



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

26 March 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to refer to the Special Session of the General Assembly on Challenges and Measures to Prevent and Combat Corruption and Strengthen International Cooperation, to be held from 2 to 4 June 2021 at United Nations Headquarters, in New York, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 73/191 and 74/276, as well as decision 74/568 entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”.

In its resolution 74/276, the General Assembly invited all Member States, observer States and observers to the General Assembly to consider being represented at the Special Session at the highest possible level.

The three-day Special Session will consist of plenary meetings to be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m., in the General Assembly Hall. A concept note and provisional programme are hereby attached. Logistical details and other relevant information will be circulated in due course. This information will also be made available online at <https://www.un.org/pga/75/special-session-against-corruption/> and duly updated on a regular basis.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/276, a concise and action-oriented political declaration agreed upon in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations under the auspices of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption will be presented for adoption by the General Assembly at its Special Session. Detailed information on the preparatory process for this Special Session is available at the following website: www.ungass2021.org.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

I intend to consult with membership in due course regarding practical arrangements for participation, as well as the format of the Special Session for subsequent decision of the General Assembly on the basis of an assessment of the COVID-19 related health conditions.

In addition, I have the further honour to inform you that, pursuant to operative paragraph 16 of the resolution 74/276, I will convene a high-level supporting event on the margins of the Special Session. Further details regarding this event will be communicated in due course.

For additional information, please contact Mr. Igor Bondiuk, Advisor for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (igor.bondiuk@un.org), Ms. Inga Kanchaveli, Senior Advisor for General Assembly Affairs (inga.kanchaveli@un.org), copying Ms. Hila Wesa, Team Leader for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (wesa@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR

**Special Session of the General Assembly on Challenges and Measures to Prevent and
Combat Corruption and Strengthen International Cooperation
2-4 June 2021
General Assembly Hall, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Concept Note

The special session of the General Assembly on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation will be held from 2 to 4 June 2021 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 73/191 and 74/276 as well as decision 74/568 entitled “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption”.

In accordance with resolution 73/191, the preparatory process for the special session has been led by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, with the substantive expertise and technical support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In its resolution 74/276, the General Assembly, inter alia, invited all Member States, observer States and observers to the General Assembly to consider being represented at the special session at the highest possible level.

Corruption threatens the stability and security of societies, undermines public trust and institutions, and jeopardizes sustainable development. It distorts markets, stifles economic growth and diverts funds from public services. While corruption is a global phenomenon, evidence shows that it has a disproportionate impact on certain demographics, in particular poorer communities and the most vulnerable persons. Corrupt practices have a particularly adverse impact on the lives of women, socially, politically and economically, contributing to gender disparity gap.

Corruption undermines the rule of law and is an enabler of criminal activities. It is directly linked to serious crimes, including money laundering, financing of terrorism, and the trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons. It is a grave threat to peace and stability, and both a root cause and consequence of conflict.

In 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which is the most comprehensive and universal instrument on corruption. The Convention is a unique tool for developing a comprehensive response to this global scourge. Since its entry into force in 2005, the Convention has led to advances in preventing and combating corruption at national and transnational levels. At the same time, challenges remain in improving its implementation, particularly at national levels.

The Convention’s Implementation Review Mechanism has, inter alia, led to a global overview of gaps and good practices in addressing corruption. Challenges and technical assistance needs identified in the course of the country reviews under the review process are being integrated into country programmes.

Similar to other global challenges, addressing corruption more effectively requires close cooperation between governments and with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector.

The special session will provide an opportunity to galvanize the political will of governments and the international community as a whole in advancing the fight against corruption. Governments will be able to take stock of global efforts and commitments and identify solutions to common challenges in preventing and combating corruption. The special session will also contribute to driving forward the efforts of countries to fully and effectively implement the Convention, including by, inter alia, sharing best practices and lessons learned.

The political declaration, to be agreed upon in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations under the auspices of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and adopted at the special session, is expected to cover a wide range of thematic areas pertinent to advancing the fight against corruption. These range from prevention to criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation and asset recovery, cross-cutting issues such as research and education, the use of technology in fighting corruption and ways for measuring corruption, as well as forward-looking, innovative approaches.

The three-day special session will consist of plenary meetings from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 to 6 p.m. on each day. The opening segment will include statements by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the President of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and a youth representative.¹

The plenary meetings will include statements by Member States, States and regional economic integration organizations parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, observers to the General Assembly and, time permitting, a limited number of representatives from relevant organizations attending the special session.²

The President of the General Assembly will also convene a high-level supporting event on the margins of the special session, which will include interactive elements and enable participation by a range of stakeholders. Further details regarding this event will be communicated in due course.

A provisional programme for the special session is enclosed. Additional details, including updates to the programme and other aspects of the special session, will be made available online on the website of the President of the General Assembly at: <https://www.un.org/pga/75/special-session-against-corruption/>.

A report on the preparatory work undertaken by the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption will be made available to the special

¹ General Assembly resolution 74/276, operative paragraphs 2(a), 2(b) and 17.

² General Assembly resolution 74/276, operative paragraphs 2(c), (d), and (e).

session. Detailed information on the preparatory process for this special session is available at the following website: www.ungass2021.org.

Provisional Programme 2-4 June 2021

2 June 2021

10:00

Opening Segment

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

Credentials of representatives to the special session of the General Assembly: Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

Election of the President

Statements by:

- President of the General Assembly
- Secretary-General of the United Nations
- President of the Economic and Social Council
- President of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption
- Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- Youth representative (in accordance with operative paragraph 17 of resolution 74/276)

Organization of the special session

Adoption of the agenda

Adoption of the political declaration

11:00 to 13:00

General Debate

- Statements by:
- Member States,
- States and regional economic integration organizations parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,
- Observers to the General Assembly
- Other stakeholders (time permitting) ³

³ Representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or other relevant representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, attending in accordance with resolution 74/276.

***Note:** the mandated time limit for statements is five minutes for individual delegations and seven minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.*

15:00 to 18:00 General Debate continued

3 June 2021

10:00 to 13:00 General Debate continued

15:00 to 18:00 General Debate continued

4 June 2021

10:00 to 13:00 General Debate continued

15:00 to 18:00 General Debate continued
Minute of silent prayer or meditation
Closing of the special session