

**Graduation**  
**of the**  
***Master in Anti-Corruption Studies***  
**MACS 2012-2014**

9 December 2014

***Laudatio***  
by the Dean of IACA  
Mr. Martin Kreutner

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Dear Graduates,  
Dear MACS Students,

Distinguished Members of  
the Academic Consortium,  
the Defence Committee,  
the Board of Governors,  
the International Academic Advisory Board,  
the Faculty,

Mr. Ocampo, our Guest of Honour,  
Your Excellencies,  
Families and Friends of the MACS Graduates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Let me first of all extend my heartfelt congratulations to all graduates of the first Master's class in Anti-Corruption Studies on your achievements and on the successful completion of an inspiring, yet complex and demanding academic programme. *O faustum et felicem diem*, this is your day, graduates, and we all join you in celebrating this festive and joyful event, this notable accomplishment of yours.

Speaking on the occasion of your graduation, and also on International Anti-Corruption Day, observed annually on 9 December since the formal opening for signature of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2003, allow me to share some thoughts with you, from the geo-political anti-corruption agenda to crossroads and challenges in academia and the Master programme itself.

Dear MACS graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is growing awareness of corruption's intertwined nature, its devastating effects on sustainable development; poverty eradication; social, economic, and political prosperity; as well as peace and security. We all welcome and appreciate the multitude of international legal instruments at our disposal, private-public partnerships, civil society engagement, and the efforts for robust action. We particularly welcome and commend the UNCAC and its 2009 historical milestone of implementing a promising state-owned review mechanism; the

supply-side oriented OECD Anti-Bribery Convention; the important Fourth Evaluation Round of GRECO – the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe; as well as the recent declaration of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), adopted in the framework of the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC, which shines a new light on the nexus between human rights and grand transnational corruption.

In the St. Petersburg G20 Leaders' Declaration of September 2013 it reads: *“Corruption is a severe impediment to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction and can threaten financial stability and the economy as a whole. Corruption is corrosive, destroying public trust, distorting the allocation of resources and undermining the rule of law”*. In this context, let us recall that corruption consumes over 3% of the global GDP every single year; it adds up to 10% to the total cost of doing business globally; and it increases the expenses of public procurement in developing countries by up to 25%.

As far as education and training are concerned, on 12 November 2014, only a month ago, more than 1,000 participants at a UNESCO World Conference gathered under the banner “Learning Today for a Sustainable Future”. That international gathering, in its final document, the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration, emphasized *“the potential of education for sustainable development (ESD) to empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competences and values required for addressing global citizenship and local contextual challenges of the present and the future, such as critical and systemic thinking, analytical problem-solving, creativity, working collaboratively and making decisions in the face of uncertainty, and understanding of the interconnectedness of global challenges and responsibilities emanating from such awareness.”* The Declaration, moreover, stressed *“that education for sustainable development is an opportunity and a responsibility that should engage both developed and developing countries in intensifying efforts for poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, environmental protection and economic growth, with a view to promoting equitable, more sustainable economies and societies benefiting all countries, especially those most vulnerable”*.

In a similar vein, Resolution AOP3-Res-1, unanimously adopted at IACA's Assembly of Parties in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 20 November, recognizes that capacity-building activities and technical assistance provided by IACA – which pursues a holistic, interdisciplinary approach in offering anti-corruption education across cultures, disciplines, and sectors – further contribute to the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals of the

United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015. It also urges all States to further consider including a strong anti-corruption dimension in the final draft of this Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), their targets, and means of their implementation.

But we must go further, Ladies and Gentlemen. Corruption is the antithesis vis-à-vis justice, the rule of law, equality and equity, and human rights *per se*. Anti-corruption, therefore, needs to be an even greater component of the global political agenda nationally, trans-nationally, and internationally, in particular at the United Nations and beyond, both in contributing to the SDGs and in creating a new and strong responsive framework in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Synthesis Report of the United Nations Secretary General on this Agenda, entitled *The Road to Dignity by 2030*, and released (in its unedited version) only five days ago defines and shares six essential elements for delivering the SDGs: People, Dignity, Prosperity, Justice, Partnership, and Planet.

It also reiterates that access to fair justice systems, accountable institutions of democratic governance, measures to combat corruption and illicit financial flows [...] are integral to sustainable development.

