Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption
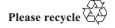
Report on the meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption held in Vienna from 13 to 15 December 2010

I. Introduction

1.   In its resolution 3/2, the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption decided to establish an interim open-ended intergovernmental working group, in accordance with article 63, paragraph 7, of the Convention, and rule 2, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure of the Conference of the States Parties, to advise and assist the Conference in the implementation of its mandate on the prevention of corruption.

2.   In the same resolution, the Conference also decided that the Working Group should perform the following functions:

      (a)   Assist the Conference in developing and accumulating knowledge in the area of prevention of corruption;

      (b)   Facilitate the exchange of information and experience among States on preventive measures and practices;

      (c)   Facilitate the collection, dissemination and promotion of best practices in the prevention of corruption;

      (d)   Assist the Conference in encouraging cooperation among all stakeholders and sectors of society in order to prevent corruption.

3.   Also in the same resolution, the Conference further decided that the Working Group should meet during the sessions of the Conference and, as appropriate, hold at least two intersessional meetings, within existing resources. The Conference also decided that the Working Group should submit reports on all its activities to the Conference.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

4.   The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations at its meeting held in Vienna from 13 to 15 December 2010:

(a)   The Working Group recommended that each of its future meetings focus on a specific and manageable number of substantive topics drawn from chapter II of the United Nations Convention against Corruption;

(b)   The Working Group also recommended that its next meeting focus on the following topics:

(i)   Awareness-raising policies and practices, with special reference to articles 5, 7, 12 and 13 of the Convention;

(ii)   The public sector and prevention of corruption: codes of conduct (article 8 of the Convention) and public reporting (article 10 of the Convention);

(c)   The Secretariat should continue to carry out its information-gathering activities relating to chapter II of the Convention, concentrating on good practices and initiatives relating to the implementation of that chapter as established by States parties. It should also continue to collect information on existing expertise within the United Nations system and other relevant organizations in the prevention of corruption, and in doing so should pay attention to the specific features of anti-corruption strategies and policies in different sectors. The priority in gathering such information should be to facilitate discussion on specific topics as they are addressed at the meetings of the Working Group in a way that best assists States parties in implementing effectively those articles of the Convention relating to the prevention of corruption;

(d)   The Working Group noted that the availability of adequate expertise on the specific topics to be addressed at its future meetings would benefit the discussion of those topics;

(e)   The Working Group encouraged States parties to share their initiatives and good practices in the area of prevention of corruption, particularly those practices relevant to specific topics to be addressed at future meetings of the Working Group, and to communicate such initiatives and good practices to the Secretariat;

(f)   In view of the limited information collected to date on chapter II of the Convention and the fact that the review of that chapter would not begin until 2015, the States parties and the Secretariat should strive towards early reporting on chapter II, with emphasis on evaluation of the effectiveness of existing prevention measures, the compilation of good practices and the identification of technical assistance needs;

(g)   The Working Group encouraged Member States, with the assistance of the Secretariat, as appropriate, and in collaboration with relevant regional organizations, to promote regional activities to prevent corruption, including regional workshops for the exchange of relevant experiences and good practices;

(h) States parties should improve training and education at all levels of the public and private sectors in the prevention of corruption and, depending on their national legislation, should make such training and education an integral part of national anti-corruption strategies and plans;

(i) In view of the forthcoming review of chapter II of the Convention during the second cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism, the Working Group stressed the importance of building legislative and institutional frameworks consistent with the requirements of that chapter;

(j) The Working Group recommended that the Secretariat continue to strengthen cooperation with Member States and relevant international organizations in addressing the prevention of corruption in the public procurement sector, including through the use of electronic systems for public procurement ("e-procurement"), with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the relevant provisions of the Convention;

(k) The Working Group noted with appreciation the cooperation between the Secretariat and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) with regard to public procurement and recommended that such cooperation be further pursued, particularly in aligning the revised UNCITRAL Model Law on Procurement of Goods, Construction and Services, which is expected to be finalized in 2011, with article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention;

