

PRESS RELEASE

International right to know day Governments should act on transparency commitments

Secrecy fosters corruption

28 September 2013, Berlin - On International Right to Know Day, the UNCAC Coalition, a global civil society network, says governments need to move faster to implement transparency commitments made under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The anti-corruption network seeks action on the transparency agenda at the next UN anti-corruption summit in Panama in November 2013. “Secrecy practices foster corruption. Public access to information is vital for anti-corruption efforts.” said Coalition Coordination Committee member Saad Filali Meknassi.

In the tenth anniversary year of the UN Convention, the Coalition reminds governments of their obligations to translate key transparency measures into law and to apply and enforce them. in [a statement](#) issued last Wednesday the Coalition outlined priority measures. “Government action to increase transparency is overdue.” said Filali Meknassi.

One of the Coalition’s key demands is for governments to adopt and implement comprehensive access to information legislation in line with international standards and in fulfillment of UNCAC.

The network also emphasizes that secrecy of company ownership is a key factor facilitating corruption and is calling for states to collect beneficial ownership information through national-level public registers of companies and trusts. This is needed to translate UNCAC commitments into practice.

Another area where transparency is crucial relates to income and asset declarations by senior public officials. The Coalition calls on governments to introduce public registers of Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and for those PEPs to file and publish comprehensive declarations.

Finally, the Coalition seeks more transparency in the UNCAC review process—the process for monitoring how countries are fulfilling their treaty obligations. The review process falls short of the transparency aspirations of the Convention in several respects, most notably the lack of public access to the full reports produced by the reviews.

Corruption undermines democracy, human rights and sustainable development. Any treaty is only as strong as its implementation. For the UNCAC to succeed, its provisions on access to information and transparency must be fully respected.

Note to Editors: The comprehensive United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), adopted in 2003, is the only global legal framework for combating corruption. It is a binding agreement among 167 states parties on standards and requirements for preventing, detecting, investigating and sanctioning corruption.

The UNCAC Coalition, formed in 2006, is a network of more than 350 civil society organisations in over 100 countries. Its goal is to promote ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption.

[UNCAC Coalition website.](http://www.uncaccoalition.org)

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