



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

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## Implementation Review Group

First resumed tenth session

Vienna, 2–4 September 2019

### Report of the Implementation Review Group on its first resumed tenth session, held in Vienna from 2 to 4 September 2019

## 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. Organizational matters

### A. Opening of the session

2. The Implementation Review Group held its first resumed tenth session in Vienna, from 2 to 4 September 2019, which included two meetings held jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, on 4 September.

3. The Implementation Review Group held six meetings, which were chaired by María Consuelo Porras Argueta (Guatemala), President-designate of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption at its seventh session.

### B. Attendance

4. The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the session: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic



Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

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

6. In accordance with Rule 2 of 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 might be invited to participate in the sessions of the Implementation Review Group.

7. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs, International Anti-Corruption Academy, International Criminal Police Organization, League of Arab States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and World Customs Organization.

### **III. Review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption**

8. A representative of the secretariat briefed the Implementation Review Group on the latest trends and findings emerging from the reviews completed under the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, on the basis of the thematic report on the implementation of chapter II (preventive measures) of the Convention ([CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/10](#)). She noted that the overall trends identified in the 25 executive summaries completed at the time of drafting confirmed some of the previous findings but also highlighted a number of new nuances.

9. The representative indicated that the identified challenges and good practices had been disaggregated by article of the Convention for analysis. In terms of the number of recommendations issued, the challenges most frequently encountered were related to the public sector (article 7), the private sector (article 12) and measures to prevent money-laundering (article 14). In comparison with the previous update, a higher number of challenges had been identified with respect to measures to prevent money-laundering than with codes of conduct for public officials (article 8). Nevertheless, the number of recommendations issued under article 8 and article 9 (public procurement and management of public finances) remained high. In addition, the representative observed that almost all States parties had received recommendations in relation to article 7. Overall, more than 80 per cent of the States under review had received recommendations related to most of the other articles.

10. The representative also informed the Implementation Review Group of good practices identified in the implementation of chapter II of the Convention. The largest number of those was in the areas of preventive anti-corruption policies and practices (article 5), the participation of society (article 13) and public procurement and management of public finances (article 9). In terms of number of States, more than half of the countries had been identified to have good practices in relation to

articles 5 and 9 of the Convention, whereas measures relating to the judiciary and prosecution services (article 11) and the private sector (article 12) remained the areas where the least number of good practices had been identified.

11. In the ensuing discussion, many speakers expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for the comprehensive analysis on the implementation of chapter II of the Convention by States parties and encouraged it to continue to collect and analyse information on challenges, good practices, experiences and lessons learned from reviews conducted under the second cycle.

12. The speakers highlighted the significance of the Implementation Review Mechanism under the Convention and reiterated the commitment of their countries to implementing the Convention. Many speakers shared the good practices and successes achieved by their countries in the implementation of the Convention, including as a follow-up to the recommendations emanating from the review. Successful practices included various legislative, regulatory and administrative measures to promote the prevention of corruption, such as creating effective legislative and policy frameworks, developing integrity tools and putting in place measures to prevent corruption through public education and strengthen the integrity of the judiciary, establishing anti-corruption bodies, regulating conflicts of interest, enhancing the integrity of procurement, protecting reporting persons, strengthening transparency and facilitating corruption complaint procedures.

13. Some speakers referred to the introduction of a wider range of awareness-raising campaigns in their countries, including tailored educational programmes available at different levels of education for the prevention of corruption. The important role played by civil society organizations in that area was widely acknowledged.

14. Some speakers referred to the steps taken by their countries to promote integrity in the public sector, which included the adoption of codes of conduct for various sectors in the public service, the enhancement of asset declaration systems for public officials and the revision of legislation regulating different aspects of the work of civil servants. Some speakers mentioned the introduction of asset and interest disclosure systems as an effective tool in the prevention of corruption.

