Submission by the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly against Corruption 2021

The Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific is the first multilateral initiative in the region dedicated to fighting corruption. Established in 1999 jointly by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it brings together 32 member economies in the Asia-Pacific region, which have committed to action against corruption with the aim to enhance the development of Asia-Pacific economies. They have jointly developed the Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific and work together towards its implementation. In 2010, the Initiative adopted Strategic Principles that guide the Initiative’s future activities and strategic direction, and made UNCAC implementation a priority for the Initiative. The Initiative supports the member governments’ efforts through three main workstreams: the Public Integrity Network, the Law Enforcement Network, and the Business Integrity Network.

The Member economies of the Initiative are honoured to present the following submission to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly against Corruption 2021, the first Special Session of the General Assembly on anti-corruption to be held since the United Nations was founded. The submission of the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific accompanies the OECD-wide contribution developed by the OECD Secretariat. Corruption is a scourge against humanity and never have its effects been seen more starkly than in the context of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Renewed resolve to prevent, investigate and punish corruption will pave the way for greater global resilience and facilitate a faster recovery, in the Asia Pacific region and worldwide. In line with the Anti-Corruption Action Plan of the Initiative and its Strategic Principles referred to here-above, the Initiative and Member economies of the Initiative:

- Commit to effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption in the Asia Pacific region, respect the authority of the United Nations and in particular UNCAC as the most prominent international anti-corruption treaty;

- Commit to deny safe haven to corrupt persons and the proceeds of their crimes, and follow the principles of “zero tolerance towards corruption, zero loopholes in institutions, zero barriers in cooperation” in international anti-corruption cooperation;

- Carry out measures to enhance practical cooperation, recover assets, enhance MLA and extradition cooperation, prevent corruption and promote integrity in the public and private sectors as well as criminalise bribery of domestic and foreign public officials and related offences to build a clean business environment taking into account existing relevant regional and international instruments and good practices, while pursuing equality and mutual benefit, respecting each other’s differences and emphasizing pragmatic outcomes;

- Recognise the vital role played by preventive anti-corruption bodies and the need to ensure such bodies are granted the necessary independence and resources to carry out their functions effectively and free from any undue influence;

- Recognise the role played by the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific in promoting international cooperation within the Asia Pacific region in transnational corruption cases and building the capacity of specialised anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute corruption offences; and
Commit to support the UNCAC Review Mechanism as a way to promote exchange, mutual understanding and trust between State Parties, including through thematic studies of legal and regulatory frameworks to prevent, detect and investigate corruption and hold both natural and legal persons liable for committing or participating in corruption offences; and the development of law enforcement tools and mechanisms for enhanced international cooperation.

1 Afghanistan; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; People’s Republic of China; Cook Islands; Fiji; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

2 Including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime, the 40 Recommendations of the FATF as supported by the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the Related Recommendations, the OECD Council Recommendation on Improving Ethical Conduct in the Public Service, the OECD Principles on Corporate Governance, the Anti-Corruption Policy of the ADB, the APEC Public Procurement Principles, the PBEC Charter on Standards for Transactions between Business and Government, and the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement.