

**UNCAC CoSP 8**  
**Statement in the plenary session on the UNCAC review mechanism**  
**by David Banisar, UNCAC Coalition Chair**

Thank you, Mr President, and good afternoon to delegates.

The UNCAC Coalition, a network of over 100 NGOs around the world, working at the local, national, and international levels on fighting corruption, wish to give a few comments on the review mechanism from the civil society perspective, now that we have nearly 10 years of experience.

We have four major concerns with the process as it currently standards.

1. Civil society is not fully recognised in the process and in practice as is enshrined in Article 13 of the Convention. While it has been reported that there has been a high level of engagement with CSOs in national reviews, our members report a much less satisfactory level of engagement. We welcome the kind words from the many delegations on CSO participation, and we believe it is time to move beyond the Marrakesh compromises and engage CSOs fully in both the national and international processes. NGOs should not be seen just as pretty faces, but as key partners.
2. We wish to emphasise, as many others have, that the delays in the second cycle are highly concerning and urge that the financial, administrative and political roadblocks are resolved in an urgent manner. In the spirit of the convention, this should be seen as an opportunity by states to evaluate and reform, not a burden.
3. The review process is too limited. While the self-assessment and peer reviews produce detailed analysis and recommendations, there are no mechanisms for follow-up to the recommendations, to evaluate if they have been adopted or if other measures to fight corruption have been taken. I note that this is quite different than regional mechanisms such as those operated by the OAS, Council of Europe, OECD Istanbul process in Asia.
4. Plans for activities beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle seem limited at best. It took years to agree on the current system. It is already late to discuss the next stage beyond any extension. It is in no one's interest for the Convention to stop actively operating once the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle is to be done.

Recommendations:

We ask UNODC and the IRG to prepare a proposal to continue the UNCAC review process beyond the ongoing second review cycle. We would like to see an evaluation of the review process so far, and a set of proposals to improve it and make it more efficient. Importantly, the review process in the future should be provided with adequate resources, ensure the inclusion and participation of civil society and include a mandatory follow-up process on the

recommendations that were issued in previous cycles. The proposal on how to improve the review process should be discussed at the UNGASS and approved at the 9th CoSP.

For any future processes, we suggest that a multi-stakeholder model that brings together States, NGOs, Academia and Industry to co-develop action plans to fight corruption. This would vastly expand stakeholder engagement and support. This model is already being effectively used by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Construction Transparency Initiative (CoST), the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and many others in over 100 countries collectively around the world.

As part of this, documents should be freely shared and constructive submissions to the process should be considered and incorporated into country reviews and recommendations. At the IRG, we recommend that NGOs be allowed to be observers in the IRG processes, with the opportunity to intervene as appropriate.

Finally, we ask delegations to support the Transparency Pledge, and voluntarily commit to six principles of transparency in the review process. 19 countries have already committed to publishing updated individual country review timetables and contact information of focal points, to publishing key review documents including the self-assessment checklist and full country reports, and to organising country visits with the participation of civil society. If you are interested, please visit us down the hall outside the NGO room today or tomorrow.

Thank you for your time.