15. A number of speakers reported on the adoption of anti-corruption policies and action plans by their Governments. In this regard, one speaker underscored that his country had implemented 11 action plans related to its national strategy on the prevention of corruption and had achieved substantial progress in a variety of areas, from the introduction of an anti-bribery management system in the private sector to measures for enhancing the integrity of public officials. Another speaker indicated that his country had adopted a zero-tolerance approach to corruption and a multi-agency anti-corruption strategy. All government agencies and ministries in his country were thus obliged to submit reports on the implementation of the strategy on a regular basis. Several speakers also highlighted that the adoption process of their anti-corruption strategies had benefited from a wide participation of stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, media and academia. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the strategies, broad consultations and information sessions had also been held.

16. Several speakers highlighted the importance of legislative and administrative measures pertaining to access to information, such as the enactment of legislation on unrestricted access to information by the public. The use of information and communications technology as a tool to facilitate public participation in anti-corruption efforts was underlined, including through e-government mechanisms, online platforms and social media. In this regard, the promotion and use of such technology for raising public awareness and promoting the active participation of society in the prevention of corruption were highlighted.

17. A number of speakers highlighted the progress made by their countries in the prevention of conflicts of interest and the protection of reporting persons. In this regard, it was underscored that specific legislation on the prevention of conflicts of

interest had been adopted by several States, while concrete measures to regulate gifts and gratuities, external employment and external activities for public officials had also been put in place.

18. Many speakers also described how the reporting of corrupt conduct to anti-corruption bodies through multiple channels, such as by mail, electronic means, toll-free numbers and hotlines, had been facilitated to help to prevent corruption. Several speakers also noted the need to protect reporting persons in order to encourage reporting.

19. Speakers highlighted good practices in public procurement, such as e-procurement, to strengthen the integrity of procurement. One speaker mentioned the use of integrity pacts in her country to encourage procuring organizations and bidders not to engage in corrupt practices, while another speaker highlighted the use of open and transparent procedures in the procurement process in his country. In terms of measures to prevent money-laundering, several speakers reported on national practices for strengthening anti-money-laundering regimes, including through the adoption of measures to promote beneficial ownership transparency.

20. Nevertheless, a number of speakers expressed concerns over challenges faced by their countries in terms of prevention of corruption, such as the overlapping of functions by different government agencies with anti-corruption mandates, the lack of resources to monitor anti-corruption measures and inadequate partnerships between the public and private sectors.

21. One speaker referred to challenges that arose in the identification of positions considered especially vulnerable to corruption and underlined in this regard the importance of taking a risk-based approach that included measures targeting public officials. He requested that the secretariat provide more detailed information about good practices and successes achieved by States in that area, including information on which States had made progress in that regard. The speaker also proposed to hold panel discussions at future sessions on the identification of public positions considered particularly vulnerable to corruption.

22. Many speakers shared their positive experiences in relation to the participation of their countries in the Mechanism. One speaker highlighted the importance of international cooperation under the central coordinating role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as provided for in the Convention, which was the sole legal instrument, with near-universal adherence, that included a full set of comprehensive measures to counter corruption. Support was expressed for the guiding principles of the Mechanism, namely its intergovernmental, technical, transparent, inclusive, impartial and non-punitive nature. The speaker noted that the Mechanism had stood the test of time and had proven to be a reliable instrument for monitoring progress and identifying best practices and challenges linked to the implementation of the Convention. The Mechanism contributed to legislative and institutional reforms at the national level and strengthened cooperation in anti-corruption efforts among different competent bodies, civil society, the private sector and academia in various countries.

23. In reference to the Mechanism, one speaker noted that, in the course of country reviews, efforts should be made to ensure that recommendations were consistent with the provisions of the Convention and did not go beyond them. This was particularly relevant in view of the follow-up phase of the Mechanism, to ensure that States were not required to implement such recommendations. Some speakers noted that any such follow-up should consider the availability of the technical assistance provided when reviewing the implementation of recommendations.

24. One speaker referred to article 63 of the Convention and emphasized that a common understanding of its provisions was needed, noting that one of the main objectives of the Mechanism was to assist States parties in implementing the Convention more effectively. The speaker referred to unilateral coercive measures that had been taken against his Government. Those measures had created a serious

technical impediment in the implementation of the measures to prevent and counter corruption in his country, which, in turn, was contrary to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions.

25. Some speakers reported on the measures that their countries had taken to ensure transparency in the conduct of the review, including by publishing their responses to the self-assessment checklist and country review reports on the UNODC website, and conducting consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.

