

# UNGASS against Corruption Debrief for Civil Society

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Mathias Huter

Yonatan Yakir

Managing Director

Programme manager

[mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org)  
[yonatan.yakir@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:yonatan.yakir@uncaccoalition.org)

# About the UNCAC Coalition

- A global network of over 120 CSOs and individual members and an additional 250+ 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 against Corruption

- UNGASS: took place June 2-4 in New York

UNCAC Coalition submission

[https://ungass2021.unodc.org/uploads/ungass2021/documents/session1/contributions/UNCAC Coalition 2nd UNGASS submission March 2021.pdf](https://ungass2021.unodc.org/uploads/ungass2021/documents/session1/contributions/UNCAC%20Coalition%202nd%20UNGASS%20submission%20March%202021.pdf)

- The UNGASS adopted a Political Declaration: <https://undocs.org/en/A/S-32/L.1>
  - Full of caveats
  - No proper follow-up mechanism

# UNGASS – our key takeaways

- Yes to Stronger UNCAC implementation
- No to new normative frameworks, new mechanisms or new institutions
  - No asset recovery protocol
  - No deliberations on an IACC
  - No Working Group to discuss gaps in anti-corruption global architecture

# UNGASS – our key takeaways

- There was support for some fine-tuning of commitments on criminalization, prevention, asset recovery, international cooperation
- There is a reluctance to agree to major new commitments
- No momentum for effective follow-up to ensure effective implementation of current commitments

# Political Declaration: Public procurement transparency

- “10. We commit to increasing transparency and accountability in the management of public finances and in government procurement, funding and contracting services to ensure transparency in government actions in the use of public funds and during the whole public procurement cycle.

We commit to strengthening data-collection systems and open databases that are accessible and user-friendly, in accordance with domestic laws, and to better understanding and better enabling oversight and accountability, including by supreme audit institutions and oversight bodies. (...)”

# Beneficial Ownership Transparency

- “16. We commit to making efforts in international cooperation and taking appropriate measures to enhance beneficial ownership transparency by ensuring that adequate, accurate, reliable and timely beneficial ownership information is available and accessible to competent authorities and by promoting beneficial ownership disclosures and transparency, such as through appropriate registries, where consistent with the fundamental principles of domestic legal systems and using as a guideline the relevant initiatives of regional, interregional and multilateral organizations against money-laundering.”



# Access to Information

- “22. We will respect, promote and protect the freedom to seek, receive, disseminate and publish information concerning corruption, and ensure that the public has effective access to information, in accordance with the domestic laws of States. We commit to increasing the transparency of decision-making processes, in accordance with the fundamental principles of domestic law, as a means to prevent and combat corruption and facilitate efficient processes, including by adopting appropriate and necessary procedures or regulations and designating and enhancing bodies responsible for facilitating access to information, as well as through the use of digital tools, open data and Internet-based portals to help make information more accessible, with due regard for data protection and privacy rights.”

# Whistleblowing

- “30. We will provide a safe and enabling environment to those who expose, report and fight corruption and, as appropriate, for their relatives and other persons close to them, and will support and protect against any unjustified treatment any person who identifies, detects or reports, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, corruption and related offences.
- To this end, we will, inter alia, enable confidential complaint systems, protected reporting systems and programmes for the protection of reporting persons, and increase awareness of such measures, in accordance with domestic legal systems and within our means. (...)”

# Role of Civil Society

- “We note with appreciation the important role of civil society, academia, the private sector and the media in identifying, detecting and reporting on cases of corruption, and we will take appropriate measures, within our means and in accordance with the fundamental principles of domestic law, to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and the private sector, in the prevention of and the fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption.”

# Political financing; free & fair elections

- Member States are responsible for ensuring transparent, free and fair elections (...)
- Ambition to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at the national level.
- We will maintain, strengthen, develop and implement measures that protect the integrity of the electoral process and promote its accountability to voters, transparency and impartiality in domestic electoral institutions and oversight mechanisms, and transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office, political parties and electoral campaigns (...)

# Asset Recovery

- Strive to ensure transparent and accountable return of assets (OP 48)
- ...allocating such proceeds to the national revenue fund or the State treasury, reinvesting funds for special purposes and compensating victims of the crime, including through the social reuse of assets for the benefit of communities (OP 49)
- Strengthen efforts to confiscate and return assets when employing non-trial resolutions, including settlements (OP 50)

# Interesting commitments

- Expand the global knowledge and data collection on AR
- UNODC to hold corruption prevention campaigns, including education and research, incl. addressing young people
- Promote the use of technological innovations against corruption and facilitate digital government
- Creation of Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities under the auspices of the UNODC

# Interesting commitments

- Improve understanding the linkages between gender and corruption; continue to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, including by mainstreaming in relevant legislation, policy development, research and projects
- COVID-19: commit to redoubling efforts to prevent and combat corruption and to ensuring that corruption safeguards and responses are integral elements of our recovery efforts as we respond to COVID
- Criminalize bribery in all its forms by 2030.
- UNODC to support States in measurement of corruption