Let us look at the vision of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the proposed SDGs with cautious hope. But let us also confess some concerns. All the universal goals, which we all agree on, run the risk of being severely undermined by corruption. It is therefore obvious that the prevention of and fight against corruption needs to constitute a more prominent and explicit component of this ambitious Agenda, from social inclusion to economic growth and poverty alleviation. If we are to strengthen the accessibility, availability, and sustainability of human rights, relevant goods and services, and bring poverty to an end, we must openly, steadily, and straightforwardly staunch corruption. And to be clear: This is true in every nation and in every region. Let us stand together and work *viribus unitis*, with joint forces, to see the inclusion of this strong and explicit anti-corruption component in order to not to threaten these noble causes.

Indian scientist Abdul Kalam once said: *"If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother, and the teacher."* It is in particular with reference to the latter that IACA has been entrusted with a pivotal mandate – to

empower professionals in the fight against corruption. And as far as this Master programme is concerned, we not only do so in the literal classical sense of *academia*, but also by combining a strong theoretical footing with practitioners' expertise and real life experiences.

In ancient Greece, the Agora (*ἀγορά*) was the central community and market place. It was also a key societal and communal institution – an almost constituting parameter of the Greek *polis*. The Agora not only hosted community and judicial gatherings, but it was also a domicile for leisure, for public and philosophical debate under the prerogative of freedom of speech. With the Greek philosopher Homer, the absence, however, of an Agora consequently comes along with lack of rights and lawlessness.

It was exactly this environment that we undertook to provide to our students; an Agora-style atmosphere of open debate; of analyzing, searching, and scrutinizing; of academic discourse and deliberation; of critical thinking; of walking the path from hypothesis via antithesis to the synthesis; of asking the right questions and positively drawing and gaining from diversity and multi-disciplinarity; of exploring the meta-level, the underlying meaning of things; allowing for the “heureka”, the gnosis; and also of understanding limitations and margins, of applying – if necessary – modesty and reticence in the sense of Socrates' *Ἐν οἶδα οτι ουδέν οἶδα*, or in its more popular form *scio nescio*, a humble “*I know that I know nothing*”.

Regrettably, this sound academic model is more and more threatened by zeitgeisty and less critical approaches and developments of watering down academic angels by breeding purely repetitive re-actors, by training unreflective competencies rather than enabling critical thinking, by judging empowerment of the human mind against unalloyed cost-effectiveness and simple utilitarian output. Konrad Paul Liesmann recently warned: “*He who addresses himself only to what he immediately requires, he who only focuses on usefulness and usability, will in the end stay limited*”.

Dear graduates, on the occasion of this academic celebration let me share with you two other recent developments which will see us raising increasing concerns and triggering yellow or even red flags. Critical thinking, one's exposure to the *[audiatur et] altera pars*, the other's argument, the wealth and plenitude of thoughts, the diversity and colourfulness of perspectives and potential avenues, are steadily and silently probed and ultimately undermined by two increasing phenomena. Apparently and disappointingly, this *volens nolens* also applies to academic discourse.

First, the concept of political correctness – a notion that started by addressing and opposing severe insensitivities, inequality, and inequity – has in some instances become an instrument of de-facto self-restriction, punitive pillorying, clear-cut censorship, and subsequently an outright intellectual silencer. Let us not forget what one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment, François-Marie Voltaire once said: *“I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”*

Second, individualized, distorted, or anticipating realities. Try it yourself or let two people, two students, in one place and at the same time use one of the major search machines of the web typing the same search word. They will be delivered and “serviced” with different results; results which derive from pre-emptively anticipated sets of preferences. In simple terms: *“We deliver what you want to see”*, or even worse and driving the argument one step further: *“We deliver what we want you to see.”* Such results, however, subsequently shape and distort “reality”, or at least what is left of the perception of reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, at IACA we have had a close look through a variety of research and trainings on particular aspects of corruption and its ensuring stranglehold on the access to services and rights of society. Knowing this, we have incorporated the standards set out in the UNCAC and other international legal instruments into our capacity-building and technical assistance efforts. Our focus and experience have not been limited to the public sector, but concentrate on the private sector and civil society as well. Our holistic approach has centered on bringing together professionals of various vocational and cultural backgrounds, introducing them to a variety of subject areas, offering a combination of strong theoretical and practical tools, and guiding them in finding durable solutions which fit their specific scenarios.

It is against this background that the curriculum for our present flagship programme, the Master in Anti-Corruption Studies (MACS), was developed; a curriculum that contends with the very real and threatening world of corruption; a curriculum designed for professionals by professionals, and consulted with and supported by major international stakeholders. Accredited with 120 ECTS under the Bologna criteria, it was launched back in December 2012 as the first interdisciplinary post-graduate programme of its kind, focusing on an advanced study of anti-corruption and compliance.