26. Several speakers expressed their appreciation to UNODC for the support and technical assistance provided and, in this regard, noted that such technical assistance allowed for more effective implementation of the Convention. Some speakers referred with appreciation to the work undertaken for and technical assistance provided to their countries by the United Nations system, the European Commission and bilateral development partners to strengthen their anti-corruption efforts. Particular appreciation was expressed for UNODC and the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative for developing cumulative knowledge and practical tools for combating corruption.

27. The importance of political will in addressing impunity in corruption cases and meeting the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16, as well as national development plans, was underlined.

#### **IV. Performance of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption**

##### **A. Drawing of lots**

28. No new States had acceded to or ratified the Convention since the previous drawing of lots, carried out at the tenth session of the Implementation Review Group, held in Vienna from 27 to 29 May 2019. Similarly, no States parties had requested a redraw of their reviewing States. Consequently, no drawing of lots to select reviewing States parties was conducted.

##### **B. Progress report**

29. A representative of the secretariat provided an update on progress made in the country reviews conducted under the first and second cycles. So far, 182 of the 184 States parties under review in the first cycle had submitted their responses to the self-assessment checklist, 173 direct dialogues (comprising 159 country visits and 14 joint meetings) had taken place and 169 executive summaries had been finalized. The finalization of several other executive summaries was imminent.

30. The representative informed the Implementation Review Group that, under the second cycle, all 77 States parties under review in the first and second years had nominated focal points. Moreover, in the first two years of the second cycle, 67 States had submitted responses to the self-assessment checklist, 49 direct dialogues (comprising 47 country visits and two joint meetings) had taken place and several other country visits were at various stages of planning. At the time of reporting, 27 executive summaries and 11 country review reports had been finalized and several additional executive summaries were being completed. It was noted that, for the third year of the second cycle, 33 of the 36 States parties under review had nominated focal points, 16 States parties had submitted responses to the self-assessment checklist and seven direct dialogues (comprising six country visits and one joint meeting) had taken place. With regard to the fourth year of the second cycle, 21 of the 37 focal point nominations and one response to the self-assessment checklist had been received. The representative of the secretariat drew the attention of the Group to some of the practical challenges encountered in the

conduct and completion of the country reviews, such as significant delays in the submission of responses to the self-assessment checklist, delays in the submission of nominations of focal points and governmental experts, and the number of languages used for some reviews. She also recalled the revised procedures regarding the nomination of governmental experts.

31. A representative of the secretariat provided a brief update on recent efforts to facilitate access by States parties to information, resources and services related to the work of the Mechanism.

32. She described recent efforts to provide States parties with easy and user-friendly access to such information, resources and services through the UNODC website. She highlighted that, in order to provide practitioners with a single-entry access point to information regarding various types of competent authorities under different conventions, data from the Convention directory of competent national authorities had been migrated to the Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime portal. She also briefed the Group on efforts to redesign the UNODC legal library. The search function had been improved to make it more user-friendly, and legal data received in the context of the first and second cycles of the Mechanism were continuously uploaded to keep the library up to date. She informed the Group, that, to further enhance synergies with other relevant multilateral mechanisms, and in response to a request made at its tenth session, the secretariat planned to link States parties' country profiles on the UNODC website to their country profiles on the websites of the Financial Action Task Force and the Financial Action Task Force-style regional bodies, with a view to facilitating access for States searching and collecting information that had already been provided in the course of a mutual evaluation. In addition to the hyperlinks added to other relevant multilateral mechanisms, as presented to the Group at its tenth session, those additional links could assist States parties in their response to those questions in the self-assessment checklist that related to the prevention of money-laundering and the prevention and detection of transfers of proceeds of crime.

33. During the ensuing discussion, several speakers reiterated their countries' commitment to the full implementation of the Convention and expressed support for the Mechanism, which had been widely recognized as an effective tool in assisting States parties in implementing the Convention and preventing and combating corruption, as well as in serving as a vehicle for identifying gaps and triggering legislative reforms. The smooth functioning of the Mechanism was acknowledged by several speakers. Appreciation was expressed to UNODC for its significant efforts, despite a limited number of staff, in assisting States to advance country reviews, organizing country visits and meetings and facilitating the finalization of relevant documentation.

