

STATEMENT TO THE PLENARY BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

(AGENDA ITEM 4)

Thank you, Mister President.

Distinguished Delegates to this Conference:

On behalf of Transparency International, we congratulate you on your many achievements in the implementation of Chapter II of the Convention, but at the same time we wish to draw your attention to **a prevention** area that requires your immediate action:

The effective implementation of Article 7.3 of the Convention, on enhancing the transparency of the funding of election campaigns, candidates and political parties.

Campaign finance is regarded as the weakest area of electoral integrity. 2024 will see 74 elections in the world, yet at least in 60 of these elections transparency and oversight of political finance are not effectively implemented. This gap opens the door to corruption and contributes to the erosion of public trust in governments.

In 20 years since the adoption of the Convention, not one of over 60 resolutions has addressed the challenges in the implementation of Article 7.3 on the transparency of the funding of candidates, political parties and election campaigns.

This is despite that, as the Thematic Report prepared by the Secretariat on the implementation of Chapter II, 80 out of 82 countries have received recommendations to address the **most prevalent challenges to implement Article 7. Some of these challenges are:**

1. "...inadequate limits to private donations
2. insufficient restrictions on anonymous and foreign donations,
3. the lack of effective disclosure obligations
4. And the lack of effective oversight and audit mechanisms"

Let me also bring to your attention to the Conference Room Paper titled **Road map to strengthening the role of non-governmental actors in the fight against corruption, submitted by the United States**. Young people, academia and civil society, have identified as one of their common priorities the call for greater transparency in political party funding and have provided extensive recommendations to facilitate greater access to information and greater scrutiny of political finance.

The Atlanta Declaration must echo the 2021 UNGASS Political Declaration and renew a commitment with transparent and accountability of political funding. **We urge you to include in the Atlanta Declaration the recognition that States parties should step up their efforts to introduce measures for the digital reporting, public disclosure and effective oversight of the funding of candidates and election campaigns.**

The Atlanta Declaration can then help prepare the way for the next Conference, and help make a priority the issuing of comprehensive guidelines to give full effect to article 7.3 of the Convention, including measures like the ones proposed in the RoadMap, such as:

1. **Close legal loopholes that enable illicit political funding, particularly** to restrict and stop donations from anonymous and foreign interests, and from companies that do not disclose their beneficial owners.
2. **Establishing compulsory systems for digital reporting and disclosure of political finance information** to a competent oversight authority, including **the identity of persons providing funding**.
3. Empowering and resourcing **political finance oversight bodies** to detect illicit political funding.
4. **And promote the engagement of academia, civil society and young people in the oversight of political finance**, including of the honest use of public resources in election campaigns

We look forward to working with States parties and UNODC to prevent corruption through the transparent funding of political life.

14 December 2023

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