



**Transparency International address to the plenary assembly of the Fourth Session of the
Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption**

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Mr President, distinguished delegates, This is a special moment, one when the relevance of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the broader fight against corruption is particularly clear.

The events of the Arab spring underscore both of our key areas of focus at this Fourth Session of the Conference of States Parties (CoSP) to the UNCAC, firstly the importance of, and potential inherent in, civil society involvement. And, secondly, the need for strong cross-border anti-money laundering and asset recovery measures. The rapidly unfolding events in the region should provide added momentum to the important task we have undertaken.

Transparency International recognises that the Convention review mechanism, which was adopted at our last meeting in Doha, is performing significantly better than initial expectations.

Six country reviews have been completed and many more are underway. We are pleased to see that some have indeed accepted inputs from civil society organisations (CSOs). And some governments have also published their responses to the Self-Assessment Checklist.

But we are still concerned about the wavering of some countries in honouring their commitment to the involvement of civil society in the Convention review process, a role that is enshrined in the Convention itself and supported by a written opinion from the UN Office of Legal Affairs. The Arab Spring has made clear that there can be no effective fight against corruption without citizen involvement, and that countries ignore civil society at their own risk.

The Conference of States Parties (the CoSP) should make clear at this meeting that the Implementation Review Group (or IRG) will comply with Rule 17 of the CoSP Rules of Procedure, which provides for civil society participation.

The IRG has a crucial role in the operation of the review mechanism. And there is no logical justification for limiting civil society inputs to the IRG, when the importance of this input to the CoSP and to country reviews has already been acknowledged.

We also believe that the review process can be improved in other ways. We suggest that the timetable for country reviews and the official contact point be published to facilitate timely inputs from civil society and the private sector. All government responses to the UNODC's Self-Assessment Checklist and final reports should be made public. And civil society inputs should be accepted and put to good use by reviewers, identifying where they agree or disagree with government assessments and what additional information may be needed.

These suggestions will make the review process more effective and more transparent, reinforcing public confidence.

Transparency International and other civil society organisations are supporting the review process led by the CoSP with 13 country progress reports on UNCAC implementation which are being launched at this meeting along with an overview report. We plan to publish such reports on a regular basis and we welcome comments on how our reports should evolve.

We're grateful to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for publishing executive summaries of the reports on the conference website.

The events in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia also highlight another long-standing, critical issue that we have come here to address, namely the return of stolen assets and ensuring that the global financial system is not instrumentalised to launder the proceeds of corruption.

In this spirit, we applaud the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative's (StAR) report "Barriers to Asset Recovery" and its key recommendations which aim to facilitate judicial cooperation in the area of asset recovery and allow for rapid tracing and temporary freezing or seizing of assets. The protection of whistleblowers is a critical element of this framework, and the Convention contains provisions on precisely this subject.

And we call on states parties to comply with the anti-money laundering requirements under the UNCAC and other international standards. This should include enforcement of requirements that banks identify the beneficial owners of funds, and that they identify customers who are Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and report suspicious transactions made by them to the Financial Intelligence Unit.

Ladies and gentleman, we have a limited time together here in Marrakesh and we bear a great responsibility. Let us move forward with a willingness to take bold action so that we can do more in the fight against corruption. The billions of people we represent here deserve nothing less.