

## Gender Mainstreaming in Anti-Corruption Efforts

Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption<sup>1</sup> of the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC Submission to CoSP11

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Gender mainstreaming - integrating a gender equality perspective into all policies, programs, and institutions - has been a central strategy for advancing women's and men's equality over the past 30 years. Since its endorsement in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, this approach has been widely adopted by governments, international agencies, and civil society organisations.<sup>2</sup> Despite challenges, gender mainstreaming has led to important achievements, including the creation of planning frameworks, gender analysis tools, training curricula, and guidelines that help integrate gender considerations across diverse sectors.<sup>3</sup>

However, the systematic integration of gender perspectives into anti-corruption efforts remains limited. While the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was not drafted with a gender perspective in mind, some countries have attempted to incorporate it into anti-corruption institutions, policies, and activities. Yet, such initiatives are fragmented and remain sparse in 2025. Corruption is a key factor in the global gender equality gap, disproportionately affecting women<sup>4</sup> and marginalized groups, limiting access to essential

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<sup>1</sup> The Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC's Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption comprises of over 200 members, from civil society organizations, activists, academia and other stakeholders. It seeks to influence and inspire others to pay more attention to gender and inclusion in anti-corruption policy and practice, share ideas on new research questions for academics to undertake around gender and corruption, and advance for better data on gender and corruption. UNCAC Coalition. "Gender, Inclusion and Corruption Working Group." UNCAC Coalition, accessed 20 November 2025. <https://uncaccoalition.org/get-involved/working-groups/gender-inclusion-corruption/>.

<sup>2</sup> Kelsi Caywood and Gary Darmstadt, "Gender mainstreaming at 25 years: Toward an inclusive, collaborative, and structured research agenda," Journal of global health, 2024. <https://jogh.org/2024/jogh-14-04011/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> UNCAC Coalition. "Promoting a gender-responsive and inclusive approach to anti-corruption," UNCAC Coalition Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption, 2023. <https://uncaccoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Working-Group-Submission-to-the-CoSP10.pdf>; Betina Pasteknik and Isabella Moggs, "Anti-corruption as a feminist cause: The gendered dimensions of power abuse," U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2025. <https://www.u4.no/blog/anti-corruption-as-a-feminist-cause-the-gendered-dimensions-of-power-abuse>.

services, economic opportunities, and political representation.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, gender neutral anti-corruption efforts risk reinforcing inequalities and enabling abuse.

Mainstreaming gender in anti-corruption efforts can enhance their effectiveness in preventing and pursuing corruption-related offenses, as well as in providing better protection for victims of corruption.<sup>6</sup> It is also important for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 5 and 16.<sup>7</sup>

There is still a long way to go in mainstreaming gender into global anti-corruption efforts, particularly to fulfil commitments under UNCAC CoSP resolution 10/10,<sup>8</sup> and obligations arising from international frameworks.<sup>9</sup> Most national anti-corruption strategies make little or no mention of gender, and women's organizations, gender ministries, and experts are often excluded from anti-corruption planning and policy implementation. Moreover, gender-disaggregated data on corruption and the analysis of the gendered dimensions of corruption risks remain limited.

However, despite an impression of policy inertia, several concerted efforts merit recognition over the past decade, serving as useful examples of promising practices and lessons learned. Many of these initiatives have been fostered by civil society actors and international organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its landmark study, "The Time is now: Addressing the gender dimensions of corruption," maps and documents the intersection of gender and corruption, moving the debate toward evidence, policy gaps, and practice.<sup>10</sup> Others have emerged from regional cooperation programs such as EUROsociAL<sup>11</sup> between European and Latin American countries, which took stock and shared progress on gender mainstreaming and the legal recognition of sexual corruption in criminal law. The diagnostic study of this program acknowledged the lack of empirical data to analyze

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<sup>5</sup> For example, corruption constitutes a barrier to women's participation in politics, with those in public office facing harassment risks; sexual corruption remains a largely unaddressed issue, resulting in a lack of protections and remedies for victims; and whistleblowing and reporting mechanisms often ignore gender barriers.

<sup>6</sup> UNODC. Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in the Implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2023. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools\\_and\\_publications/Toolkit-gender-and-human-rights-mainstreaming-ebook-EN.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Toolkit-gender-and-human-rights-mainstreaming-ebook-EN.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> United Nations. "The 17 Goals." <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

<sup>8</sup> UNODC, "Resolution 10/10 on Addressing the societal impacts of corruption," CAC/COSP/2023/L.14/Rev.1, (December 15, 2023). [https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E\\_L.14\\_Rev.1.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E_L.14_Rev.1.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Notably, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration, the Millenium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>10</sup> UNODC. "The Time is Now: Addressing the gender dimensions of corruption," 2020. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2020/THE\\_TIME\\_IS\\_NOW\\_2020\\_12\\_08.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2020/THE_TIME_IS_NOW_2020_12_08.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> EurosociAL. Gender Equality Policies, <https://eurosoci.al.eu/politicas-de-igualdad-de-genero/>.

and assess the relationship between corruption and gender as the main obstacle to a more robust approach to this emerging issue.<sup>12</sup> In the Asia-Pacific region, collaboration between the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Experts Working Group (ACTWG) Malaysia and the Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE), involving international experts on gender, private sector and public policy makers, women's group organisations, law enforcement, anti-corruption practitioners, and academia across 16 countries, resulted in proposing eight policy recommendations on gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption work.<sup>13</sup> Development agencies have also been at the forefront of including a gender perspective in development assistance and cooperation to improve governance systems, public integrity, and the rule of law.