34. One speaker proposed that the Implementation Review Group undertake an assessment of progress made under the two cycles, with a focus on the impact that it had had on anti-corruption efforts made and challenges encountered by States in this regard. The speaker stressed the need for the Group to consider ways to come to an agreement on how to rationalize and consolidate the work of the Mechanism, in preparation for the eighth session of the Conference. The speaker also stressed that the challenges that were encountered should be clearly defined, with the view to making this and all other relevant information available for consideration at the eighth session.

35. Some speakers stressed that the guiding principles of the Mechanism, in particular its intergovernmental nature and the non-interference in internal affairs, were key to the success achieved in the first cycle and should continue to guide the work of the Mechanism in its second cycle.

36. Several speakers requested that the secretariat make available in written form all the information provided to the Implementation Review Group on progress made under the Mechanism.

37. Speakers shared the experiences of their countries in their participation in the Mechanism, both as States parties under review and as reviewing States parties. They took stock of progress made in finalizing their own reviews and referred to the efforts made in addressing the recommendations arising from both cycles.

38. Some speakers noted the delays observed in the conduct of the second cycle reviews, in particular in terms of the submissions of responses to the self-assessment checklist and the finalization of the subsequent stages of the review. It was noted that the review, which, according to the model review schedule, was to be carried out in a time frame of six months, required a longer period, even years in some cases. It was stressed that such delays were sometimes due to the large volume of information required for completing the response to the self-assessment checklist and the wide range of institutions that needed to provide input for reviews conducted under the second cycle, in particular as regards chapter II of the Convention. Other reasons included the need to translate working documentation into different languages for some reviews and requests for additional information by reviewing experts.

39. While acknowledging that experts wished to use the Mechanism in the most effective and accurate way, one speaker emphasized the need for States to better observe the agreed time frames for the conduct of country reviews and to limit any requests for additional information to what was required to review the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Convention. The speaker also suggested that any additional detailed information that the reviewing experts might wish to obtain but that was not directly related to the review in question could be requested through bilateral channels, which would reduce both the time frames for completing the country reviews and the expenditure incurred. Another speaker stressed that it was incumbent upon States to facilitate their participation in the country reviews in an effective manner by, *inter alia*, submitting their responses to the self-assessment checklist and providing comments, as reviewing States parties, in a timely manner.

40. One speaker reiterated the commitment of his country to the implementation of Conference resolution 6/1, while recognizing that the Mechanism was substantially behind schedule, in particular for reviews conducted under the second cycle. He noted that consideration should be given to the implications of the delays identified in relation to country reviews under the second cycle, which was due to conclude in June 2021, and to the future of the Mechanism. In this regard, he requested that the secretariat provide in writing, in advance of any substantive negotiations and prior to the eighth session of the Conference, updated statistical information on progress made under the second cycle, disaggregated by year, as well as estimates for the completion of reviews under the second cycle and identified trends. He also requested that the secretariat provide detailed information on the budgetary implications of completing all the pending country reviews under the second cycle and of continuing the second cycle beyond the envisaged timeline.

41. Speakers welcomed the work undertaken by the secretariat to promote information-sharing and synergies among relevant multilateral mechanisms and referred to the participation of countries in other mechanisms, with one speaker noting that his country was observing with interest the activities of groups of States involved in such mechanisms. States were encouraged to enhance synergies with other mechanisms to make better use of them and avoid duplication of efforts.

## V. Technical assistance

42. At its meetings held jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, on 4 September 2019, the Implementation Review Group considered item 4 of its agenda, entitled “Technical assistance”, and sub-item 2 (b) of the agenda of the Working Group, entitled “Other recommendations”. The joint meetings were held in line with Conference resolution 6/1, in which the Secretariat was requested to structure the provisional agendas of the Implementation Review Group and of other subsidiary bodies

established by the Conference in such a way as to avoid the duplication of discussions, while respecting their mandates, and pursuant to the workplan agreed for the period 2017–2019.<sup>1</sup>