(l) The Working Group noted the various efforts undertaken to assess vulnerabilities to corruption in the public and private sectors and recommended that the Secretariat continue to support States parties in such efforts;

(m) States parties may wish to consider, according to their needs, the establishment or improvement of mechanisms for assessing vulnerabilities and preventing corruption at all stages of the procurement process and on the part of both the procuring entity and the provider of goods or services;

(n) The Working Group noted with appreciation the efforts of the Secretariat to promote integrity within the United Nations system through the Institutional Integrity Initiative and recommended that the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption consider how States parties and the Secretariat might pursue such efforts further;

(o) The Working Group noted the efforts of the Secretariat to gather information on good practices in promoting responsible, professional and safe reporting by journalists on corruption and recommended that the Secretariat continue that work. The Working Group also noted the possibility of other future work to promote responsible, professional and safe reporting in accordance with article 13 of the Convention, in particular paragraph 1 (d) of that article, and the respective laws of the States parties;

(p) The Working Group requested the Secretariat to report to it at its next meeting on the activities undertaken pursuant to the present recommendations.

III. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

5.   The meeting of the Working Group was chaired by Dominika Krois (Poland) and John Brandolino (United States of America). In opening the meeting, Ms. Krois underscored the importance of implementing articles 5-14 of the Convention and of developing and sharing best practices in the prevention of corruption. She also highlighted the need to facilitate the exchange of information among States regarding such practices with a view to promoting the implementation of the Convention. The Chair invited the Working Group to capitalize on the wealth of information to be exchanged at the meeting. Drawing the attention of participants to the fact that the Working Group's next meeting would be held in August 2011, shortly before the fourth session of the Conference, the Chair urged the Working Group to guide the Secretariat as to which issues should be given greater attention in the following months.

6.   The Deputy Director of the Division for Treaty Affairs, providing an overview of the documentation prepared by the Secretariat, indicated that that documentation had been generated in conformity with resolution 3/2, in which the Conference had requested the Secretariat to collect, analyse and disseminate information on good practices in the field of prevention of corruption while taking into account existing expertise within the United Nations system and other relevant organizations. While further accumulation of knowledge in the field of preventing corruption would be necessary, the Deputy Director expressed the hope that the documentation before the Working Group provided a useful point of departure.

7.   Ms. Krois opened the floor for general comments. Speakers highlighted the importance of the discussions to be undertaken by the Working Group and noted with appreciation the background documentation prepared by the Secretariat. Several speakers reported on national efforts to adopt measures to prevent corruption in line with the provisions of the Convention. Those efforts included the establishment of anti-corruption bodies, the development and implementation of anti-corruption action plans, the adoption or amendment of legislation and work on public procurement. The role of civil society and the private sector in preventing corruption was also underscored. Several speakers stressed the link between activities to prevent corruption and work carried out within the framework of the Implementation Review Mechanism. While chapter II of the Convention was to be reviewed only during the second review cycle, an important function of the Working Group was to assist States parties in preparing for their reviews under that chapter. In that regard, the interlinkages between all substantive chapters of the Convention were emphasized. Speakers called upon fellow participants to use the meetings of the Working Group to exchange experiences, good practices and information on the challenges that they had encountered in preventing corruption, thus making the Working Group a forum for the exchange of ideas as to how to implement the provisions of chapter II and for advising the Conference on how best to prepare for the next review cycle.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

8.   On 13 December 2010, the Working Group adopted the following agenda:

1.   Organizational matters:

  (a)   Opening of the meeting;

  (b)   Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

2.   Implementation of the mandate on the prevention of corruption of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption:

  (a)   Development and accumulation of knowledge in the area of prevention of corruption;

  (b)   Exchange of information and experience among States on preventive measures and practices;

  (c)   Collection, dissemination and promotion of best practices in the prevention of corruption;

  (d)   Cooperation among all stakeholders and sectors of society in order to prevent corruption.

