensation for damages resulting from corruption and how their legal standing was established in different legal systems. She also highlighted activities carried out in 2022 and further plans for forthcoming knowledge products.

40. A panellist who gave a presentation on behalf of the International Anti-Corruption Coordination Centre noted that the role of the Centre was to promote cooperation among law enforcement agencies with a view to facilitating international cooperation, fast-tracking intelligence-sharing, launching investigations into grand corruption and ultimately helping to return assets to affected countries. The members of the Centre were chosen on the basis of the locations where stolen assets were most likely to be

found. As a multi-agency law enforcement mechanism, the Centre provided technical assistance to countries investigating grand corruption by supporting prosecutions undertaken to recover assets. The Centre's cooperation efforts were based on a memorandum of understanding among the law enforcement agencies of various countries, with additional countries allowed to participate either as observers or as associate members. Since its inception in 2017, the Centre had been engaged in more than 177 cases.

41. In the ensuing debate, speakers highlighted the provision of technical assistance as an important component of the cooperation among countries to support global efforts to recover stolen assets and implement chapter V of the Convention. In that regard, several speakers emphasized how they had used global knowledge products that had been translated and adapted to national contexts. One speaker noted national efforts to produce similar knowledge products, in particular those regarding the direct recovery of assets in line with the Convention. The work of the StAR Initiative and the GlobE Network to facilitate international cooperation and asset recovery with a view to returning the proceeds of crime was also highlighted as an important element in informing and strengthening national anti-corruption action. Another speaker highlighted the use of the Convention as a legal basis for international cooperation and spontaneous information-sharing with other States parties.

42. The information gathered through the Implementation Review Mechanism and the country review reports was noted by several speakers as being particularly useful for the identification of entry points for technical assistance. The reports also provided important input to the secretariat for the analysis of trends presented in the thematic reports to the subsidiary bodies of the Conference. One speaker highlighted how the thematic reports on asset recovery helped to inform strategic thinking among technical assistance providers and the States parties receiving such assistance. Another speaker emphasized that technical assistance should be country-driven and must never be made conditional upon making the country review reports available to the public. A representative of the secretariat emphasized that technical assistance delivered by UNODC was never made conditional upon making the country report available to the public, but was provided at the request of a State. She noted the usefulness of the information contained in the country review reports as a basis for technical assistance programming and for preparing prioritized country-specific action plans. In that connection, UNODC was building on the outcomes of the reviews in order to support the process of establishing regional anti-corruption platforms to fast-track the implementation of the Convention through the identification of common regional anti-corruption priorities.

Panel discussion on technical assistance in relation to chapter IV of the Convention

43. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Group on the importance and role of technical assistance for the effective implementation of chapter IV of the Convention, on international cooperation. She highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the importance of including anti-corruption efforts in emergency responses as early as possible in order to ensure that funding reached the intended beneficiaries. She also noted that such an approach could be applied to most types of emergency settings, such as natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies and conflict and post-conflict situations, where speed of action could work to the detriment of accountability. The representative briefly introduced the panellists and highlighted their respective partnerships with UNODC.

44. A panellist from the Open Contracting Partnership, who was a member of the delegation of Norway, described the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public procurement as unprecedented, highlighting that governments, businesses and citizens alike faced a variety of challenges in tackling corruption. The difficulties had ranged from poor coordination in the public sector to restricted access to procurement opportunities for companies and limited access to information by civil society. He noted that work had been undertaken with UNODC to support Governments in

enhancing transparency and improving service delivery. The five key lessons learned had revealed the need to: (a) establish clear policies for emergency procurement; (b) strengthen coordination and oversight; (c) enable clear disclosure and open data; (d) conduct red flag identification and due diligence regarding suppliers; and (e) enhance accountability through monitoring by civil society. He further mentioned successes that had been identified, such as the rapid publication of contracts and disclosure of beneficial ownership information. Those good practices could lead to improved risk management, business confidence and value for money.

45. A panellist from UNDP gave a presentation on the experiences and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. He noted that while the pandemic had initially been framed as a health crisis, it had swiftly become a governance crisis, testing the resilience of governance institutions and systems. UNDP and UNODC had cooperated in the preparation of two knowledge products to guide the integration of anti-corruption measures into COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. Those tools included medium- to long-term recovery priorities that would strengthen oversight, audit and anti-corruption institutions. The panellist emphasized that effective cooperation enabled consistency in anti-corruption policies and the monitoring of resources and their implementation. It was also critical to strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders in order to empower them to assume ownership of their national anti-corruption agendas in emergency settings. He suggested that a dedicated process for public reporting in relation to wrongdoing could also prevent corruption and build confidence among the public. In the context of post-conflict reconstruction, he noted that a failure to tackle corruption from the outset of the peace process would allow corruption to resurface and prevent sustainable peace. The panellist emphasized the need for the effective integration of anti-corruption measures at the policy, programming and project levels.