43. A representative of the secretariat provided an oral update to the note by the Secretariat on technical assistance in support of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, including analysis of technical assistance needs emerging from the country reviews (CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/5), sharing information on the technical assistance needs that had been identified in the executive summaries of the 27 reviews issued during the second cycle. The representative underscored that, taking into account the seven additional executive summaries issued since the issuance of the note, the needs for technical assistance expressed with regard to articles contained in chapter II of the Convention had surpassed those indicated in relation to chapter V (asset recovery). The need for capacity-building, in particular for enhancing the skills and substantive knowledge of staff, continued to be the most prevalent need for technical assistance highlighted in the finalized executive summaries, followed by legislative assistance and institution-building. Within chapter II of the Convention, many of the identified cross-cutting technical needs touched upon the development of preventive anti-corruption policies and practices. Furthermore, in line with the growing trend in States expressing a need for greater cooperation, the importance of sharing good practices and enhancing inter-agency coordination, including at local levels of government, was highlighted. In this regard, the need to enhance the capacity of States to reach out to the public and the need to engage the public as a preventive measure, in line with article 13 of the Convention on the participation of society, were highlighted.

44. To facilitate discussion in the Implementation Review Group, and in line with the thematic focus of the first resumed tenth session, a panel discussion was held on technical assistance required in relation to chapter II of the Convention.

45. A panellist from Côte d'Ivoire informed the Implementation Review Group of the awareness-raising activities that the High Authority for Good Governance of her country had carried out to strengthen the capacities of the national stakeholders involved in the prevention of corruption. She highlighted the establishment, monitoring and evaluation of local integrity committees and anti-corruption platforms, explaining that those committees were constituted of civil society organizations working voluntarily on the prevention and reporting of corruption in their area. The panellist referred to an intervention by another State party at a previous session of the Group on a similar model of local integrity committees and indicated her intention to seek to exchange experiences with that State party to further improve that model. The panellist also shared information on the organization of awareness-raising campaigns in public administration and in the population, and on the design, production and distribution or broadcasting of awareness-raising materials and television spots. She noted the organization of workshops to develop and introduce elements on anti-corruption efforts in the syllabus of primary, secondary and tertiary education in her country. Nonetheless, she added that, despite such efforts, much remained to be done, in particular with regard to the processing and monitoring of asset declarations, the preparation of declarations of interest, the management of conflicts of interest, the regulation of matters related to gifts, and asset recovery. The panellist welcomed the technical assistance provided by UNODC, including through the joint UNODC-World Bank Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, and other development partners at the national level and requested its extension throughout the West African subregion. In concluding, the panellist opined that chapter VI (technical assistance and information exchange) of the Convention also

<sup>1</sup> Information on the panel discussion on technical assistance provided in relation to articles contained in chapter II of the Convention, which was held during the joint meetings of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption and the Implementation Review Group, is contained in the report on the tenth meeting of the Working Group.



merited to be reviewed, and she suggested that this be considered when discussing the second phase of the Mechanism.

46. A panellist from the State of Palestine highlighted the positive impact of technical assistance received from UNODC, which had so far included training workshops on financial investigations, sharing good practices in investigating corruption cases, strengthening access to public information, asset management and an assessment of the anti-corruption strategy. He noted how the assistance provided had contributed to building the capacity of national experts to adopt advanced international standards and comply with the provisions of the Convention. The panellist underscored how that assistance had enhanced the participation of civil society in the preparation, follow-up and assessment of the national anti-corruption strategy and had led to the amendment of the bill on the right to access information. He also noted the importance of the assistance provided for the development of a financial disclosure system and for building national capacity in asset management. In concluding, the panellist noted that more assistance was still needed to support current efforts.

47. A panellist from the Republic of Korea presented the international cooperation activities related to the prevention of corruption carried out by the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of her country. The Commission had entered into memorandums of understanding with other countries to share experiences and information with counterparts in the region and worldwide. The Commission also provided technical assistance to partner countries through the United Nations Development Programme Seoul Policy Centre, thus ensuring close cooperation with other technical assistance providers. The panellist also informed the Implementation Review Group that anti-corruption capacity-building programmes were organized every year for approximately 15 individuals recommended by the heads of anti-corruption agencies from around the world. The panellist concluded her presentation by highlighting the three measures related to the prevention of corruption that elicited the most interest from other countries, namely, the integrity assessment, the anti-corruption initiative assessment and the corruption risk assessment.