# The UNGASS- What's next?

P84: “We encourage the CoSP to conduct the necessary surveys on particular gaps, challenges, lessons learned and best practices on prevention, criminalization, law enforcement, international cooperation and asset recovery and return, to be undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime”



# The UNGASS - What's next?

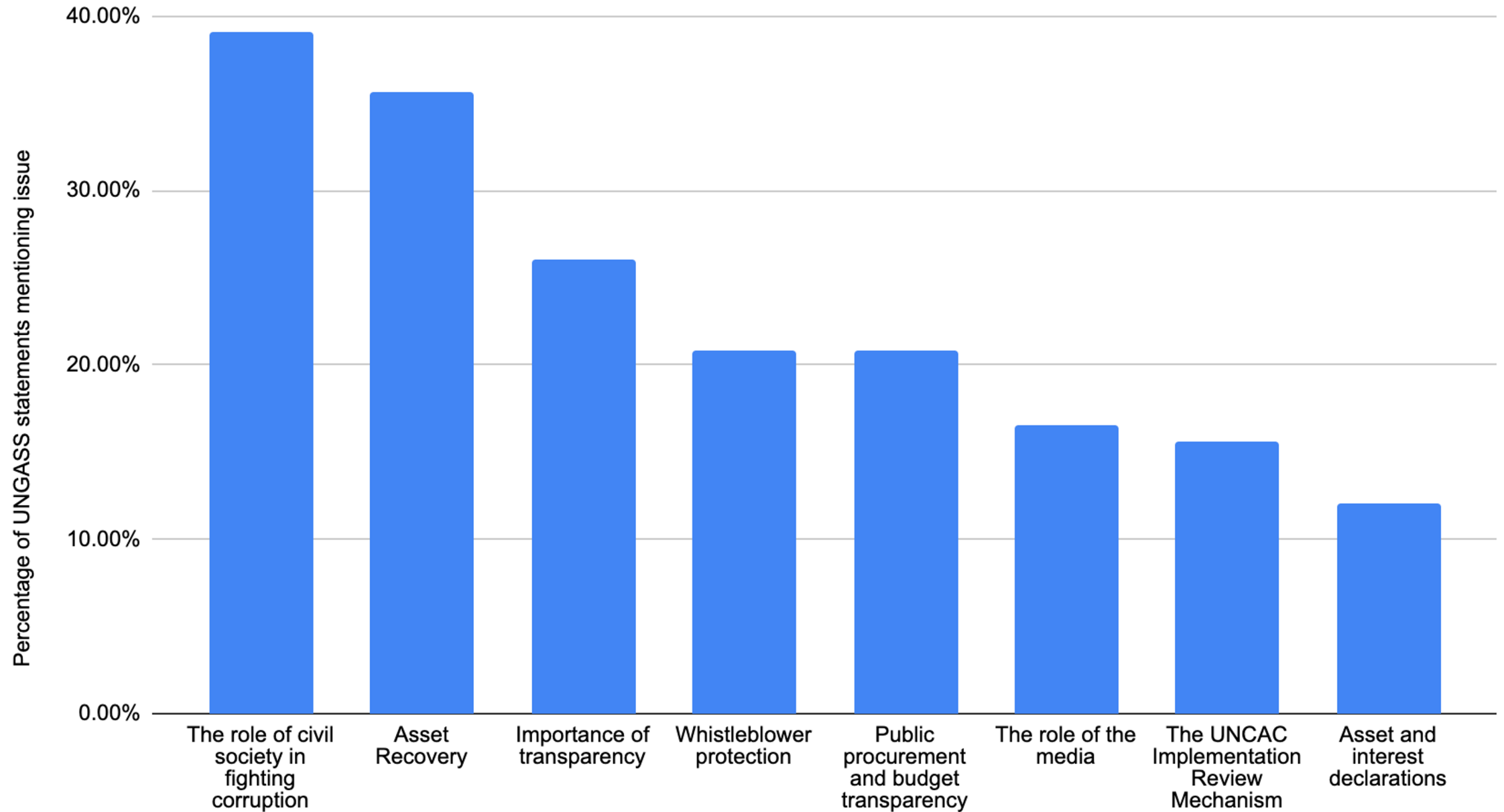
“We invite the CoSP to identify gaps and challenges in UNCAC implementation...by taking into account...any gaps and corruption challenges within the international anti-corruption framework, and **to consider recommendations by States parties to address the gaps and challenges** identified...as a first step, we invite the Conference, in the future, after the conclusion of the second review cycle, **to organize a special session of the CoSP on all aspects of the asset recovery** and return process, with a view to considering all options available under the Convention, including exploring possible areas for improvements to our international asset recovery framework.”