46. A panellist from the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia described how, in 2019, a strategic planning exercise for the United Nations in Somalia had sought to identify issues that could have a significant impact on whether or not the United Nations would deliver on the country's national development plan. While the priorities of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) spanned the entire humanitarian development-peacebuilding nexus, preventing and combating corruption had been identified as a game changer throughout every area of the national development plan. Subsequently, in 2020, the Government of Somalia had launched the plan, in which strengthening anti-corruption efforts was identified as a nationwide imperative. During the local consultation process that had fed into the plan, weak governance and corruption had been identified as a cause of poverty. With a mandate to strengthen anti-corruption measures in Somalia, UNSOM and the United Nations country team decided to mainstream anti-corruption efforts across all United Nations programmatic interventions. However, there was also a need to widen the understanding of how to implement such a mainstreamed effort to fight and prevent corruption and of its internal and external dimensions. In concluding her presentation, the panellist recognized that those efforts were a highly ambitious commitment for the United Nations in Somalia and noted that the Mission was in the process of developing a 10-year joint programme with a view to providing continued support to the Government and delivering it as "one United Nations".

47. Echoing some of the ideas put forward by the panellists, a speaker highlighted the use of new information and communications technologies by the Office of the Comptroller General of his country to monitor the use of public resources and enhance transparency. The study of market trends relating to supply, demand and prices, combined with data cross-checking, was key in supporting audits and detecting the diversion of funds during the pandemic. In addition, the speaker mentioned that investigations with international ramifications had been launched. To that end, article 43 of the Convention had served as a legal basis for mutual legal assistance requests in administrative matters. Despite many successful cases, international cooperation

in administrative matters and asset recovery remained challenging because of the criminal origin of the prosecution of corruption, as well as normative differences. The speaker emphasized the importance of reciprocity and of clear and published standard procedures to improve international cooperation.

48. One speaker noted how a recent, unprecedented natural disaster in his country had required swift and decisive action. Echoing the panel presentations, he agreed that during emergencies, the effects of corruption could be more pronounced, but that emergencies also created new opportunities to explore pre-existing weaknesses in governance systems. Speed and action were prioritized over accountability, due diligence and fair competition. As a result, his Government had entered into a partnership with the United Nations, the World Bank and donors to undertake a post-disaster needs assessment, which had revealed critical short- and long-term issues. The speaker noted that the success of the recovery strategy would largely depend on how corruption could be prevented in public procurement and service delivery. Hence, anti-corruption safeguards such as micro- and macro-level monitoring had already instilled donor confidence and increased service delivery.

49. Several speakers stressed the importance of international cooperation and made reference to enhanced measures taken to strengthen their countries' national capacity to engage in joint investigations and to receive and respond to requests for mutual legal assistance and other forms of cooperation. One speaker noted that the support of UNODC in creating regional anti-corruption platforms in line with Conference resolution 9/4 was welcomed as a means of expanding opportunities for both formal and informal international cooperation and accelerating the implementation of the Convention.

50. In response to questions posed to the panellists as to where challenges had been encountered in implementing anti-corruption technical assistance in various emergency settings, one panellist replied that technology solutions in procurement had not been as common as hoped prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The panellist from UNDP noted that, in addition to overall coordination challenges, anti-corruption institutions were not usually involved in emergency response and recovery decision-making processes. The need to create incentives to share information across the international community, and even with civil society, was noted as a challenge by the panellist from the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia.

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

51. A representative of the secretariat presented an update on the activities undertaken to further the implementation of the political declaration adopted at the special session of the General Assembly against corruption. She noted that the intersessional meeting of the Conference was well received, drawing a total of 730 participants, including 170 from international or non-governmental organizations. She noted that the repository of contributions submitted by States parties, available in the Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (TRACK) portal, included more than 100 contributions from 31 parties to the Convention, including some 30 contributions on international cooperation and asset recovery. Those contributions highlighted a range of different measures, such as the strengthening of legislative or institutional frameworks, the conclusion of treaties or memorandums of understanding both domestically and with other States, and participation in international forums and networks. Many submissions also highlighted capacity-building initiatives for practitioners or the publication of guidance materials to improve international cooperation and asset recovery processes. She noted that the secretariat would continue to analyse those and any future submissions for the

upcoming meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference in order to complement their discussions.

