

**Graduation
of the
Master in Anti-Corruption Studies
Class of 2014 - 2016**

Laxenburg, Austria
9 December 2016

Laudatio

by the Dean of IACA

Mr. Martin Kreutner

Dear Graduates,

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

Mr. Abu Kassim bin Mohamed, our Guest of Honour,
Excellencies,
Representatives of the Governor of Lower Austria, Mr. Erwin Proell,
Mr. Mayor Robert Dienst,
Families and Friends of the MACS Graduates,
Representatives of partner universities and the Diplomatic Academy
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Let me begin by offering my warmest and heartfelt congratulations to the graduates of IACA's *Master in Anti-Corruption Studies* Class of 2014 - 2016 for successfully completing this unique global academic programme. We are delighted to welcome you here and celebrate with you on International Anti-Corruption Day for this festive and joyful occasion.

You come from 17 countries and jurisdictions around the world: Afghanistan, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brazil, Germany, India, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, the United States of America, and Kosovo.

Your professional backgrounds are equally diverse. Your class includes business executives, diplomatic service members, investigators, humanitarian experts, prosecutors, compliance managers, law enforcement officers, NGO representatives, and communications specialists.

MACS graduates, we have gathered here today to pay tribute to your academic accomplishment and professional achievement.

Max Weber, the famous sociologist, once said: "*Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth - that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he or she had reached out for the impossible.*"

In our contexts, we can attest that there is growing - yet still not enough - awareness, among both political and corporate leaders and the public, of corruption's terrible effects. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs, unanimously adopted by all United Nations Member States in New York in September 2015, includes the explicit target to "*substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms*".

In addition, the anti-corruption agenda has expanded far beyond criminal law and enforcement to also include prevention, education and awareness, as well as international cooperation.

These are the areas in which IACA, I would humbly suggest, has made an essential contribution in the five plus years since the organization was established. In 2015 alone, our programmes and activities received explicit tribute and acknowledgment in two UN resolutions - from the Human Rights Council of the UN General Assembly in July and from the sixth Conference of the States Parties to the UNCAC in November. The MACS, as the first postgraduate programme of its kind in the world, has been one of the central ingredients for IACA gaining this further international recognition.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, fighting corruption remains a difficult and demanding task. People in the arena work with limited resources; they must overcome public cynicism and fatigue in the face of often widespread, deep-rooted corruption and, as far as the economic world is concerned, a temptation to make "quick and easy bucks" using shady and slippery side-ways. And all too often, sadly, they face threats and danger to themselves.

What is more, we are fighting corruption in a world confronted by a possibly unprecedented series of major challenges and threats.

Conflicts continue to destabilize countries and regions, tensions between major powers are still on the rise, extremism and radicalism seem to flourish, economic and social divisions and divides within societies are becoming wider, resulting in a more polarized political and societal climate. And there is little trust in leaders' willingness and ability to address these issues successfully.

In such challenging times, how can anti-corruption education make a difference? To offer an answer, I would highlight - in all brevity - five key ingredients of the MACS - and these also apply to IACA's other programmes and trainings:

- One is a global perspective. As well as students from all continents, this 2014-2016 MACS class had modules in Austria, Brazil, and Malaysia, and professors and practitioners from literally around the world.

- Another is an inter-disciplinary approach. These MACS graduates have analyzed corruption from the perspectives of politics, economics, law, sociology, and business, to name just a few.
- A third aspect is to encourage fresh, critical thinking in a Socratic sense. This is why the MACS features renowned international faculty of diverse origin and thought, in-depth classroom discussion and discourse, exposure to multi-lateral fora and environments, and finally the master's thesis and its *defensio* in front of an international academic committee.
- Next and fourth is a balanced mix of theory and practice. The MACS gives students both an in-depth understanding of corruption and also new ideas and methods that they can use immediately in their work.
- Last and by no means least is access to networks of peers and like-minded. Our students have made many important contacts during the programme and they now join IACA's alumni family of anti-corruption and compliance professionals in 145 countries.

This is how anti-corruption education eventually shall *empower professionals*. Or as Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize laureate of 2014, phrased it more broadly on the occasion of the aforementioned SDG Summit at the UN General Assembly in September of last year: "*Education is hope. Education is peace*".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the 2014 - 2016 MACS programme concludes, there are many people and organizations to thank.

Let me start by expressing my sincere gratitude to Professor Elena Helmer, the Director of the MACS programme, and her colleagues Petra Susac and Khusraw Parwez (who himself is a graduate of the first MACS class of 2012 - 2014), for their tireless efforts and dedication.

I would like to thank the many distinguished academics and practitioners who have shared their rich expertise and inspired us all – as in-house or visiting faculty, thesis supervisors, or external evaluators.

My deep appreciation goes to our academic Defence Committee for supervising the students towards the very end of the programme. The Committee was most ably chaired by Prof. Peter Rosner, University of Vienna, as well as Mr. Abu Kassim bin Mohamed, and Mr. Eduardo

Vetere, respectively. Its other distinguished members were Mr. Dmitri Vlassis, Prof. Johannes Maerk, Danube University of Krems, Austria, Prof. Elena Helmer, and Prof. Eduard Ivanov from IACA.

It gives me pleasure thanking also Prof. Hans-Heiner Kühne from Trier-University in Germany, Prof. Fritz Schneider, University of Linz, Austria, and Mr. Jongsam Yang, Senior Academic Advisor at IACA, for their valuable contribution in support of evaluating the master's theses.

My sincere gratitude goes to our guest of honour, Mr. Abu Kassim bin Mohamed, a longstanding friend and supporter of IACA, and a distinguished servant in the global anti-corruption cause. We are privileged to have you here with us today, Abu Kassim, and to benefit from your vast experience as a distinguished visiting expert at IACA.

Let me also thank the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission under its former Chief Commissioner and the Office of the Comptroller General of Brazil for hosting the final two modules of this MACS programme in Kuala Lumpur and Brasilia, respectively.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Austrian Development Agency, the Siemens Integrity Initiative, and Philip Morris International provided scholarships that enabled students from Least Developed Countries and other jurisdictions to take part in the MACS programme. I would like to express my great appreciation for their generous financial support.

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, either here in Laxenburg/Vienna or online via livestream. Let us be grateful to them too.

I am also particularly thankful to all IACA's staff for supporting the graduating class throughout the programme and helping us to prepare for this ceremony.

And, of course, please allow me to thank the Klimt-Quartett for providing such wonderful musical accompaniment.

Graduates of the 2014 - 2016 MACS class,

Preventing and fighting corruption is far more than just a noble cause or a business case. It is essential and key to our hopes and perspectives for a better, more sustainable future.

In starting this programme you chose a difficult and demanding path but also - I hope - a stimulating and rewarding one. And with your graduation today, you have shown the value of anti-corruption education and set a benchmark.

In conclusion, let me recall what was mentioned also at the graduation of the preceding MACS class: Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, a German-British economist, once 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 most relevant is whether the educated have taken over some additional responsibility for the public good, the *polis* and the *res publica*, for society; or – conversely - if they have just pulled a blank cheque for extra privileges.

In the context of what we said on social, economic, and political prosperity; in light of the call for academic freedom and discourse, for free and critical thinking; I take the liberty of inviting all of you, dear graduates, even urging you to join the forces of the first. Please take over that additional responsibility!

So, as you continue in your careers, be inspired by the cause you serve and be determined in your daily work.

Let me wish you all a wonderful event today, a happy festive period, and every success in the future.

Warm congratulations to you all and – in the spirit of today’s ceremony – *gaudeamus igitur*.