This written submission builds on a policy brief pending publication by the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre and the Global Civil Society Coalition for the UNCAC Working Group on Gender, Inclusion and Corruption, which highlights meaningful practices of gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption efforts in the past 10 years, lessons learned, and gaps that need addressing, and provides recommendations to governments willing to engage in this area, as well as to civil society organizations working on anti-corruption and on gender issues.

### Good practices by governments

- Including gender mainstreaming in national anti-corruption strategies and plans.<sup>14</sup>
- Collecting and analyzing sex/gender disaggregated data at national and local levels, and in regional and international evaluations of anti-corruption efforts.<sup>15</sup>
- Gender-sensitive training for public officials working on anti-corruption, especially within anti-corruption and law enforcement bodies.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ana Linda Solano López, "Mujer y corrupción: estrategias para abordar los impactos diferenciados de la corrupción en América Latina," EuroSocial, 2019, <https://eurosocial.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OK-5-Mujer-y-corrupcion-EUROSOCIAL.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> APEC, "Bridging the Gender Gap: Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment as a Game Changer in Anti-Corruption Initiatives", 2020. [https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2020/11/bridging-the-gender-gap/220\\_act\\_bridging-the-gender-gap.pdf?sfvrsn=2b6beaab\\_1](https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2020/11/bridging-the-gender-gap/220_act_bridging-the-gender-gap.pdf?sfvrsn=2b6beaab_1).

<sup>14</sup> See for example: Comisión de Alto Nivel Anticorrupción. Plan Nacional de integridad y lucha contra la corrupción 2018-2021. <https://www.bnp.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Plan-Nacional-de-Integridad-y-Lucha-contra-la-Corrupci%C3%B3n-2018-2021.pdf.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> See for example page 8 of the following report: APEC, "Bridging the Gender Gap: Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment as a Game Changer in Anti-Corruption Initiatives", 2020. "Bridging the Gender Gap: Gender Mainstreaming and Women Empowerment as a Game Changer in Anti-Corruption Initiatives". [https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2020/11/bridging-the-gender-gap/220\\_act\\_bridging-the-gender-gap.pdf?sfvrsn=2b6beaab\\_1](https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2020/11/bridging-the-gender-gap/220_act_bridging-the-gender-gap.pdf?sfvrsn=2b6beaab_1).

<sup>16</sup> See for example: UNODC. "Australia's response to UNODC's questionnaire inviting contributions on negative effects of corruption on women and youth and the role played by women and youth in preventing and combating corruption," 2024. [https://track.unodc.org/uploads/documents/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/workinggroup4/2024-September-3-6/Contributions/CU2024-133/Australia\\_EN.pdf](https://track.unodc.org/uploads/documents/UNCAC/WorkingGroups/workinggroup4/2024-September-3-6/Contributions/CU2024-133/Australia_EN.pdf).

- Elaborating policy guidelines showing how gender intersects with corruption and barriers in addressing it.<sup>17</sup>
- Developing legislation criminalizing sexual corruption.<sup>18</sup>
- Building bridges between anti-corruption institutions and civil society to enhance gender mainstreaming and empower women as agents of change in anti-corruption efforts.<sup>19</sup>

### Good practices by civil society

- Identifying knowledge gaps regarding the intersection between gender, human rights, and corruption.<sup>20</sup>
- Researching and publishing reports to monitor government actions and progress around gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption efforts, and the challenges they face.<sup>21</sup>
- Identifying gaps in gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption policies and programs.<sup>22</sup>
- Collaborating with anti-corruption institutions at national and subnational levels to provide policy advice and guidance on mainstreaming gender in anti-corruption programs.<sup>23</sup>

### Recommendations for governments

Governments and international actors have a long way to go in fully integrating gender into the ways countries analyze, prevent, and respond to corruption. To advance this goal, we offer

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<sup>17</sup> See for example: APEC. “APEC Gender-mainstreaming mentoring package prepared for the Anti-Corruption Working Group: Mentor’s handbook,” 2022. [https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2022/2/apec-gender-mainstreaming-training-package-mentor%27s-handbook/222\\_act\\_gender-mainstreaming-training-package\\_mentor%27s-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=d0eb6909\\_2](https://www.apec.org/docs/default-source/publications/2022/2/apec-gender-mainstreaming-training-package-mentor%27s-handbook/222_act_gender-mainstreaming-training-package_mentor%27s-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=d0eb6909_2).