52. In reporting on the follow-up to the political declaration, speakers noted that States still faced many challenges in international cooperation and asset recovery, which had a negative impact on progress in combating corruption. One speaker underscored the importance of strengthening the political will to enhance States' common endeavours to make full use of existing legal instruments. Speakers also stressed the need for more direct, informal communication channels and opportunities to exchange experiences for the sake of international cooperation. In that regard, several speakers noted efforts to improve bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including participation in international forums such as the Group of 20, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum or the group comprising Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa, as well as the signing of memorandums of understanding and bilateral treaties with other States.

53. Speakers also highlighted recent legislative amendments to strengthen international cooperation, asset recovery and anti-money-laundering frameworks, as well as new national anti-corruption strategies and public awareness campaigns that engaged representatives from the private sector and civil society in anti-corruption efforts. Among the specific initiatives mentioned were video guides on anonymous whistle-blowing channels, seminars for business representatives and journalists, and the replacement of the requirement to notify an accused person during mutual legal assistance proceedings with a confidentiality provision, in line with international standards. One speaker underscored that without sufficient capacity, any legislative amendments would prove ineffective, and emphasized the importance of training for practitioners.

54. With a view to informing the preparations for the next phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism, one speaker proposed that paragraph 77 of the political declaration be discussed as part of the agenda of the next session of the Implementation Review Group, focusing more closely on the assessment of the performance of the Implementation Review Mechanism and the adaptation, where appropriate, of the procedures and requirements for the follow-up process. Another speaker supported the proposal.

55. One speaker proposed discussing any gaps in the international framework on international cooperation and asset recovery as part of the agenda of the forthcoming meetings of the subsidiary bodies. In support of that proposal, another speaker noted that such a discussion would inform the preparations for a special session of the Conference on all aspects of the asset recovery and return process after the conclusion and evaluation of the findings from the second review cycle, in line with paragraph 82 of the political declaration. One speaker proposed that a study be conducted on gaps and challenges in international cooperation and asset recovery, in particular regarding mutual legal assistance and extradition. He noted that a working group dedicated to the issue could be established. A number of speakers expressed support for the proposal, while a number of other speakers noted that all the chapters of the Convention were equally important.

56. Several speakers noted that a discussion on gaps and challenges in the international framework might be premature and suggested that more data were needed to inform the discussion, such as by concluding the second review cycle and assessing the challenges, lessons learned and good practices identified under the Mechanism. One speaker noted that discussions should focus on the implementation of the Convention and that the topic of asset recovery should be discussed in the Working Group on Asset Recovery, in support of the implementation of the Convention and the process of follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption.

57. One speaker emphasized that more efforts should be made to take advantage of the mandate issued by the Conference to its subsidiary bodies to follow up on the political declaration, and that a more structured and meaningful follow-up process

could be developed. He made concrete proposals in that regard, including the organization of panel discussions on topics such as synergies between preventing and combating corruption and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, corruption as an obstacle to resource mobilization for the achievement of sustainable development, the links between corruption and other forms of organized crime, and the implementation by the United Nations system of the United Nations common position to address global corruption. He noted that the subsidiary bodies could also analyse the contributions in the TRACK portal, including challenges and lessons learned, and proposed that the secretariat extend an invitation to all interested stakeholders to contribute to the repository. It was also noted that the follow-up to the political declaration should not be focused on only one or two aspects but should rather be global, uniform, comprehensive, balanced and respectful of the indivisible nature of the political declaration.

58. One speaker described how anti-corruption measures had helped to reshape political structures that had lacked accountability and enabled corruption in her country. She noted that as corruption was a systemic issue and the methods of criminals were constantly evolving, States needed to adapt their responses and further improve international cooperation and technical assistance in addition to preventive and repressive measures.

59. The Secretary of the Conference suggested that, in the light of the many proposals made, the secretariat prepare a workplan with a view to structuring the discussions on the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly against corruption in the meetings of the subsidiary bodies in a balanced manner in the years to come, and with a view to covering the issues contained in the political declaration. The workplan would be circulated to States parties for their approval. No objections were raised.

VIII. Other matters

60. The Chair recalled that 2023 would be the year of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and solicited suggestions from delegations on how the anniversary could be celebrated or featured in meetings of the Implementation Review Group in 2023.

61. A representative of the secretariat informed the Group that training sessions on the Implementation Review Mechanism were to be held on 7, 9 and 10 November 2022.

62. No other matters were raised.

IX. Adoption of the report

63. On 11 November 2022, the Implementation Review Group adopted the report on its second resumed thirteenth session ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.9](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.10](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.11](#), [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.12](#) and [CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/L.1/Add.13](#)), as orally amended. One part of the report, on 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 adopted by means of a silence procedure after the conclusion of the session.