48. A panellist from Paraguay shared information on the legal framework against corruption and corruption prevention mechanisms established in the public sector of his country. The National Anti-Corruption secretariat, as the institution in charge of integrity and transparency, had launched an online “reporting portal” that citizens could use to report alleged acts of corruption. He noted that the portal aimed at promoting open government by providing citizens with access to information, facilitating active participation and bolstering accountability to strengthen the proper use of public resources. The panellist noted that among the incidents most reported in the portal were the improper collection of fees, passive bribery, embezzlement and the diversion of property. In concluding his intervention, the panellist indicated that the main challenges faced in relation to the portal were the need to give due attention to all complaints and providing a timely response to them, the limited jurisdiction of the National Anti-Corruption secretariat, which did not extend to local government entities, and the lack of reports regarding cases of so-called grand corruption.

49. In the ensuing discussion, many speakers shared information on assistance that their countries had received in the implementation of the Convention, in particular in response to needs identified in the country reviews carried out under the Mechanism. While expressing their gratitude to the providers of assistance already received, speakers also highlighted additional needs for technical assistance to further the implementation of the Convention, in particular in the areas of building capacities, strengthening institutions, financial investigations, forensic accounting and the protection of reporting persons. Some speakers noted that legislative frameworks, while providing the basis for solid anti-corruption regimes, were not sufficient in themselves to combat corruption, and that continuous oversight mechanisms forcing institutions to share information were key to combat impunity.

50. Several speakers underscored that, for technical assistance to be effective, recipient countries must demonstrate political will to combat corruption at all levels and have sound public policies against corruption. In this respect, one speaker shared a recent commitment by a number of donors to continuing to support the achievement of anti-corruption initiatives by her Government. She indicated that those donors had pledged, *inter alia*, to continue to provide wide-ranging assistance and support for anti-corruption efforts and to be responsive partners in the seizure and return of assets obtained from corrupt practices, ensuring that such assets were returned to her country. Another speaker informed the Implementation Review Group that, as a result of training on the protection of reporting persons, public confidence in the reporting mechanisms and the use of hot lines for reporting had increased from 2017 to 2018. Several speakers highlighted the importance of fostering public-private partnerships in anti-corruption efforts. In highlighting the usefulness of the outcome of the implementation reviews with respect to guiding technical assistance, one speaker urged both States parties under review and reviewing States parties to respect the time frames for completion of the reviews. He also expressed his support for the efforts of the secretariat to consult other review mechanisms about their experiences when considering the future follow-up process of the Mechanism.

51. Several speakers noted that technical assistance should be country-based and country-led, focus on the needs of developing countries, respect the wishes expressed by them and assist in building capacities without imposing conditions. In this regard, the benefits of encouraging South-South cooperation were emphasized. One speaker described how his country's framework for cooperation with Africa had resulted in the organization of multiple seminars. Another speaker informed the Implementation Review Group that her country had established a "knowledge bank" to offer technical cooperation to countries eligible for official development assistance. The objective was to help to strengthen public bodies in areas such as natural resources management, taxation, anti-corruption, statistics, registers, clean energy, gender equality, higher education and research. Her country provided financial support for UNODC technical cooperation with countries in their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Convention. Support was also expressed for the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, the International Centre for Asset Recovery and the Coalition of the Civil Society Friends of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. She referred to the statements adopted at two expert group meetings held in Lima and Oslo, respectively, as a follow-up to Conference resolution 7/2, entitled "Preventing and combating corruption in all its forms more effectively, including, among others, when it involves vast quantities of assets, based on a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption". She expressed the hope that the recommendations from the meetings would be helpful to all engaged in anti-corruption efforts. Several speakers requested additional information on those initiatives, in particular the knowledge bank.

52. While expressing his appreciation for the initiative to hold the meetings of the Implementation Review Group on technical assistance jointly with the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption, thereby offering an opportunity for policymakers to exchange views directly with practitioners, one speaker asked the panellists for their views as to which areas of preventive measures could be considered by the Working Group. In response, one panellist said that she considered articles 7 and 12 of the Convention to be a priority. She noted that, as a result of the adoption of international banking regulations, the private sector had in many instances made greater progress in preventing corruption than the public sector, hence the potential fruitfulness of exchanging experiences with the private sector.

