Contribution by the International Anti-Corruption Academy to the draft Political Declaration of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly against corruption

(26-28 April 2021, United Nations Headquarters, New York)

The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) fully supports the convening in the first half of 2021 of a special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation. It welcomes the resolution entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”, adopted by the Conference of the States Parties (COSP) to the UNCAC, at its eighth session (2019, Abu Dhabi) which underlines the importance of an inclusive preparatory process and encourages relevant international organizations, amongst others, to fully contribute to that process.

It is a long-standing position of IACA that investing in anti-corruption education and training is a crucial step towards achieving sustainable development, safeguarding human rights, and strengthening the rule of law. IACA has been consistently engaged in various capacity-building initiatives and intends to continue offering its full support to UNODC and to the State Parties of the UNCAC in implementing the provisions of the Convention by providing the necessary technical assistance.

Capacity-building activities and specialized curricula of IACA and UNODC in the field of anti-corruption were explicitly noted with appreciation on several occasions by the COSP to the UNCAC and by the Human Rights Council. In doing so, the Human Rights Council stated that the negative impact of corruption on human rights and sustainable development could be combated through anti-corruption education. The COSP to the UNCAC also recognized the important contribution of both organizations in providing technical assistance and training to raise public awareness and enhance integrity.

IACA would like to propose that the following elements are reflected in the Political Declaration of the UNGASS 2021:

1. **UNCAC as a centre-piece of global anti-corruption efforts**

   - Stress that joint efforts by the international community to advance the implementation of the UNCAC, based on the results of the two review cycles, are necessary. The challenges faced by State Parties in implementation of the UNCAC and their technical assistance needs should be duly considered in the framework of regional and global anti-corruption frameworks with a view to provide capacity-building support, including through professional training and specialized educational programmes. To this end, the UNCAC Secretariat and all specialized organizations providing technical assistance, capacity-building, and education in anti-corruption, such as IACA, should join forces to advance the implementation of the UNCAC.

   - Call for increased efforts to strengthen the overall efficiency of national anti-corruption systems by enhancing the skills of anti-corruption practitioners through relevant training, capacity-building, and other forms of technical assistance.

   - Underline the need to intensify awareness raising activities to make citizens more aware of the devastating effects of corruption and help create a zero-tolerance culture around corruption at the national level, thus supporting the national anti-corruption efforts and the implementation of the UNCAC.
• Encourage the UN Member States to make use of the “let crime pay” principle, as defined in Article 62.2(c) of the UNCAC, to support organizations and institutions engaged in the fight against corruption and promoting compliance.

2. Promoting anti-corruption partnerships to facilitate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

• Emphasise that effective anti-corruption policies are necessary to promote inclusive and sustainable growth, social cohesion, reduce inequalities, and address the global climate crisis.
• Stress that the achievement of the SDGs will not be possible without effectively combating corruption.
• Underline that further efforts should be made to promote the strong involvement of all the governments as well as partnerships with civil society, academia, and the private sector in order for their inputs to inform and be reflected in intergovernmental debates. Closer engagement with these sectors should also aim to promote access to capacity-building programmes, through organizations such as IACA, to ensure that future managers of all sectors of our societies and of the international system, including diplomats, civil society leaders, academia and managers of private sector companies, acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively fight corruption and promote compliance.
• Call for harmonised efforts in the framework of an UNODC-led global anti-corruption platform involving the UN Member States, international organizations, civil society, academia, and business representatives to further enhance coordination of various anti-corruption initiatives in the context of global partnerships for sustainable development.

3. Anti-corruption research and education

• Underline that anti-corruption education and training in all sectors of society acts as a catalyst for reducing poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and creating inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development, greater equality and equity, and fair and just societies.
• Stress that based on the experience and activities of IACA and other specialized organizations and institutions, the international community needs to further develop anti-corruption education and training in order to promote a culture of transparency, integrity, and accountability at all levels of society.
• Underline the need to create a global platform for anti-corruption research and repository of knowledge to study the root causes of corruption, its various forms, its adverse effects on societies, economies, international relations, and the implementation of SDGs; analyse in a comprehensive manner national, regional, and global technical assistance needs in the anti-corruption field; support scientific projects; exchange best practices and lessons learned; coordinate the development of related handbooks, guidebooks, recommendations, strategies, etc. for the use of the entire international community; and develop a framework for a comprehensive global report on corruption.
• Encourage the international community to make better use of the expertise on anti-corruption activities provided by specialized organizations and institutions, and call for enhanced partnerships between specialized academic initiatives and/or institutions so as to encourage academic research and exchange, and to facilitate the joint development and greater availability of comprehensive anti-corruption academic materials for universities and other academic institutions.