



Indonesia Corruption Watch Submission

To the First resumed 15th session of the UNCAC Implementation
Group Review

The Impacts of Corruption to Vulnerable Groups: The Role of Women and Youth People in the Eradication of Corruption

Corruption, as an extraordinary crime, has detrimental impacts that go far beyond mere financial losses for the state. Its widespread nature worsens existing social inequalities, affecting not only the economic and social rights, but also access to public services, job opportunities, and other fundamental rights.

Impacts of Corruption to Women and Youth People

Women and youth people are among the most vulnerable to the effects of corruption. Research shows that women often face gender discrimination, which is made even worse by corruption in government systems, law enforcement, and other sectors.¹ For example, budgets that should be allocated for health or education services are diverted through corrupt practices. As a result, women, especially those in the marginalized community, find it more difficult to access these public services.² Similar to women, youth groups, who should be the one driving force of change and innovation, often find themselves trapped in a corrupt system. Their chances to get a better education, secure decent jobs, and participate in political processes are frequently blocked.³

We welcome that States Parties at CoSP10 adopted a resolution focused on gender and corruption (resolution 10/10 on *Addressing the societal impacts of corruption*), which urges States Parties to improve their understanding of the ways in which corruption can affect women and men differently and to continue to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women,

¹ Frédéric Boehm and Erika Sierra, "The gendered impact of corruption: Who suffers more— men or women?" *U4 Brief* (2015), pp. 1-4.

<https://www.u4.no/publications/the-gendered-impact-of-corruption-who-suffers-more-men-or-women>.

² Women Development Organization, "Women as Agents of Change in the Fight Against Corruption" *UNODC* (2021), pp. 11-15.

https://www.unodc.org/romena/uploads/documents/Publications/ENGLISH/WDO-UNODC_EN_WomenAgainstCorruption_Web-V5_25112021.pdf.

³ The United Nations, "Corruption and the Sustainable Development Goals: Urgent global commitment needed to safeguard sustainable development from corruption",

<https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/2023/uniscp1172.html>.

including by mainstreaming a gender perspective into relevant legislation, policy development, research, projects and programmes.⁴

In addition, the issue of gender mainstreaming in corruption has been addressed several times by the UN, although UNCAC itself does not specifically discuss gender. The UNGA has committed to improve their understanding of the linkages between gender and corruption as well as how corruption affects women and men differently.⁵ Following this, the UNCAC Coalition Working Group on Gender, Inclusion & Corruption establishes several key principles, such as inclusivity of language (considering the unique needs of each groups, e.g. women, men, children, persons with disabilities, etc.), participation of those groups at every stage of public policy development, determination of specific actions to combat corruption based on their status, ensuring that the frameworks address gendered and discriminatory forms of corruption, and impact assessment to avoid unintended harm to vulnerable groups.⁶

The influence of corruption on gender equality and women's empowerment is not uniform, it significantly depends on social, economic, cultural, and political contexts. This complexity means that a one-size-fits-all approach to combating corruption may not be effective. This urges State Parties to develop anti-corruption strategies that are sensitive to its unique circumstances, particularly in how these strategies intersect with efforts to promote gender equality. For instance, in states where gender inequality is deeply rooted in cultural practices, anti-corruption measures might need to focus on dismantling systems of nepotism and favoritism that exclude women from opportunities. In contrast, in more developed nations with relatively strong legal frameworks but persistent gender gaps in leadership, the emphasis might be on ensuring transparency in political processes and corporate governance to support women's participation at all levels. Moreover, the impact involving access to services such as healthcare, education, and legal protection requires targeted interventions. This might involve increasing oversight and accountability in public service delivery to prevent the diversion of resources meant for women's health and education.

The youth, on the other hand, are a crucial demographic in the fight against corruption. They are particularly vulnerable to the impact of corrupt practices. They have unique needs that require special consideration in anti-corruption strategies. Corruption has a significant impact on youth

⁴ UNCAC CoSP resolution 10/10: Addressing the societal impacts of corruption, https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session10/resolutions/L-documents/2325384E_L.14_Rev.1.pdf

⁵ The United Nations General Assembly Special Session (The UNGASS A/S-32/L.1 28 May 2021), <https://documents.un.org/access.nsf/get?OpenAgent&DS=A/RES/S-32/1&Lang=E>.

⁶ UNCAC Coalition, "Promoting a gender-responsive and inclusive approach to anti-corruption" *UNCAC Coalition Working Group on Gender, Inclusion & Corruption* (2023), pp. 4-5. <https://uncaccoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/Gender-Working-Group-Submission-to-the-CoSP10.pdf>.

people's lives, including but not limited to professional careers, impeding access to basic services including healthcare and education, social inequality, and political disengagement.⁷

The Role of Women and Youth People in Combating Corruption

Although UNCAC does not specifically discuss gender, participation of society in general is regulated under Art. 13 of UNCAC. Active participation does not only include society, but also access to information provided by the state. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure the participation of women and youth people in combating corruption, especially to address specific needs by those groups. It is also essential for the State Parties to ensure transparency and access to information as a measure to public participation.

It is imperative for State Parties to take into account affirmative action to close the gender gap in national parliamentary representation, ensuring inclusive discourse in policy making processes. Women involvement in executive and legislative bodies accelerates gender mainstreaming, especially in anticorruption measures. This also accelerates the fulfillment of Target 5.5 under SDG Goal 5, which reads: ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life.⁸

Beside the participation of women in executive and legislative bodies, the participation of women in eradicating corruption can be done by taking action, promoting their meaningful participation in policy development, planning, implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption programmes, in line with OP7 of resolution 10/10, or through engaging with public discourse, specifically with policy makers. Women in marginalized communities can take action on advocating the risks, form, and impact of corruption.⁹ Realizing that corruption can impact each individual directly or indirectly is important to trigger policy making processes to be more gender responsive and inclusive towards marginalized groups.

Participation of youth groups in parliament is also imperative. It plays a significant role in influencing the policy making process by enhancing research in anticorruption studies and democracy.¹⁰ Youth group contributes various perspectives, varying from economic, social, and

⁷ Assel Bekenova, "Cross-Country Analysis of the Impact of Corruption and Other Factors on Youth Presence in Parliament" *Journal of Contemporary Governance and Public Policy* 3 no. 2 (2022), p. 78.
<https://doi.org/10.46507/jcgp.v3i2.73>.

⁸ Sustainable Development Goals, "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls",
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>.

⁹ Astri Wulandari, et al., "Women and Corruption in Indonesia (Phenomenological Study of the Role and Position of Women in Eradicating Corruption)" *International Conference on Communication Science* (2021), p. 5.
<https://doi.org/10.29303/iccspceeding.v1i1.5>.

¹⁰ Assel Bekenova, *Loc. Cit.*

political point of view. In order to do so, youth groups must be equipped with adequate knowledge. This is because research shows that youth people often lack the experience and knowledge to fully understand the complexities of corruption and its impact on society.¹¹ Based on this, education and awareness programs specifically designed for youth are essential. These programs should not only inform them about the dangers of corruption but also equip them with the tools and skills needed to identify, resist, and report corrupt practices. Incorporating digital tools, social media, and online platforms into anti-corruption education can make these efforts more effective and engaging. By involving youth groups into discourse of anticorruption strategies, it broadens the objective of anticorruption movement.

Recommendations for State Parties

Based on explanation above, we urge State Parties to:

1. Acknowledge the negative impact of corruption toward vulnerable groups, respectively women and youth groups in order to ensure legal reform and institutional reform to be more gender responsive and inclusive, and launch specific initiatives to implement resolution 10/10.
2. Adopt regulation on a national level and its derivative regulations addressing gender and vulnerable groups that are accessible and inclusive for all groups.
3. Ensure the adoption and implementation of legal protection toward women and youth representatives participating in all anticorruption initiatives, including but not limited to the development and monitoring of relevant strategies, laws and policies.
4. Take into account affirmative actions as measures to ensure participation and protection of women and youth groups in all anticorruption initiatives, action plans, and strategies.
5. Ensure transparency and access to information for the public, including but not limited to the discourse on anticorruption strategies on national level and its derivative regulations.
6. Encourage State Parties to take into account recommendations and suggestions by the public, specifically women and youth groups in anticorruption initiatives and programmes.
7. Promote public awareness and participation on all levels, specifically for women and youth groups in the danger of corruption and how to mitigate corruption, as well as mainstreaming gender considerations.

¹¹ Sabrina O. Sihombing, "Youth perceptions toward corruption and integrity: Indonesian context" *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences* 39 (2018), p. 303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.kjss.2018.03.004>.