3.   Adoption of the report.

C. Attendance

9.   The following States parties to the Convention were represented at the meeting of the Working Group: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, Greece, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

10.   The European Union, a regional economic integration organization that is a party to the Convention, was represented at the meeting.

11.   The following States signatories to the Convention were represented by observers: Czech Republic, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Syrian Arab Republic and Thailand.

12.   The following observer States were also represented: Andorra and Oman.

13.   Palestine, an entity maintaining a permanent observer mission to the United Nations, was represented.

14. The following Secretariat units, United Nations bodies, funds and programmes, institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system were represented by observers: International Narcotics Control Board, United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme, World Food Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the World Bank.

15. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, Council of Europe, International Organization for Migration, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

16. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an entity maintaining a permanent observer office at Headquarters, was represented.

IV. Implementation of the Conference's mandate on the prevention of corruption

A. Development and accumulation of knowledge in the area of prevention of corruption

17. The Working Group began its consideration of the information contained in document CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/2, entitled "Good practices in the prevention of corruption and regulation models in the public sector", which was introduced by the representative of the Secretariat. The document was based on information provided by entities of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations and States parties. The ongoing Tools and Resources for Anti-Corruption Knowledge (TRACK) initiative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was demonstrated to the Working Group.

18. The observer for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) gave an overview of the activities of his organization in the field of preventing corruption and welcomed with appreciation the consultative process undertaken by the Secretariat in preparing the documentation for the Working Group. Introducing the background of UNDP engagement in the area of prevention of corruption, he drew attention to the place of those activities within the broader context of the UNDP democratic governance portfolio and their important role in attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. He also illustrated the realignment of priorities and mandates following the entry into force of the Convention, which was regarded by UNDP as a framework for governance and development, and highlighted the potential for cooperation and effective provision of technical assistance through the established and extensive network of UNDP resident coordinators and country offices. Lastly, he presented the work carried out by UNDP in sectors vulnerable to corruption and the tools, methodologies and good practices that had been developed, inter alia, to assist anti-corruption bodies.

19. The observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), introduced her organization's multidisciplinary approach to fighting corruption in the public sector. As part of its public governance programme, OECD placed particular emphasis on its Integrity Framework and the related integrity reviews of administrative processes in States members and non-members of the Organization. The three components of the Integrity Framework were accountability, guidance and training and merit-based human resource management. Reference was made to the positive experience gained through work in those areas in the Middle East and North Africa.

20. The observer for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) provided the Working Group with information on the Organization's anti-corruption work since 2001, emphasizing that information on that work had been exchanged with UNODC on a regular basis with a view to ensuring complementarity and avoidance of duplication. OSCE had developed a new good governance programme based on a comprehensive, multidimensional and sectoral approach. The representative provided examples of the Organization's work in South-Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus to strengthen local self-governance and integrity in customs and border control. She recalled the Organization's mandate to cooperate with UNODC in order to ensure universal ratification of the Convention and indicated that the anti-corruption projects supported by OSCE would be based on States' responses to the self-assessment checklist endorsed by the Conference. She also indicated the readiness of OSCE to assist in the collection of anti-corruption legislation, thus contributing to the legal library being developed by UNODC.

21. It was noted that all presentations were to be made available to interested delegates.

22. The representative of the Secretariat introduced the topic of methodologies, including evidence-based approaches, for assessing areas of special vulnerability to corruption in the public and private sectors, as presented in document CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/4. He outlined methodologies for obtaining quantitative assessments of vulnerabilities and reviewed the main approaches that had been used at the national and international levels, highlighting the main similarities and differences between them. It was recognized that evidence-based approaches could provide reliable and accurate information on areas vulnerable to corruption. Such approaches typically involved the collection of reports and evidence of corrupt practices and the analysis of that information using objective procedures. It was acknowledged that while many entities had conducted such assessments at the national and international levels, there was no consolidated methodology for producing reliable and standardized assessments of corruption and vulnerabilities to it.