The MACS ran over two years, combining six on-site modules at IACA and one co-hosted by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission. The journey started with concepts and theories of corruption, the history of ideas, politics, economics, sociology, and business in the first year, taking a turn to modules on law, enforcement, and prevention in the second. Each module was delivered by leading international authorities specializing in that specific area and guided by the Academic Consortium and our partnering and in-house staff.

Altogether, 31 students from 17 countries were admitted to the MACS, bringing in their own questions, experiences, and best practices. They ranged from 26 to 59 years in age, coming from national anti-corruption authorities, private businesses, academia, civil society, and international organizations. The structure of the programme was compact and dense, allowing it to accommodate these seasoned professionals who continued to pursue their careers during their studies.

The MACS students have learned as they went along the ingredients of successful anti-corruption and compliance regimes and how they can tailor them to their own environment. And they will pass these lessons on – through their work in the field of anti-corruption and compliance, and act as multipliers in our common cause. The general feedback from the MACS has been overwhelmingly positive and interest in it has surged. As a result, in October 2014, the second intake of MACS students started their journey.

Dear Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen, a special word of thanks extends to so many of you – for making this programme possible, for creating a truly enriching experience, and for supporting our students.

My gratitude goes to the Academic Programme Consortium – Professor Susan Rose-Ackerman, Professor Nikos Passas, and Professor Mark Pieth – for your guidance and direction.

Thank you to the course directors, the in-house, partnering and visiting faculty, the Thesis supervisors and external evaluators – a group of renowned academics and practitioners from around the world – for sharing your expertise, for your enthusiasm, and for the attention you have given our students.

Our Defence Committee, chaired by H.E. Muhyieddeen Touq – thank you for supervising the students in the final stage of the programme.

Mr. Ocampo, thank you again for being with us today. Your accomplishments represent the extraordinary strength and critical contributions of the anti-corruption agenda.

I would also like to distinguish the array of international stakeholders who have consulted and supported the MACS curriculum, and especially the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with our dear friend Dimitri Vlassis, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Basel Institute on Governance, just to name a few.

My deep appreciation also extends to our close partner, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and its national Anti-Corruption Academy, for co-hosting Module VI of the programme and for offering a memorable experience in Kuala Lumpur.

Our sponsors – the Siemens Integrity Initiative, the Duchy of Luxembourg, and Phillip Morris International – deserve special recognition for providing scholarships for participants from Least Developed Countries and making their participation in the programme possible.

My own staff, particularly the MACS team and its coordinator, Ms. Monika Stumpf-Hulsroj – thank you for your dedication and commitment to this programme.

My gratitude also extends to all IACA staff, today under the leadership of Ms. Elisabeth Täubl, for organizing this memorable ceremony joined by an ensemble of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra; a “thank you” to the music.

Students, graduates, many people have helped you arrive at this special moment in your life – your families, friends, employers, and the others cheering you on today, as they have throughout your time here. Congratulations, Class of 2014, and thank you for inspiring us and for distinguishing yourselves and the Academy!

Through his renowned 1970s book, *Small is beautiful – the return to the human dimension*, Ernst Friedrich Schumacher reminded us of a Chinese study which found that 30 peasants had to work in order to allow for one citizen to attend post-secondary education. The ratio and the typology of such “supporting people and professions” might have changed; however, the question that remains relevant is whether the

educated have taken over some additional responsibility for the public good, the *polis* and the *res publica*, or if they have just pulled a blank cheque for extra privileges.

In the context of what was said on sustainable development, poverty eradication, social, economic, and political prosperity; in light of the notions of academic freedom, freedom of speech, and free and critical thinking; in preserving the intellectual environment of the Agora and an un-censored reality, I take the liberty of inviting all of you, dear graduates, even urging you to join the forces of the first.

*“Fighting corruption”, as former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo put it, “is not a one-night affair”. And it is not an easy “marriage” either. An old Arab proverb complements by reading: “Actions speak louder than words”. You will face multiple hurdles on this way, you will be disregarded, you will be probed, you may even be threatened. But you should always remember one thing: “It is not the critic who counts. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena [...]; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”* (Theodore Roosevelt).

Graduates, you are an exceptional, illustrious group, and we are all proud of you. We all wish you all the best in your careers and private lives. Our doors are always open for you.

Thank you and – as this is an academic graduation – *gaudeamus igitur*.