



FACT SHEET 4

**ANTONIO MARIA COSTA, UNITED NATIONS
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL: STATEMENTS ON
CORRUPTION AND THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION**

“In the past few years, unprecedented efforts have been made to raise awareness about corruption and its damaging effects on the welfare of nations and their peoples. Corruption not only distorts economic decision-making; it also deters investments; undermines competitiveness and, ultimately, weakens economic growth. Since the legal, political and economic aspects of development are linked, corruption in any one sector impedes development in them all.”

*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, The Global Programme Against Corruption,
The Anti-Corruption Toolkit, Foreword by Antonio Maria Costa*

“Fighting corruption is a pre-condition for good governance and the rule of law which, in turn, are the foundation stones of sustainable development.

“Corruption represents a significant challenge to the international community and requires an international response. In fact, not only do the acts of corruption often have a transnational dimension, but many countries are not able to deal with the problem without assistance.

“Most cases of corruption involve interactions between the public and private sectors. In the case of corporate corruption, the benefits are often felt by shareholders in developed countries, while the costs are suffered by ordinary people in the developing world.

“Given the seriousness of corruption as a problem, and the requirement for a global response, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. This is a global problem requiring a global solution.

“Although its impacts are perhaps more visible today in a globalising world, corruption is not a new problem. We do not expect to solve it tomorrow. I do, however, expect the international community to raise to the challenge of dealing more effectively with this global challenge, and in this I am very much an optimist.”

*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Programme Against Corruption,
National Conference for Cleaner Public Life, Budapest, 20–21 March 2003,
Global Dynamics of Corruption by Antonio Maria Costa*

“This Convention is innovative because it is a very balanced instrument. It provides for law enforcement as well as for preventive measures. It offers technical assistance to help countries implement the preventive tools.

“Being a United Nations Convention, it has a potentially universal scope of application, differently from other existing instruments.

“The lack of definition of corruption reflects the need to make this Convention agreeable and flexible. The Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism never materialized because of the question of definition. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, that entered into force as recently as 29 September 2003, took a different approach. Rather than defining organized crime, it captures a typology of situations. The United Nations Convention against Corruption has taken a similar approach. Defining and criminalizing such concepts as bribery, money laundering, abuse of power, embezzlement and so forth becomes de-facto a definition.”

“The agreement reached on the Convention against Corruption shows the international community’s determination to do something concrete against it. It is a Convention with strong enforcement power, a true global response to the global challenge posed by worldwide corruption.

“A major achievement of the negotiations was the agreement reached on the return of assets obtained through corruption. The Convention spells out the measures for prevention and detection of proceeds stolen from a country because of corruption.”

Vienna, 2 October 2003 (United Nations Information Service)

“Stolen and illegally exported assets have to be returned. This is a new, fundamental principle agreed upon during the negotiations in Vienna. The recovery of assets sets the stage for much greater cooperation among States. There will be fewer ways and places to hide stolen assets and a much greater likelihood that the money will be returned.”

Vienna, 11 August 2003 (United Nations Information Service)

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For further information:
www.unodc.org and www.unis.unvienna.org