INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY
9 December 2019

Every year, trillions of dollars – the equivalent of more than five percent of global Gross Domestic Product – are paid in bribes or stolen through corrupt practices that seriously undermine the rule of law and abet crimes such as the illicit trafficking of people, drugs and arms.

Tax evasion, money laundering and other illicit flows divert much-needed resources from schools, hospitals and essential infrastructure; funds that are essential to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

People are right to be angry. Corruption threatens the well-being of our societies, the future of our children and the health of our planet. It must be fought by all, for all.

And as in their mobilization for ambitious climate action and a fair globalization, it is inspiring to see young people demanding accountability and justice as a way to address and eradicate corrupt practices.

We must unite against corruption to stop the drain on resources caused by illicit financial flows. The United Nations Convention against Corruption, ratified by nearly every country in the world, gives us the means to strengthen our commitment to addressing this issue.

Later this month, Governments will meet in Abu Dhabi to review progress and prepare for the first-ever General Assembly Special Session on combatting corruption, which will take place in 2021. I call on them to take decisive action to make the fight against corruption a top priority.
On this International Day, I urge people everywhere to continue to work on innovative solutions to win the battle against corruption and to ensure that precious resources serve the peoples of the world.

***

Executive Director, UN Office on Drugs and Crime,
Yury Fedotov:
Statement on International Anti-Corruption Day
9 December 2019

VIENNA, 9 December (UN Information Service) — Corruption affects people in their daily lives. It bars them from accessing resources and opportunities. It erodes trust in public institutions and compromises the social contract. In doing so, corruption thwarts our attempts at building a better world.

As we enter a decade of ambitious action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on time, stepping up efforts to eradicate corruption and promote good governance is essential if we are to deliver on our global pledge to leave no one behind. To win the fight against corruption is to create the conditions necessary to effectively combat poverty and the inequalities that stem from it.

Notable progress has been made in the past fifteen years on the criminalization of corruption and the recovery and return of stolen assets, thanks to the almost universally-ratified United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). For ten years now, implementation of the Convention has benefited from a unique peer-review mechanism, serving as a trigger for countries to launch legislative action, strengthen their institutions and increase cooperation.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) helps the international community to translate the Convention into effective action and advance the global anti-corruption agenda. An important part of this is assisting preparations for the first-ever UN General Assembly special session against corruption in 2021.

In building inclusive momentum for this key occasion, we have to listen to the voices of young people who are demanding transparency and moving the dial
by taking action in their communities. We must capture the full potential of innovation in the fight against corruption, harnessing technology for monitoring, reporting, raising awareness and countering those who exploit it to enable their crimes.

We cannot afford to let corruption threaten our future. Standing united against corruption, we are standing up for justice, protecting the rule of law and increasing the chances that prosperity in our societies can be enjoyed by all.

* *** *

For further information please contact:
Sonya Yee
Speechwriter and Spokesperson, UNODC
Phone: (+43 1) 26060-4990
Mobile: (+43-699) 1459-4990
Email: sonya.yee[at]un.org

***

United Nations
SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION AND DIGNITY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

9 December 2019

On this day we remember and pay tribute to the victims of the horrendous crime of genocide. We also reflect on what more we can do to uphold the responsibilities set out in the Genocide Convention.

Too often, the world has failed the populations under threat of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing. The examples are many, and we know them well, but they remain a scourge, even today, causing great suffering. And the devastating impact on the victims, communities and society as a whole can take generations to overcome and heal.

Acting quickly to early warning signs and investing in early prevention can save lives and prevent attempts to destroy vulnerable groups, in whole or
in part. Where we see people facing systematic discrimination or becoming targets of violence simply because of who they are, because of their identity, we must act – both to defend those at immediate risk and those who could be in jeopardy in the future. By promoting a culture of peace and non-violence that includes respect for diversity and non-discrimination, we can build societies that are resilient to the risk of genocide.

The imperative to prevent genocide is not only moral; it is a legal obligation set out in Article I of the Convention. Indeed, the primary obligation to prevent genocide rests with States. I congratulate Turkmenistan, Dominica and Mauritius for responding to my appeal last year for the universal ratification of the Genocide Convention. I urge the 42 States that have yet to ratify the Convention to do so as a matter of priority.

Civil society, religious leaders, media outlets and teachers play an important role. This year, I launched two initiatives, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech and the Action Plan for the Protection of Religious Sites, which aim to galvanize our work and to encourage contributions from these partners, working hand in hand with states.

Investing in prevention is especially urgent today. Across the world, we are seeing an alarming surge in xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and attacks against Christians, often fed by nationalist and populist ideologies. It is important on this day to recognize that the Holocaust did not start with the gas chambers, nor did the genocides in Rwanda, Srebrenica or Cambodia start with mass killings. They were all preceded by discrimination, hate speech, incitement to violence and the dehumanization of “the other”.

Let us pay tribute to the victims of this egregious crime by remembering their suffering and by recommitting to equality and prevention, not only in our words but in our actions.

***