<sup>18</sup> See Article 25: The United Republic of Tanzania. “The Prevention and Combating of Corruption Act,” revised edition 15 June 2022. <https://elibrary.osg.go.tz/server/api/core/bitstreams/3b948878-6396-4830-be95-0ead5b823b82/content>.

<sup>19</sup> The EUROsocial cooperation programme partnered with civil society organisations from several Latin American countries to identify strategies to address the differentiated impacts of corruption in local realities in Latin America. See more on this (Spanish) in: Solano López, A.L. 2019. *Mujer y corrupción: estrategias para abordar los impactos diferenciados de la corrupción en América Latina*, <https://eurosocial.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OK-5-Mujer-y-corrupcion-EUROSOCIAL.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> See for example: Mexiro A.C., “Women Against Corruption: Anti-Corruption Policies and Programs”, accessed 20 November 2025. <https://www.mexiro.org/proyectos/mujeres-anticorrupcion-pautas>.

<sup>21</sup> See for example: Observatorio Ciudadano de Corrupción. “Informe Temático Regional: Inclusión del Enfoque de Género en la Lucha Contra la Corrupción,” accessed 20 November 2025. <https://occ-america.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/3.-inclusión-del-enfoque-de-genero-en-la-lucha-contra-la-corrupcion-1.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> See for example: Disna Mudalige, “Microfinance and Credit Regulatory Authority Bill: TISL Files Petition in the Supreme Court,” Transparency International Sri Lanka, 2024. <https://www.tisrilanka.org/microfinance-and-credit-regulatory-authority-bill-tisl-files-petition-in-the-supreme-court/>

<sup>23</sup> See the example mentioned in footnote 19 above.

the following recommendations, drawing on good practices and lessons learned from the shortcomings of gender mainstreaming initiatives in other policy areas.

### **1) Greater gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption strategies, policies, and institutions**

- Facilitate gender expertise in anti-corruption bodies and policy-making, providing training to public officials and implementing policies promoting gender diversity, responsiveness, and sensitivity in decision-making positions, in the public and private sectors.
- Audit anti-corruption strategies and institutions for gender responsiveness.
- Integrate a gender dimension into national and sectoral anti-corruption risk evaluation processes.
- Adopt Gender Responsive Budgeting as a means to promote gender equality in anti-corruption initiatives.
- Collaborate with civil society organizations, academics and other stakeholders with expertise in mainstreaming gender and/or focusing on introducing gender in anti-corruption efforts.

### **2) More gender-disaggregated data**

- Conduct research on the impacts of gender on corruption, analyze its impact at sectoral and national levels, and collect gender-disaggregated data to inform anti-corruption work, policies and institutions.
- Publicly report on gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption efforts to allow for learning from challenges and best practices.
- Build on the experience and data collected by national and subnational anti-corruption bodies and on development programs, as well as civil society's expertise.<sup>24</sup>

### **3) Greater stakeholder inclusion**

- In decision-making around gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption, states should ensure relevant stakeholders are involved (including but not limited to gender-related ministries, women's organisations, gender experts, etc.), and that the voices of women and other marginalized groups are represented in decision-making processes.

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<sup>24</sup> See for example the information collected by the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centers (ALACs) from Transparency International: <https://www.transparency.org/en/alacs>.

**4) Adopt a gender-sensitive approach in the prosecution of corruption, and detect and prosecute sexual corruption**

- Review existing anti-corruption legislation and regulations around sex as a currency of bribery, with a view to criminalizing sexual corruption.
- Provide reporting channels, support, and protection for victims of sexual corruption.

**5) Increase gender mainstreaming in the protection of whistleblowers and other reporting persons**

- Increase awareness on the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to reporting persons and related protections, identifying and highlighting gender-related risks, integrating a gendered dimension to awareness-raising campaigns, and developing gender-sensitive protection measures.
- Ensure investigators receive adequate training to take gendered dimensions into consideration throughout the reporting process.

## **Recommendations for Civil Society**

Civil society actors also have an important role to play in supporting the integration of gender into anti-corruption efforts; they play an invaluable role in providing the necessary expertise and guidance, as well as lobbying governments on gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption efforts. This can be done through:

**1) Data collection**

- Collecting gender-disaggregated data through regular surveys and reporting cycles, and compiling reports to present to government stakeholders.
- Creating observatories on gender and corruption-related issues, putting emphasis on data sovereignty and ethical data governance to protect communities and survivors.

**2) Policy advice and capacity building to governments**

- Providing expertise and support by training public servants on gender mainstreaming in anti-corruption efforts.

**3) Sharing best practices and enhancing cooperation among civil society actors at the international level**

- Strengthen the knowledge and capacities of both gender and anti-corruption expert organizations on the interlinkages between gender and corruption.