

**Statement by Transparency International to UNCAC Implementation Review
Group**

Vienna, 5 June 2014

Delivered by Gillian Dell, Head of the Conventions Unit

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

Good morning. My name is Gillian Dell and I am Head of the Conventions Unit at Transparency International. TI is a global movement of civil society chapters fighting corruption in more than 100 countries. We operate on the principle that corruption can only be defeated if we seek to build coalitions between government, business and civil society.

We appreciate the opportunity to share once again today our experience in supporting implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption and its review process.

The adoption of the UNCAC and was a remarkable achievement and we are committed to its success. It put the corrupt of this world on notice that the international community was resolved to work together against corruption, to stem its destructive effect on our societies. The introduction of the Convention's review process was also an important landmark serving to strengthen collective resolve. But we have a long way to go before the convention realises its promise and we believe we can proceed much faster if we join hands in trying to achieve that goal, as envisioned by the Convention.

With preparations under way for the second cycle of reviews, there is good reason to do an interim stocktake. Looking at the present situation, the good news is that the first cycle of UNCAC country reviews has been proceeding steadily, albeit slowly, and has produced useful outputs –namely 68 reviews to date by our count. It is positive that most of these reviews have been

conducted with country visits and civil society participation. We also see a steady increase in the transparency of the process, though there is much room for improvement. We commend States Parties and UNODC for all these promising results.

However, there are also challenges to be addressed. The reviews continue at such a slow pace that less than half of them have been completed at the end of the fourth year of review. It is evident that streamlining measures are required, such as those currently under discussion in the IRG. We suggest that this should include consideration of a reduction in the volume of translations involved. It should also include an examination of whether the resources budgeted are sufficient. Furthermore, while transparency is increasing, the level is still inadequate and States should be encouraged to increase it—for example, only 28 countries have so far agreed to publish their full review reports on the UNODC website. Moreover, NGOs report ongoing difficulties in obtaining information about focal points and timetables for their national review process. This should be addressed.

With regard to the Executive Summaries produced by the process, as we found in our UNCAC Progress Report submitted to the Conference of States Parties last year, the quality of the assessments is uneven and in many cases they offer insufficient guidance.

Additionally, our report last year on Whistleblower Protection and the UNCAC, found that the 30 Executive Summaries available at the time generally contained little about Article 33 and where they recommended improvements, they generally did not indicate what type of measures should be introduced. These issues are natural growing pains of a new and monumental process, but need careful attention. We are aware that some of these challenges are under

consideration in IRG discussions, including a discussion of changes to the questionnaire for the second cycle. It is also worth considering preparing additional guidance material and providing additional training for reviewers.

For the second cycle, States Parties are faced with an important challenge of streamlining the process but maintaining a useful quality output. In their published responses on the revised self-assessment checklist and collecting information to facilitate assessing the performance of the Mechanism, about twenty States Parties have provided valuable observations and suggestions. Without going into detailed points, we encourage the IRG to ensure that the quality of the reviews is such that they provide useful guidance for meaningful national action and at the same time are not excessively burdensome.

Apart from preparations for the second cycle, we recommend consideration of the follow-up to the first cycle. Follow-up on the recommendations in the first cycle is key for advancing the Convention's aims. Without follow-up the efforts put into the first cycle of reviews will be lost. In that regard, in our Progress Report last year, we recommended that governments prepare action plans within six months after country reviews were completed to respond to the recommendations in the country review reports and identify technical assistance needs.

We gather from UNODC's Technical Assistance Needs paper prepared for the current session that there are a number of countries that have already prepared such action plans and we commend this. We would welcome seeing other countries follow their good example, whether or not they are candidates to receive technical assistance.

A further issue is technical assistance. We commend those countries that have provided technical and financial assistance to developing countries to assist the latter in addressing challenges identified in their country reviews. It would be useful for civil society and other members of the public to be able to access more information about what technical assistance is being provided to assist countries in meeting their UNCAC obligations so that we can help support these initiatives.

In conclusion, we commend States Parties and UNODC on their progress to date in the massive effort to achieve implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption. We are pleased to be actively supporting these efforts and are looking forward to working with you in an expanding partnership.

At the same time, we remain disappointed at the exclusion of NGOs from UNCAC subsidiary bodies, including the IRG and the Working Groups. We believe this is contrary to UNCAC standards and rules of procedure and sends the wrong signal. We urge governments to give further consideration to the question: Is it really in the interests of the fight against corruption to exclude NGOs from key international discussions?

Thank you for your attention.