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**International cooperation in combating
transnational crime: new challenges in the
twenty-first century**

Report of Committee II

Workshop on Combating Corruption

1. The Workshop on Combating Corruption, organized by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute in cooperation with the International Scientific and Professional Advisory Council was held on 10 and 11 April 2000 within the framework of Committee II. The Workshop had before it a background paper prepared by the Institute (A/CONF.187/9) and an informal document on the proceedings of the International Conference on the theme "Responding to Challenges of Corruption", held in Milan, Italy, on 19 and 20 November 1999. The Workshop was addressed at its opening session by the Secretary-General of the Congress and Executive Director of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. The representatives of 24 Governments made statements, and 21 presentations were made by representatives of specialized governmental agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector.

2. The Workshop adopted the multidisciplinary approach advocated in the global programme against corruption, launched jointly by the Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, and considered definitions and causes of corruption, monitoring and assessment, the organized crime nexus, measures to combat corruption at the international and national levels, crime prevention, and best practices. The Workshop made recommendations concerning measures to be taken with regard to law enforcement, legislation, the private sector and civil society, as well as measures to be taken at the international level, including the promotion of debate on the possible development of a United Nations instrument against corruption. The activities at present being undertaken within the framework of the global programme against corruption were described by representatives of the Centre and the Institute.

3. There was general agreement on the importance of transparency, the independence and integrity of investigative and subsequent criminal justice processes, and strengthening the role of civil society (including the media and the private sector). Participants in the Workshop were greatly encouraged by the increased public awareness of the issue of

corruption but noted that, in many countries, a great deal remained to be done, not only within the legal framework but also in the implementation of policies, in particular those concerning enforcement—for example, in raising awareness of the risk and cost of corruption to the offenders. There was agreement that general strategies to combat corruption must be adapted to the situation in particular countries.

4. The discussion highlighted the need for justice to be applied to past activities, including financial recovery of the proceeds of corruption, proper investigation, prosecution and the application of effective criminal and/or non-criminal sanctions.

5. At the same time it was considered necessary to provide appropriate prevention measures for the future, including the strengthening of civil society, decreasing the opportunities for corruption of high-level and low-level officials, improving their status and providing social rewards for those who were not corrupt in the performance of their duties. Finally, there was need to develop a mechanism that would permit systematic feedback from anti-corruption investigations into prevention measures and best practices.

6. A possible methodology for curbing corruption was suggested. The first step should be to increase the perceived risk, costs, insecurity and degree of difficulty in engaging in acts of corruption, through, *inter alia*, targeted risk-based prevention efforts, with stricter regulation of contract-bidding and vetting procedures. As a second step, the perceived risks of corruption to the offenders should be increased through efficient and independent investigations and criminal justice processes, an approach that supplemented awareness-raising, proactive integrity testing and independent mechanisms for dealing with complaints.

7. The rewards anticipated from corruption by the offenders should be reduced by expeditious law enforcement and asset recovery.

8. Finally, any social tolerance for corruption should be reduced by the deeper involvement of independent media and civil society in anti-corruption campaigns, by rewarding those who were not corrupt and by systematically stigmatizing corrupt behaviour.

9. The participants at the Workshop stressed the potential value of drafting an international convention against corruption. It was agreed that such an instrument could be successfully implemented only if Governments were ready to provide both political support and the necessary financial resources.
