

UNGASS 2021 – The UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption

Briefing for civil society – 14/15 April 2021

Mathias Huter
Managing Director
mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org

Yonatan Yakir
Programme Manager
yonatan.yakir@uncaccoalition.org

About the UNCAC Coalition

- A global network of over 110 CSOs and individual members and an additional 200+ groups in its wider network in more than 100 countries
- Committed to advancing the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to combat corruption
- Founded in 2006 as an informal network
- Coalition opened its permanent office in Vienna in 2019, now 5 team members

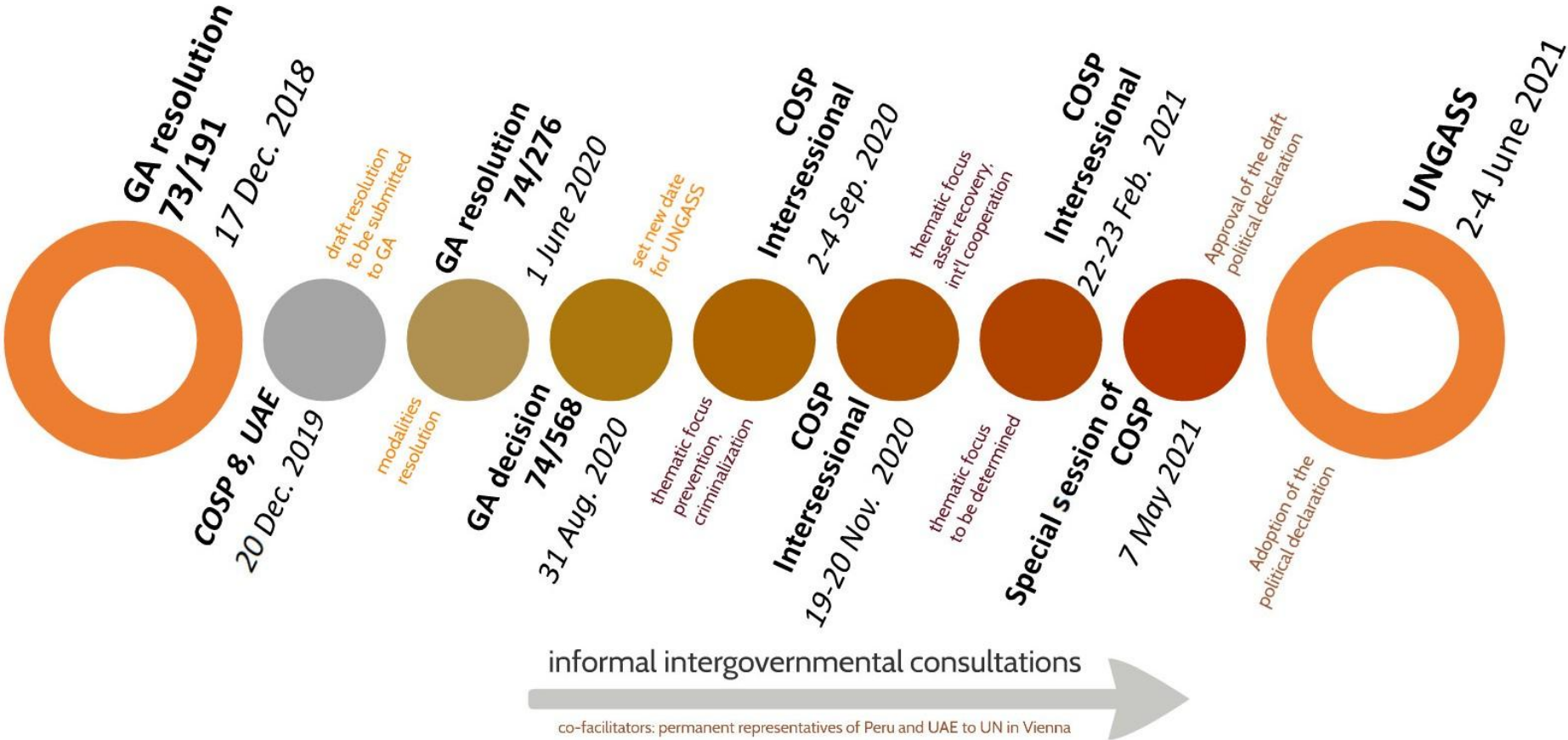
About the UNCAC Coalition

- Ensure that the voice of civil society is heard in UNCAC fora
- Advocacy for policy priorities and civic space
- Facilitation of joint advocacy, networking and coordination among civil society groups
- Support to civil society groups engaging in the UNCAC review process
 - Support and funding for parallel reports
 - Transparency Pledge signed by 27 governments
- Regular engagement with delegations in Vienna
 - Briefing sessions, sharing of good practices and civil society asks

UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) against Corruption

- First-ever UNGASS against Corruption
 - Others on Covid-19 (2020), Drugs (2016),...
- „on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation“
- „...shall adopt a **concise and action-oriented** political declaration, agreed upon in advance **by consensus** through intergovernmental negotiations ...;
- Colombia as one of the key initiators, idea of an International Anti-Corruption Court.
- High-level meeting (hopefully heads of State/government & ministers)

UNGASS2021: timeline



<https://ungass2021.unodc.org/ungass2021/en/preparatory-process.html>

Format of the UNGASS

- Hybrid participation:** In-Person: mostly Member States. Almost all others: virtually
- NGOs with ECOSOC status can still apply for participation: contact NGO branch of UN DESA.
 - NGOs without ECOSOC status: deadline for submitting an application has passed.
 - ‘Non-ECOSOC NGOs’ will be accredited if Members States do not object.
 - 4-18 May: registration of attendees from accredited NGOs. Instructions will be published on UNGASS website: 2-5 participants/organisation

General Debate in the Plenary: 10 am-1 pm, 3-6 pm NY time. Broadcast on UN WebTV: <http://webtv.un.org/>

Format of the UNGASS

Statements will be made by:

- Member States.
- Regional economic integration organizations parties to the UNCAC (EU).
- Observers to the General Assembly.
- Other stakeholders, including NGOs (time permitting) – **probably 2-3 statements**
- Statements could be pre-recorded, but introduced by CSOs in person.
- Not clear yet if ‘non-ECOSOC NGOs’ will be allowed to deliver a statement.

<https://ungass2021.unodc.org/ungass2021/en/information-on-ungass2021.html>

UNGASS Side Events

- a) Events may be organized by Member States, UN entities, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC.
- b) Only one event per main organizer will be accepted.
- c) Duration: 50 minutes.
- d) **Application period: 1-30 April.**
- e) Side events will be virtual (using Microsoft Teams)
- f) Language: English (no translation)
- g) Speakers and Participants all have to be registered as UNGASS participants
- h) Guidelines and logistical info:
https://ungass2021.unodc.org/uploads/ungass2021/documents/SideEvents/Guidelines_Side_Events_UNGASS_2021_23_March_2021.pdf

Side Events: How can CSOs participate?

- NGOs must be accredited to the Special Session in order to participate in side events.
- Non-ECOSOC NGOs: reach out quickly to a potential main organiser (e.g. your government) of an event to partner.
- Confirmation of side events: three weeks prior to the session.
- **Open Question:** organise more informal civil society-led side events, possibly in the days before the UNGASS?

UNGASS Youth Forum

- 24- 26 May, virtually, in English.
- Individual Young Person (individuals up not older than 30 years who want to attend in a personal capacity and not on behalf of an organization)
- Individual Person (individuals age 31+ who want to attend in a personal capacity, due to particular expertise in the field e.g. academic)
- Youth-led Organization (an organization run by youth, age 30 and below)
- Youth or anti-corruption-focused Organization (an organization run by adults, age 30+ working on relevant youth / corruption issues)
- Regional or international organization working on relevant youth / corruption issues
- **Registration open until 4 May:** <https://forms.office.com/r/rJegQQJf5v>
- **More info:** <https://ungass2021.unodc.org/ungass2021/en/information-on-ungass2021.html>

Political Declaration

- Still under negotiations, will be finalised and adopted at a special session of the UNCAC Conference of States Parties (**registrations are currently open**)
- Prevention section is largely agreed – not much stands out, no apparent big new commitments
- Some minor progress
 - Transparent, free and fair elections
 - Procurement transparency
 - Environment for CSOs, protection of anti-corruption activists
 - Asset recovery and return from settlements
- Still being negotiated: the path forward
 - What will come after the UNGASS? Will there be any mechanism to follow-up and hold governments accountable?

Opportunities for engagement

How can we build momentum?

- Contact your country's negotiators and advocate for your country to champion specific issues in their statements at the UNGASS
 - Who? Vienna-based delegates, experts in MFA/MoJ
- Written submissions to the process: <https://ungass2021.unodc.org>
 - Do not necessarily reach negotiators – need to actively communicate them!
- UNGASS side events
- Participate in UNGASS
- Raising the pressure on governments to deliver
 - How can we best do that?

Questions?

On the UNGASS process?

On opportunities to become involved?

Ideas for how to direct wider attention to the UNGASS?

How can we hold governments accountable for UNGASS implementation beyond the event?

Thank you very much for your attention!

In case you have questions or require further information, please contact us:

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Managing Director

mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org

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