

**4th Edition of the African Forum of Territorial Managers and  
Training Institutes Targeting the Local Government**

**(FAMI 4 - 2020)**

Tangier, Kingdom of Morocco and online

23rd to 28th November 2020

Statement by the Dean of the International Anti-Corruption Academy,

Mr. Tomas Stelzer

"Progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Convention  
against Corruption (2004) and the role of IACA"

23 November

15:00

## "Progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2004) and the role of IACA"

- Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,
- It is an honour to have the opportunity to speak to you here at this 4th Edition of the African Forum of Territorial Managers and Training Institutes Targeting the Local Government.
- This year's theme of "Promoting Responsible, Transparent, Ethical, Performing and Accountable Local Public Institutions in Africa to act and impact the Decade of Action", is a timely and important one. As we enter the Decade of Action we must redouble our efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs. One effective way to do this is to focus our efforts on anti-corruption. The global cost of corruption is estimated to be at least \$2.6 trillion per year. This is money which could be spent on development efforts and public services.
- This year's theme is also timely in the context of the United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly (UNGASS 2021), which will take place next year and focus on anti-corruption issues. This meeting may help set the agenda for future international efforts on anti-corruption including issues like transparency and accountability in public institutions.
- While we may look forward to the UNGASS and the new perspective it may bring, I am here today to speak about the agreement which started it all. Twenty-five years ago, there were no international treaties on anti-corruption. It was not considered to be a subject which could be addressed at the international level. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) changed all that. Today we realise that corruption is an issue that and indeed must be tackled by international cooperation.
- It has now been ten years since the UNCAC's Implementation Review Mechanism was launched. The Review Mechanism assesses the performance of the State Parties in advancing the goals of UNCAC and is our only way to measure the implementation of the convention. It has been busy ten years for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), who carry out the work on the review. I will give you just a few figures which demonstrate the progress made:
  - 147 States parties have shared information on good practices, experiences and measures taken after the completion of their first cycle reviews or in

preparation for the second cycle with measures ranging from the creation of new and independent anti-corruption authorities, the active engagement of the private sector in the fight against corruption, the opening of a dialogue with civil society, the introduction of new criminal offences or the signing of new mutual legal assistance treaties to the sharing of technical support with neighbouring countries.

- 90% of states report making legislative amendments based on the reviews.
  - 37% of states strengthened their international cooperation capacities.
  - 50% of states reported the adoption of new preventative measures.
- I think that these few examples show that the UNCAC has had a significant impact. We are currently about half-way through the second review cycle which is due to be completed in 2024 which should give us an updated overview of where we stand on implementation.
  - As the only legally binding international anti-corruption multilateral treaty the UNCAC is an invaluable tool. On a personal level I am immensely proud to have been part of the negotiation process which gave us the UNCAC.
  - However, there is criticism of aspects of the review mechanism from some quarters, including from Civil Society organisations. Some of the issues highlighted by critics include:
    - a lack of engagement with Civil Society organisations in the review process.
    - The ability of reviewed states to withhold the review reports.
    - and the lack of a follow-up mechanism on the reviews and their recommendations.

These issues may be the result of compromises between such a large group of states. In my view the perfect should not be the enemy of the good, so while the UNCAC may have some room for improvement it remains a crucial tool in the international fight against corruption.

- The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) was conceived to help speed up implementation of the UNCAC. Established a decade ago, the Academy is both an international organisation, made up of 80 parties, and a third level educational institute. It is the only IO whose mandate focuses solely on the fight against corruption.
- IACA's role in supporting UNCAC implementation is three-fold. Firstly, IACA builds capacity in anti-corruption professionals, and others involved in the fight against corruption, through the highest standards of education and training. We currently have 2 master programmes and are launching more academic programmes very soon,

including with UN partners. We also provide tailor made trainings specific to the needs of the requesting party. More recently, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have developed a whole host of open online trainings which are currently being rolled out. We aim to widen our reach to be able to provide anti-corruption training to the most amount of people possible, and we have ambitious goals in this regard.

- My vision is that in the future all managers of the international system including diplomats and civil servants, all local government officials, and all managers of our economies, will have at least basic training in anti-corruption. We need to make sure that anyone in a position of power can recognise corruption when they see it. To understand where helping family or friends crosses the line into nepotism and cronyism for example. To know the difference between receiving a gift and a bribe. This understanding is lacking the world over, and therefore education and training should be at the heart of our efforts to fight corruption.
- IACA's second function is as a technical assistant provider. This assistance comes in various forms related to increasing national anti-corruption capacities. This could include providing advice on the establishment of national anti-corruption institutions for example. In addition, we also have more traditional project-based activities. We currently have a new joint project with UNODC, which just recently received funding, on *Providing Specialized Training on Anti-Corruption Legislation to Least Developed Countries to Fast-Track UNCAC Implementation*.
- Our third function is research. Right now, we are in the process of rebuilding our research department which has been dormant for some time. Our aim is to make IACA a hub for research on anti-corruption. It will act as a central repository where global research is gathered in one place and is accessible to everyone. This is something that is currently lacking in the international anti-corruption community. There is no one stop shop for anti-corruption research, so we aim to fill that role.
- As you can see IACA has ambitious plans to expand its effort in supporting UNCAC implementation over the coming years. We hope to expand our work in Afirca, including with LDCs. In fact, this year we had planned to hold our Regional Summer Academy and our Alumni Reunion in Africa, but unfortunately due to COVID-19 we were forced to postpone these events. We do hope to hold them when conditions allow. I also encourage you all to keep an eye on our website for events or trainings which might be of interest to you.
- Thank you very much for welcoming me here to speak once again and I wish you all a fruitful forum over the coming days.