## VI. Other matters

53. Gratitude was expressed to the Government of the United Arab Emirates for agreeing to host the eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties, and the secretariat was requested to provide a briefing on the status of preparations for the session.

54. In response, the Secretary provided the following information: (a) the draft provisional agenda of the eighth session had been agreed at informal consultations held on 28 February 2019; (b) the host country agreement between UNODC and the Government of the United Arab Emirates had been signed on 30 July; (c) invitations to the session had been issued on 15 August and the information note for participants would be made available shortly; (d) the Conference would be held at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center; (e) the host Government had developed a logo and a website for the session in close coordination with the secretariat, and the website would be launched shortly; (f) the call for applications for special events had been issued and would also be circulated through a special message to permanent missions, together with the extension of the deadline for such applications to 30 September 2019; and (g) the session would be preceded by three events, to be held on 14 and 15 December, namely, an event for young people to be organized by the host Government, the annual general conference of the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport and a meeting bringing together anti-corruption authorities and State audit institutions.

55. One speaker reiterated his delegation's request for the secretariat to provide to States parties, in written form and in advance of the eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties, information on the expected duration of the second cycle, given the current pace of reviews, and the budgetary implications of the delayed completion of the country reviews under that cycle. Another speaker recalled that the terms of reference of the Mechanism had been the subject of protracted negotiations and that, while the country reviews under the first cycle had been nearing completion in a timely manner, the reviews under the second cycle had been subject to delays. It was also recalled that the current workplan of all subsidiary bodies of the Conference was coming to an end and that a new workplan needed to be discussed and adopted, as it would provide guidance on the future work of the Implementation Review Group, including the length of its sessions. In this regard, it was also noted that a decision on the multi-year workplan would be closely connected to the programme of work of the Group and that the secretariat should contribute to such discussions.

56. Several speakers further emphasized the need for the Implementation Review Group to start discussing the following review phase, in line with paragraph 40 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism, in which it was stated that, in the following review phase, each State party was to submit information in its responses to the comprehensive self-assessment checklist on progress achieved in connection with the observations contained in its previous country review reports. In accordance with that paragraph, States parties, as appropriate, were also to provide information on whether technical assistance requested by them in relation to their country review reports had been provided. In this regard, some speakers noted that the inclusion in the agenda of the Group of a new item on the voluntary exchange of information on national measures taken after the completion of country review reports, as proposed by Switzerland, could be a way of developing the practices on how States reported on measures taken and, for the Group, of gaining a better understanding of measures and practices that could be useful.

57. It was noted that the experience of other review mechanisms in transitioning from the first to the second phases could be useful, and the Secretary informed the Implementation Review Group that this work was already under way and that information on this topic would be provided to the Conference as part of the report of the Secretariat on enhancing synergies with other review bodies. One speaker referred to a draft Conference resolution proposed by her Government, in which, *inter alia*, a call was made for discussing the next phase of the Mechanism.

58. In response to the comments raised, the Secretary referred to the two components for consideration, namely the duration of the second cycle under the first phase of the Mechanism and the conceptualization of the second phase. She noted that the informal consultations on the working methods of the subsidiary bodies could also cover the future of the Mechanism and that the secretariat stood ready to support those informal consultations.

59. Several speakers reported on measures taken in their countries to implement the Convention, as well as good practices and challenges identified in the process. Several speakers also mentioned that new legal frameworks had been adopted to strengthen the capacity of authorities to prevent and combat corruption and recover the proceeds of corruption effectively. New institutions had been established, such as specialized preventive, investigative, prosecutorial bodies, as well as national anti-corruption courts and task forces. It was stressed that new technology was already in use or was being introduced to increase the transparency of government operations and improve the capacity of authorities to detect, prevent and investigate corruption offences effectively. Some speakers highlighted specific examples of successful cooperation in the form of provision of technical assistance, workshops and study visits with other States, including examples of South-South cooperation. One speaker noted with appreciation the good practices shared by other speakers and suggested that relevant thematic reports of the Secretariat on findings of country reviews, when listing good practices, could mention States parties for which such good practices had been identified, in particular with regard to the establishment of national anti-corruption courts, in order to facilitate the sharing of information.

