

17 December 2021

**Oral statement delivered by Yonatan Yakir on behalf of the UNCAC Coalition  
To the UNCAC CoSP9, agenda item 7: Follow-up to the UNGASS against corruption**

Thank you Mr. Chair,

The UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) against Corruption with its Political Declaration adopted in June 2021 serves as an important milestone in the global efforts to prevent and combat corruption. From a civil society perspective, clearly, governments should go beyond the consensus of the agreed text in their anti-corruption efforts. Despite serving as the driving force for the process, new international legal frameworks to tackle impunity and strengthen asset recovery were not negotiated and the forward-looking section of the declaration remains quite vague. While States Parties called first and foremost for stronger UNCAC implementation, some of the UNGASS commitments did call for more far-reaching anti-corruption actions; The declaration highlighted the importance of transparency, and called for more effective access to information. In particular, it elaborated on the need for more transparency in all stages of public procurement, as well as in the declaration of assets, political financing, and beneficial ownership information. It noted the important role of civil society, called for the protection of journalists, and the need to improve our understanding of the links between gender and corruption. States Parties also committed to “fully and effectively following up on the conclusions and observations from the UNCAC review process”.

This is all nice on paper, but the UNGASS will create real momentum only if a structured, transparent, inclusive and articulated follow-up process will be put in place and executed. As the UNCAC CoSP was “invited to follow-up and build on the declaration”, the expectation now from the States Parties is to adopt follow-up measures that will operationalize these commitments. This should be done through the adoption of more focused CoSP resolutions as well as actions on the national level. The commitments should also inform further UNODC research, the developments and update of guides, as well as the delivery of more up-to-date capacity building programs and technical assistance. With regards to the implementation of paragraph 82 of the political declaration, which called for a CoSP special session on all aspects of asset recovery, including exploring possible areas for improvement of the international asset recovery framework, we call on States Parties to engage in discussions as soon as possible on the preparatory process for this future special session, in order to fulfill this important commitment.

Mr. Chair,

We are pleased to see that civil society will continue to be an important stakeholder in the process. Rest assured that civil society will use this opportunity to provide valuable input that will inform the follow-up discussions, as it did during the run-up to the special session.

At the same time, we encourage States Parties to publicly report on their implementation of UNGASS commitments. It is not clear how the follow-up discussion will take place in the context of the work of the CoSP subsidiary bodies that are not open to the participation of civil society observers. According to our understanding, so far, only one CoSP intersessional meeting was scheduled, in 2022, to discuss the implementation of commitments.

The CoSP intersessional period and the UNGASS follow-up process should make sure that the Political Declaration commitments will not be overlooked or watered down. The cross-cutting emphasis on transparency in the political declaration should be reflected in future resolutions and eventually guide the Conference in adopting effective anti-corruption measures internationally as well as on the country level. Or else, the UNGASS political declaration will lose its momentum and will turn into a weak product of the multilateral spirit of consensus.