



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

Distr.: Limited
19 December 2019

English only

Eighth session

Abu Dhabi, 16–20 December 2019

Draft report

Rapporteur: Germán Andrés Calderón Velásquez (Colombia)

Addendum

VI. Special session of the General Assembly against corruption

1. At its 8th meeting, on 19 December 2019, the Conference considered agenda item 7, entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”.
2. In his introductory statement, the President of the Conference recalled that, in its resolution [73/191](#) entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”, the Assembly had decided to convene in the first half of 2021 a special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation. The Assembly had also decided that, at that special session, it would adopt a concise, action-oriented political declaration, agreed upon in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations under the auspices of the Conference and invited the Conference to lead the preparatory process for the special session by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner. Further, the Assembly requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to provide substantive expertise and technical support and decided to conduct the special session and its preparatory process from within existing resources. He also informed the Conference that, in furtherance of General Assembly resolution [73/191](#), the Bureau of the Conference had started preparations for the special session by agreeing on a number of steps, including a call for contributions from Member States and the establishment of a reference website for the special session. Further, the President of the Conference had submitted a draft resolution, entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”, which dealt with the modalities of the special session.
3. In his introductory remarks, the Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs of UNODC noted, inter alia, that there had been only a few special sessions in the history of the General Assembly and that none to date had focused on corruption. He noted that the Bureau of the Conference at its seventh session had started preparations for the special session by issuing on 1 November 2019 a call for contributions by Member States. He further noted the subsequent issuance of a call for contributions from other stakeholders and the approval of the establishment of a reference website for the special session (www.ungass2021.org). He encouraged Member States and other stakeholders to continue to submit contributions. The Director referred to the United Nations system-wide Task Force on Corruption, established by the Secretary-General and chaired by UNODC, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and



UNDP, which had undertaken internal coordination and the conceptualization of the United Nations work on corruption, in particular in view of preparations for the special session.

4. All speakers welcomed the convening of the special session of the General Assembly against corruption in 2021, as it represented a unique opportunity to renew political commitment to the fight against corruption at a sustainable and global level. Speakers noted that the Convention against Corruption was the cornerstone, and the most important international legal framework, for combating corruption and that implementation of the Convention, and the Implementation Review Mechanism, should be at the heart of the political declaration of the special session against corruption. The technical tools provided by the balanced and comprehensive framework of the Convention were useful instruments for all stakeholders in the fight against corruption, and the Convention and the implementation reviews had had real impact and significant results in many countries, such as by identifying gaps in domestic systems, bringing together stakeholders, mobilizing society and political will and bringing ample political discussion. Speakers also highlighted the importance of technical work and capacity-building carried out by UNODC and suggested that UNODC advocate for those activities more strongly in order to raise visibility of that work.

5. With regard to the structure of the political declaration, speakers noted that it should be concise and action-oriented, containing both high-level political commitments, as well as tangible and verifiable commitments, and tools for their review and monitoring. The declaration should add value rather than duplicate or repeat existing political statements.

6. Several speakers highlighted the importance of the special session and the political declaration for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, and noted that the political declaration should contain commitments regarding respect for the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, human rights and sustainable economic development. One speaker suggested that the political declaration should create greater synergies between the Convention and the 2030 Agenda.

7. Many speakers highlighted that the content should include a call for stronger international cooperation in the fight against corruption. Several speakers also stressed the need for the inclusion of comprehensive and effective prevention strategies to increase transparency, integrity and accountability, and the need for impartial and independent judiciaries to effectively enforce anti-corruption legislation. Among other topics suggested for the content of the political declaration were an increased focus on advocacy and raising public awareness of corruption and its consequences. In addition, one speaker suggested education as one priority, including the development of school curricula and training courses for the public and private sectors, in order to create a lasting foundation for a culture of transparency and the rejection of corruption at all levels of society, including by working with youth. One speaker suggested that the political declaration should address the links between the issues of corruption and gender.

8. Several speakers noted that the joint fight against corruption must keep pace with the evolving methods of criminals and therefore suggested that the political declaration should include innovative approaches to combating corruption, including measures addressing the global financial sector and the use of new technologies. One speaker expressed his concern about the issue of reigning impunity and suggested that the political declaration should lay the groundwork for the establishment of an international court, to be subsidiary and complementary to national jurisdictions and with the possibility of independent prosecution, for cases of corruption involving vast quantities of assets.

9. Several speakers requested that the special session and its preparatory process be conducted in an inclusive and transparent manner and that a broad range of other stakeholders, such as civil society, academia and the media be included. One speaker

suggested that the rules of procedure of the Conference and the General Assembly should be applied to the process.

10. The representative of the UNCAC Coalition welcomed the convening of the special session and asked for the process to be open and transparent and for all submissions to be made public. The representative of Transparency International suggested that cross-cutting issues such as the link between corruption and human rights be addressed in the political declaration, as well as the topics of beneficial ownership transparency and ways to combat corruption involving vast quantities of assets.
