

## **GOPAC Submission to the UNGASS 2021**

GOPAC welcomes the UN Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) initiative to collect contributions from organs, entities and specialized agencies of the UN system, relevant international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and other relevant stakeholders to be addressed by the General Assembly at its special session.

As an international network of parliamentarians holding special consultative status with ECOSOC, GOPAC has been involved in the work of anti-corruption with various UN stakeholders. GOPAC also participates in every Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

The UNGASS 2021 offers a timely opportunity for the global stakeholders to focus on the current state of corruption and its problems, especially during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. It is essential to set a global stage for anti-corruption measures both at the international and national levels to protect public funds, restore what has lost, punish those who responsible, strengthen governance to ensure an efficient, effective and accountable program delivery and foster networks for greater actions against corruption.

As part of our UNGASS 2021 contributions, we urge the UN Member States to include within the draft POLITICAL DECLARATION a commitment to strengthen the role of Parliaments and Parliamentarians as a key common commitment to effectively addressing and countering corruption.

GOPAC endorses the Resolution 8/14 on *promoting good practices in relation to the role of national parliaments and other legislative bodies in preventing and combating corruption in all its forms* adopted by the CoSP UNCAC at its 8<sup>th</sup> Session, on 16-20 December 2019.

GOPAC supports for the inclusion of resolution 8/14 to the POLITICAL DECLARATION of the UNGASS 2021, in particular, the paragraphs as follows:

- 1. Urges States parties to take effective measures, in accordance with the fundamental principles of their legal systems and the relevant obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption, to support the role and strengthen the capacity of parliaments and other legislative bodies to prevent and combat corruption, including in areas where they have a mandate for review or oversight;*
- 2. Encourages States Parties to identify and implement any legislative or other measures that may be necessary to implement the Convention and address relevant recommendations emerging from the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption;*

3. *Encourages State Parties to strengthen inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, through parliamentary organizations such as GOPAC.*

As the international network of parliamentarians working solely on anti-corruption and good governance, GOPAC and its Regional Chapters: African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC), Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC), GOPAC Latin America, GOPAC Oceania, Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC), GOPAC Caribbean (in development), South Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption/SAPAC (in development), along with other GOPAC National Chapters aspire the following:

1. A parliament that is independent by nature and parliamentarians that are strong, representative, clean, and skillful;
2. Stronger legislative frameworks to prevent and combat corruption as well as to address the pervasive impact and modus of corruption;
3. An independent anti-corruption institution and a better governance of the integrated criminal justice system;
4. An improved collaboration among international stakeholders.

We therefore recommend the following to the POLITICAL DECLARATION of the UNGASS 2021:

**A Parliament that is independent by nature and parliamentarians that are strong, representative, clean and skillful.**

1. Recognizes the key role of parliament in criminalizing and responding effectively to acts of corruption through the exercise of its constitutional mandates as an independent institution aimed to provide checks and balances to the executive;
2. Enhances the role of legislative bodies in the management of public finances and their traditional exercise of budget oversight, along with their role in overseeing integrity mechanisms;
3. Encourages parliamentarians to strengthen its constituent's participation in preventing and combatting corruption by enabling proper and innovative channels of public grievances;
4. Calls upon Member States to establish a specific and dedicated anti-corruption parliamentary standing committee for a deeper parliamentary deliberation and engagement on anti-corruption measures at the national level;
5. Urges the full implementation of asset declaration and beneficial ownership registry regulation as well as stronger code of conducts/ethics for all public officials including parliamentarians;
6. Encourages Member States to include parliamentarians as members of national delegations to significant international meetings and events related to anti-corruption and good governance and other UNCAC thematic agenda.

**Stronger legislative frameworks to prevent and combat corruption as well as to promote good governance and address the pervasive impact and modus of corruption.**

1. Emphasizes the important role of Parliament and parliamentarians in promoting the full and universal implementation of the UNCAC;
2. Urges for the widest possible measure of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, including asset recovery and identify any legislative and other national measures needed for the return of assets, including the prevention and detection of transfer of proceeds of crime, measures of direct recovery of property, international cooperation in confiscation, and others;
3. Promotes preventive measures to corruption, including through digital innovation such as digital payment system, online whistleblower mechanism, online beneficial ownership registry, and others;
4. Urges Member States to review the existing anti-corruption regulatory measures including legislations so that all national stakeholders and institutions (executive, legislative, Judiciary, NGOs and the public) can jointly take actions, within their respective purview, in preventing and combating corruption;
5. Emphasizes the essential role of political parties in democracy and that its finance needs to be regulated thoroughly, with a view to develop an open, transparent, accountable financing to political parties. A common measure shall also be developed for general election.

**A stronger and independent anti-corruption institution and a better justice system.**

1. Stresses the need for and urges the establishment of a stronger and independent anti-corruption body or bodies to carry out its or their functions of preventing and combating corruption effectively and without undue influence;
2. Encourages Member States, in accordance with the fundamental principles of respective legal system, to continue its justice system reform where citizens have equal access to resources, incomes, opportunities and facilities that will reflect back justice among the citizens thus it will decrease the level of corruption.

**An improved collaboration, stronger cooperation, and enhanced partnership among international stakeholders.**

1. Urges Member States and international community to foster more inter-parliamentary dialogue and promote closer partnership and cooperation between Member States, international organizations and NGOs and the inter-parliamentary and parliamentarians network organization such as GOPAC aiming to provide parliamentary development fund, specific knowledge supports and capacity building mechanism, develop tools, facilitate exchange of good parliamentary practices, and engage parliamentarians to the anti-corruption and good governance international community;

2. Develops national partnership between parliamentarians and local organizations to educate and reinforce awareness among the citizens on the pervasive impact of corruption and ways to prevent it;
3. Encourages the establishment of a UN expert group to explore more and provide a feasibility and in-depth study for the development of international mechanism/structure needed to address grand corruption and other linked form of crimes of an international character.

GOPAC calls on the secretariat to consult with ECOSOC NGOs including GOPAC over all stages of the Draft Political Declaration. GOPAC also call upon parliamentarians to contribute and actively engaged in the preparatory process of the UNGASS 2021.