

UNCAC CoSP10 – General plenary, 13 December 2023

Statement by Francois Valerian, Transparency International

Honorable President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past twenty years the United Nations have been successful at building a system of governmental and intergovernmental fight against corruption, in which civil society is included, both in parallel reviews and in the conference of state parties itself. Governments need civil society organisations in the fight against corruption because civil society organisations stand for the victims, the victims who may be unable to speak or too many to be heard, as is the case when entire nations are victims of corruption.

Over the past few years the attacks against civil society activists have considerably increased and we urge all state parties to defend civic space within their territory and within the conference of state parties itself, as was done yesterday morning with very positive plenary vote. With that respect we urge you to reform the objections process to prevent its abuse.

Civil society organisations stand for the victims and they fight for transparency against those hiding behind opacity. The most important opacity tool is the misuse of legal entities to hide and invest stolen money. We want beneficial ownership information to be available to civil society and the media, and deterrent sanctions to be provided for and enforced to make sure that information is complete and accurate.

Legal entities may be used to invest stolen money in capital markets and real estate, they may also be used to buy political influence. It has been a major progress so far that this year's conference of state parties seems to have taken very seriously the crucial issue of transparency in political financing. Governments need civil society organisations in the fight against corruption and civil society organisations need governments in the fight against corruption but there will be no victory over corruption and abuse of power if political power itself is up for sale.

Thank you very much.