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Press release

## G7 UNGASS statement

G7 countries sign joint statement ahead of special session of the UN General Assembly against corruption

From:

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Published

2 June 2021



We, the G7 Ministers, recognize that corruption is a pressing global challenge. As the UN Convention against Corruption notes, corruption threatens the stability and security of societies, undermining the institutions and values of democracy, ethical values and justice, and jeopardizing sustainable development and the rule of law. Corruption presents serious threats for individuals and societies and often enables other forms of crime, including organized crime and economic crime, including money laundering. These threats have been heightened by COVID-19. As the world continues to recover, it is critical that we do not let corruption threaten our efforts to build back better and address global challenges especially the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

We are looking forward to the G7 ministerial meeting in September this year, where there will be a discussion on our joint efforts to address corruption.

Corruption is a challenge faced by all countries. Its effects are felt at local, national, and global levels and it is our common and shared responsibility to take action. We as the G7 stand up for an open society, with a strong civil society and free media. We are convinced that these actors are crucial in preventing and combatting corruption. Thus, it is our goal to acknowledge the role of civil society and free media and to promote their freedom and protection in the UNGASS declaration. We recognise that progress will catalyse prosperity, security and development.

G7 Foreign Ministers committed to work collectively to strengthen the foundations of open societies and protect against threats, including corruption, and illicit finance, and the closure of civic space. In this regard, we reaffirm the fundamental role of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and its supporting bodies play in the global fight against corruption. It is the only legally binding universal instrument on corruption, negotiated on the basis of consensus. The Convention is the cornerstone of our international anti-corruption framework. It forms an integral part of the international anti-corruption architecture which, when fully and effectively implemented, will robustly combat corruption.

We fully support the aims of this Special Session of the General Assembly against corruption to address challenges and measures to more effectively prevent, detect, prosecute, and punish corruption and strengthen international cooperation.

We welcome the adoption of the action-oriented political declaration and commit to achieving its aims. Given our international responsibilities, we as the G7 recognise the need to enhance our efforts to prevent and combat corruption by leading by example. We must continue to make real progress on this issue. We will ensure strong and effective implementation of UNGASS commitments. To this end, we commit to:

1. **Prevention:** As the G7, we will work to ensure there are strong measures in place to prevent corruption and other forms of illicit finance to protect our financial centres and deny safe haven to the proceeds of crime. We will support other countries' efforts to do the same, including anti-corruption safeguards and transparency mechanisms in the delivery of humanitarian aid to ensure that aid, required in times of natural disaster and other emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic, reaches intended beneficiaries. We also reaffirm our commitment to putting in place measures that promote transparency in the beneficial ownership of legal entities. We further commit to promoting the effective implementation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Standards, the global standard setter for combatting money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation finance.
2. **Transparency:** Comprising many of the world's most open societies, we note that enhancing transparency benefits citizens and societies and is the foundation on which effective anti-corruption efforts are built. As such, we reaffirm our commitment to implementing measures that afford a high degree of transparency in governance, including measures to enhance transparency in public procurement, and supply chain transparency in the private sector. Consistent with our legal obligations, we will protect and promote access to information for all citizens, including civil society organisations, media and journalists.
3. **Law Enforcement Cooperation/Criminalization:**
  - a. **Foreign bribery:** As major centres of private enterprise, we commit to actively enforcing our domestic and foreign bribery laws and ensuring effective implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and we urge all G20 countries to do the same. We recognize the positive impact that incentivizing robust private sector corporate compliance can have on the goal of effectively preventing corruption. We also recognise the corrosive effect of bribe solicitation and call for greater preventive action including awareness raising and training.
  - b. **Denial of Safe Haven:** As some of our financial centres and industries can attract corrupt actors and the proceeds of crime, we commit to strengthening international cooperation to deny safe haven to corrupt individuals and their ill-gotten gains, including through information sharing, and the appropriate use of sanctions and visa restrictions.
4. **International Cooperation and Technical Assistance (TA):** As many of the world's largest donors, we recognise the role of Official Development Assistance and commit to using our programmes efficiently to build capacities and provide timely, sustainable, adequate and effective technical assistance that meet needs. We call on our partner countries to take a lead in the coordination of

- TA at country level, including by, publishing needs identified by the implementation review mechanism, involving all relevant stakeholders and, mainstreaming gender in analysis and the delivery of programmes.
5. Civil Society (including protection of journalists and role of the media): We commit to championing the role of civil society and media freedom as a vital part of upholding democracy and human rights around the world. We condemn all attacks on those who work to expose corruption, including journalists, civil society and individual whistle-blowers, and commit to support and protect those who report and stand up against corruption.
  6. Asset Recovery: As home to many of the world's leading financial centres and as recipients of some of the largest volumes of mutual legal assistance requests in the world, we renew our commitment to counter money laundering linked to foreign corruption and to effectively recover proceeds of crime, particularly money laundering proceeds. We further underline the importance of ensuring confiscated stolen assets, when returned, are returned in a transparent and accountable manner, within the framework of the UNCAC, that ultimately benefits those harmed by corruption. We will promote and support international co-operation among relevant law enforcement agencies including in asset recovery.
  7. Rule of Law and Fundamental Freedoms: We recognise that the fight against corruption must be based on respect for the rule of law, support for democratic governance, fundamental freedoms and human rights including due process rights of those accused of and sought for corruption. Rule of law is an essential component to achieve sustainability, to counter abuses of power and to foster an environment needed to effectively achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda.
  8. Implementation of anti-corruption conventions and other initiatives: As global leaders in the fight against corruption, we recognise the importance of international and regional conventions and other initiatives to fight corruption and emphasise our individual and collective responsibility to step up our efforts towards their effective implementation.
    - a. Commit to consulting civil society in our country reviews and promoting their inclusion as observers in subsidiary bodies of the UNCAC and Conference of States Parties.
    - b. Call all countries under review by UNCAC to publish their full UNCAC country reports and invite inputs from a wide range of stakeholders.
    - c. Support UNODC to prepare a comprehensive report on member state implementation of UNCAC, after completion of the current review phase, and report its findings to the COSP.
    - d. Support the effective implementation of existing regional anticorruption frameworks and the FATF standards, including their review mechanisms for compliance.
    - e. Urge those who have not ratified the UNCAC to join the 187 other state parties who have done so.

We firmly reiterate the importance of strong and unified leadership in addressing corruption. We look to forthcoming processes in relevant for a with close cooperation with other stakeholders such as, the US Summit for Democracy and the Open Government Partnership 10-year Anniversary Summit in South Korea and the UK presidency of the G7 to build on these commitments. We commit to working within these forums, as well as through the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group, to continue to drive progress on this important agenda.

Published 2 June 2021

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