## **VII. Provisional agenda for the eleventh session**

60. The Chair recalled that, at its tenth session, the Implementation Review Group had agreed to continue its deliberations on the provisional agenda of the eleventh session of the Group at its first resumed tenth session.

61. The Secretary informed the Implementation Review Group of the results of a survey on the degree of satisfaction of delegations with the support provided by the secretariat in connection with the tenth session of the Group and the thirteenth session of the Working Group on Asset Recovery. The Secretary also provided a brief summary of the responses of States parties to a note verbale dated 4 June 2019 by which, pursuant to Conference decision 7/1, they had been invited to share their impressions on the implementation of the workplan and on any impact thereof on the attendance of experts. Those States parties that had not yet done so were encouraged to submit their comments on this matter to the secretariat for inclusion in a report that the secretariat would prepare for consideration by the Conference at its eighth session.

62. The work undertaken by the Implementation Review Group in identifying best practices, common challenges and lessons learned, in particular for the first cycle of the Mechanism, was recognized.

63. Speakers welcomed efforts to improve the working methods of the Implementation Review Group, to better structure its discussions and to plan future sessions of the Group and the other subsidiary bodies of the Conference.

64. Some speakers noted that, with a view to further increasing the efficiency of the Mechanism, the number of annual sessions of the Implementation Review Group should again be reduced to one regular and one resumed session. This would streamline efforts and make the remaining meeting entitlements available for other ad hoc meetings that the Conference may decide to convene, such as preparatory meetings for the special session of the General Assembly against corruption to be held in 2021. Speakers also highlighted the importance of continuing to coordinate the Group's sessions with those of other subsidiary bodies of the Conference to enhance discussions. One speaker underscored the importance of identifying and enhancing synergies among the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Conference of the Parties to

the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, in order to define topics of common relevance and make full use of available resources.

65. A number of speakers expressed support for the proposal submitted by Switzerland to include in the provisional agenda of the eleventh session of the Implementation Review Group a new item entitled “Voluntary exchange of information on national measures taken after the completion of country review reports”, as it would facilitate the deliberations of the Group. Many speakers, however, noted that such information was already being shared by many States either under existing items, such as item 2 (review of implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption), or at any other stage.

66. Some speakers noted that, while more detailed information on progress made and national measures taken could be made available, the inclusion of such an agenda item should not erode the fundamental principles of the functioning of the Mechanism, including impartiality, and the implementation of the Convention as a whole. In that regard, some speakers indicated that clarifications regarding the proposal by Switzerland were required, including on its practical implications, given that the proposal might affect the guiding principles of the Mechanism, including the confidentiality of country review reports provided for in paragraph 37 of the terms of reference of the Mechanism.

67. Since no agreement on the inclusion of the proposed item in the provisional agenda of the eleventh session could be reached, some speakers urged States parties to hold informal consultations on that matter with the involvement of the secretariat in advance of the eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties. Several speakers said that, in addition to addressing the question of the proposed item, those informal consultations should also include ways of improving the working methods of all subsidiary bodies of the Conference, as well as the workplan of those bodies for the period 2020–2021.

68. The Implementation Review Group agreed to continue its deliberations on the provisional agenda of its eleventh session at its second resumed tenth session, to be held concurrently with the plenary session of the eighth session of the Conference, while also taking into account any decisions that the Conference may take on the future programme of work of the Group. Owing to the limited time available for discussions during the second resumed tenth session, the Chair encouraged delegations to hold informal consultations on the draft provisional agenda of the eleventh session, as well as on ways of improving the working methods of all subsidiary bodies of the Conference, as well as the workplan of those bodies for the period 2020–2021, prior to the eighth session of the Conference.

## VIII. Adoption of the report

69. On 4 September 2019, the Implementation Review Group adopted the report on its first resumed tenth session.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.6, CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.7, CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.8, CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.9, CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.10 and CAC/COSP/IRG/2019/L1/Add.11.