

Message from Christiaan Poortman, TI Global Programmes Director and Gillian Dell, Programme Manager for the Conventions Programme

Transparency International sends greetings and very much regrets not having been able to send a representative to your meeting today. By this message, we would like to convey to you our great interest in strengthening the ties between the Global Compact companies and TI National Chapters around the world. We would like to join forces in addressing corruption issues. And more specifically, in the next months we would like to work together to support the introduction of an effective review mechanism for the UN Convention against Corruption at the UNCAC Conference of States Parties due to take place in Doha in November 2009. TI is currently conducting a campaign to promote an effective review mechanism and is hoping for your support.

In a globalised world, corruption has also gone global and only a global framework like the UNCAC, if properly implemented, can address the problem. UNCAC is the only global anti-corruption instrument, with comprehensive measures to prevent and criminalise corruption. This instrument is of crucial importance to creating the sustainably sound and competitive global economic environment that you need, an environment where investment and export activity is not undermined by the uncertainties and risks created by corruption. Corruption is bad for business as the global financial crisis painfully shows.

So it is key that governments ratify and implement the UNCAC. But experience with regional anti-corruption conventions shows that governments will only give the necessary priority to implementation if there is a serious follow-up process accompanied by the necessary technical and financial support to governments to help them do the job. A review process for the UNCAC is therefore crucial. Not only that, it must be an effective review process, that really takes a good and serious look at what steps governments have taken and need to take. After studying review mechanisms for other conventions, TI has concluded that for the UNCAC review mechanism to be effective, it is essential that it have a number of features, not all of which are yet agreed by the governments meeting in Vienna ahead of the big meeting in November.

- It is essential that a review mechanism should include transparency—the mechanism should result in published country reports with recommendations: But some countries want country reports kept confidential. How will the public then know what steps still need to be taken?
- It is key that the assessments be balanced – the assessment process should be non-political and involve inputs from multiple stakeholders including the private sector. Some countries want only governmental inputs to the assessment process. But governments are not always able to assess themselves with the necessary critical distance. Other views are needed, from the private sector, professional organisations, research institutes, civil society and others.

- It is necessary that the process include a small review body that brings expertise and efficiency – the review process should be assisted by a group of independent experts who review reports to ensure consistency of standards. Some countries say reports can be reviewed in meetings attended by representatives of all the parties to the Convention—around 140 governments. That cannot work. That is liable to politicise the whole process and will not ensure the necessary serious expert review needed.
- It is also essential that the review process include a strong secretariat and the necessary resources to be conducted in an effective way.

To ensure that these elements are included, TI is working with a global coalition of CSO organisations to promote an effective UNCAC review mechanism and that group has also endorsed these proposals. TI has also prepared a set of Recommendations about the UNCAC review process which we would be very pleased to send you at your request.

We would like to invite you to join forces with TI groups around the world in a joint global campaign to promote an effective UNCAC review mechanism. TI and the Global Compact office in New York would like to facilitate this process and Jobi will be communicating with Global Compact companies by email on the issue. We are very keen to see this collaboration move forward quickly given that there are only five months left before the big intergovernmental meeting in November where the question of the review mechanism will be decided.

Beyond the UNCAC work, we would like to strengthen the ties between our groups at country level and hope the collaboration will extend to other areas as well. . We are very much looking forward to working with you.