**“will consider holding a General Assembly follow-up special session on corruption”**

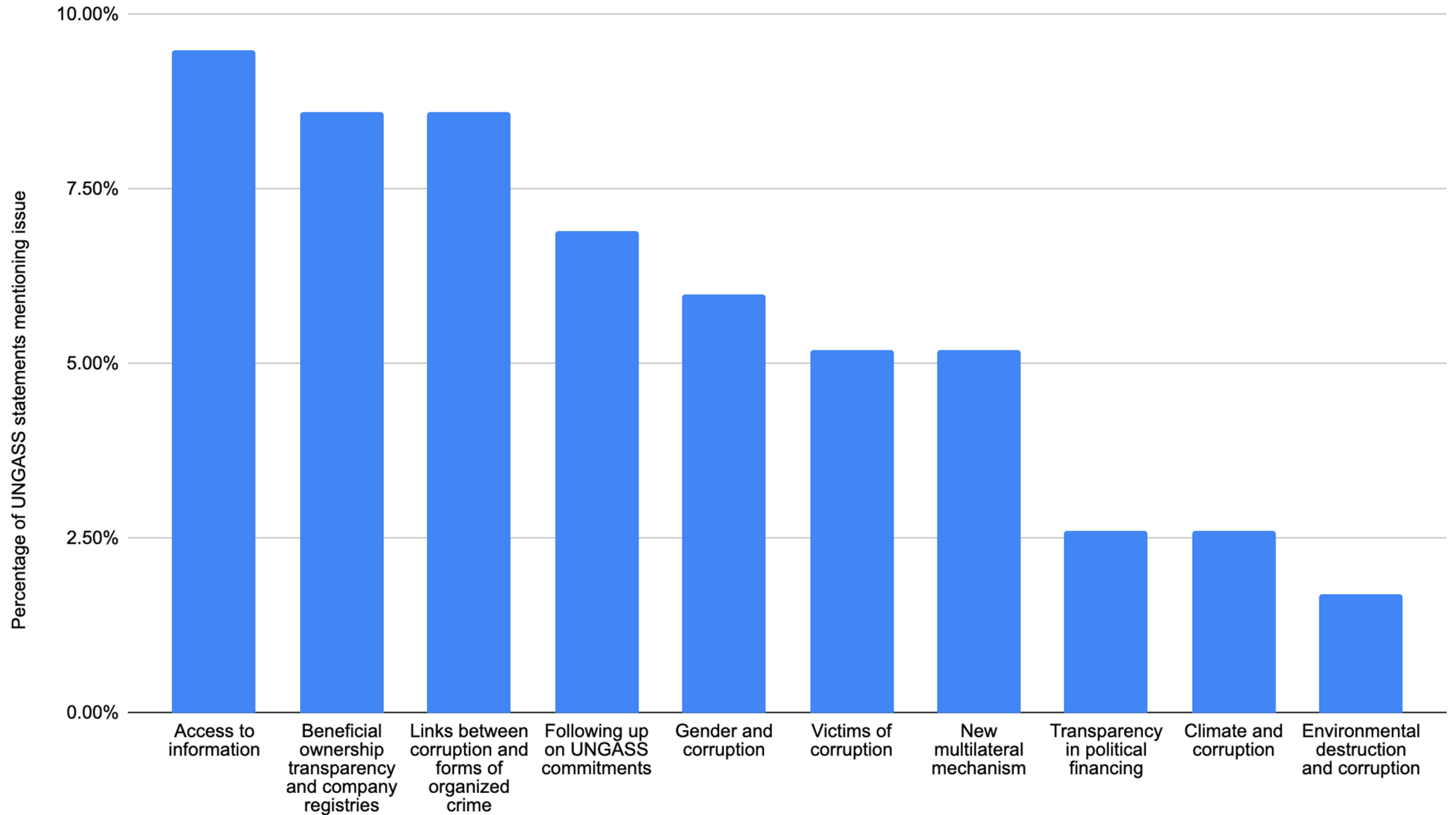
# High level national statements (the General Debate)

- 117 countries delivered statements
- Analysis of the statements- [who mentioned what?](#)
- Order of [speakers](#)
- Recording of statements on our [YouTube channel](#)

## UNCAC Coalition priority issues mentioned in more than 10% of UNGASS statements



## UNCAC Coalition priority issues mentioned in less than 10% of UNGASS statements



# High level national statements: findings

- Few new commitments to tackle corruption
- Strong [G7 statement](#) – transparency, role of civil society, UNCAC review
- Few expressed need for new multilateral frameworks
- Few mentions of commitment to follow-up on the UNGASS
- The role of civil society: true commitment? lip service?

# UNGASS- follow up

- ‘Fact check’ statements!
- [TI Sri Lanka](#), [TI NZ](#)
- [UNGASS side events](#) (including new initiatives)
- Basis for advocacy: UNGASS commitments + national statements
- **“Commit to fully and effectively follow-up on the conclusions and observations from the UNCAC implementation review process”**

# UNGASS Follow up

## Run up to the UNCAC CoSP

- The UNGASS is the latest international consensus
- Preparation of resolutions for the UNCAC Conference of States Parties, 12-17 December, Sharm El Sheik
  - **! Application period will be in late July-August !**
- The NGO briefing on margins of UNCAC IRG: 7 September
  - UNODC mandates & actions?
  - States Parties actions?

# Questions? Thoughts? Ideas?

Mathias Huter  
Yonatan Yakir

Managing Director  
Programme manager

[mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:mathias.huter@uncaccoalition.org)  
[yonatan.yakir@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:yonatan.yakir@uncaccoalition.org)

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[info@uncaccoalition.org](mailto:info@uncaccoalition.org)