

Statement by the Republic of Turkey
on Agenda Item 86
(The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels)
at the Sixth Committee
22 October 2020

Mr. Chair,

Turkey aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and its member states, and we would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Corruption damages socio-economic values, undermines the sense of justice and harms equality. It generates unjust gains and unfair advantages for its perpetrators and frustrates those who abide by the rules. It poses a serious threat to justice, human rights, democratic institutions, rule of law, good governance as well as global trade and development.

This threat transcends national boundaries. Without strong international cooperation and a united response from States, international organizations and interest groups including the private sector, the chances for complete success to defeat this evil is unlikely.

Turkey was one of the delegations that supported the selection of this subtopic for this year's debate. We are pleased that the Sixth Committee is discussing this issue, less than a year away from the UN General Assembly Special Session focused on corruption, which we look forward to. It should also be noted that this discussion has indeed become even more pertinent in the face of the multitude of problems and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taking the fight against corruption as a policy priority, Turkey has enhanced its domestic capacity through numerous legislative, administrative and institutional steps. Laws that concern topics such as ethics, public procurement, laundering of proceeds of crime and public financial management, as well as the founding legislation of the High Court of Accounts have been either modified or enacted in line with this purpose.

We believe that transparency, accountability and effectiveness are the key elements in the fight against corruption. In this respect, Turkish national strategy against corruption, which involves these critical components, has been in implementation since 2010, with the active involvement of civil society, the business sector and academia.

Turkey is also a party to various international conventions and initiatives in this field. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) are some examples in this regard.

Mr. Chair,

Facilitating exchange of information and collection of good practices among States are critical means for furthering anti-corruption efforts. We also attach great importance to maximizing international operational and training activities in the framework of the relevant bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

One area regarding which we consider that the international community needs to take further action is securing the return of proceeds of corruption and stolen assets to the country of origin. It goes without saying that the flowing of the funds of illicit origin from developing countries poses a threat to sustainable development, the rule of law and the security of nations. In this regard, this problem deserves further cooperation and confidence building.

Another issue which we would like to particularly underline is the link between terrorism, organized crime and corruption. As a country that has suffered from this dangerous combination of crimes, we believe that strong international cooperation, including extradition of suspects and criminals and confiscation of the proceeds of crime, are essential in addressing such threats.

Mr. Chair,

We would be remiss not to emphasize the crucial connection between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global fight against corruption. Turkey appreciates that Goal-16 has specific targets to “*substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms*” and “*to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*”. We will continue working towards achieving these targets in cooperation with national and international partners.

Mr. Chair,

Even though we did not have any intention to divert the focus of the important discussion that we are having under this agenda item, we are obliged to respond to the allegations made against Turkey by the delegation of Armenia.

It has become clear that this delegation is intent on disrupting the Committee’s work with its desperate attempts to steer the attention away from its aggression, and portray itself as the victim. This is indeed the third agenda item which the concerned delegation is abusing in the current session of the Committee, in order to bring up outrageous claims and fake news, and to continue its black propaganda and defamation.

Turkey strongly condemns all of Armenia’s attacks against Azerbaijan, which constitute flagrant violations of international law, including international humanitarian law.

We emphasize once again: Despite four UN Security Council Resolutions, which call for immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal, Armenia continues to occupy 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s sovereign territory. In this regard, it is also important to underline yet again the fact that Azerbaijan is conducting its counter operations within its internationally recognized borders.

We also feel obliged to emphasize that, if all members of this Committee were to follow Armenia's ill-intentioned approach as regards the manner in which we take up and analyze the legal and technical issues before us, we would not be able to make any meaningful progress on any item.

Thank you.