23. The observer for the World Bank presented the work conducted by the Bank over the past decade in the field of quantitative assessments of corruption, including the Bank's experience conducting diagnostic surveys of corruption in almost 20 countries at the request of those countries' Governments.

24. The observer for UNDP provided an overview of his organization's work in the area of assessing corruption, including the development of knowledge products and the provision of support to States requesting assistance in conducting

assessments. He outlined several guiding principles for work in that area, stressing the importance of country-based and nationally owned processes that would feed the results of such assessments into national policy reform. He also emphasized the development of national capacity and encouraged multi-stakeholder processes.

25.   The Working Group expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by UNODC and the background documentation prepared for the meeting. Speakers acknowledged the importance of gathering accurate and complete information on the implementation of the Convention, particularly chapter II, and on typologies of corruption. In respect of the former, speakers noted that the Conference had already decided on methods for gathering such information through the self-assessment checklist. With regard to the latter, it was emphasized that the work of the Implementation Review Mechanism should be borne in mind when developing evidence-based methodologies to assess vulnerabilities to corruption.

26.   Speakers took note of the proposal, contained in the background document, to establish a group of international experts to consolidate experiences in evidence-based assessments of corruption and the identification of vulnerabilities to it. Several speakers expressed the view that the establishment of such a group was not desirable at the present stage. Several speakers welcomed the development of capacity at the national level to develop and utilize such methodologies. Support was expressed for evidence-based rather than perception-based assessments. Many cautioned against the use of any methodology establishing a form of ranking among States.

B.   Exchange of information and experience among States on preventive measures and practices

27.   Speakers provided the Working Group with information on efforts in their countries to prevent corruption in the management of public finances. The representative of Brazil reported on her country's transparency portal, to which new features had been added on 9 December 2010, on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day. In particular, the portal contained user-friendly information on contracts concluded by the federal Government and specific public expenditures. Two further portals had been launched to inform citizens about investments in infrastructure and related expenses in connection with the organization of the 2014 Football World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, to be hosted by Brazil. The representative welcomed the fact that an increasing number of citizens were accessing the portal, thus contributing to greater civil society control of public expenses.

28.   Several speakers highlighted efforts made and good practices in promoting integrity and transparency in public administration, inter alia, by enhancing accountability and eliminating bureaucratic systems through reform. Anti-corruption action plans and strategies had been adopted to prevent corruption in the public sector and institutions such as ombudsman's offices had been established to deal specifically with corruption. Reference was made to the importance of providing public officials with adequate remuneration and channels for reporting cases of misconduct. The designation of 23 June as United Nations Public Service Day, and the fact that the African Union had also decided to mark that day, was welcomed as

an opportunity to share experiences at the regional level. One speaker highlighted the extensive efforts undertaken in his country to coordinate corruption prevention initiatives at the national level while providing assistance to other countries.

29. Speakers drew attention to models for regulation of the public sector, including measures to address conflicts of interest and the adoption of codes of conduct. One speaker highlighted the need to strengthen the justice system in his country. It was also noted that following the adoption of codes of conduct, public officials should be trained on the content of those codes.

C. Collection, dissemination and promotion of best practices in the prevention of corruption

30. The representative of the Secretariat, introducing the background paper entitled "Good practices in the prevention of corruption in public procurement" (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/3), drew attention to the fact that public procurement could have an impact on public officials' accountability, public expenditure and the perceived efficiency of public procurement systems. Public procurement was a tool of growing importance in the implementation of macro-economic policies; corruption in that sector could therefore have multiple negative effects.

31. Reference was made to article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which listed three fundamental principles that should inform effective and efficient public procurement systems, namely transparency, competition and objective criteria in decision-making. It was pointed out that the adoption and correct implementation of those principles would facilitate both prevention of corruption in public procurement and increased competition, which were mutually reinforcing goals.

32. The adoption of electronic systems for public procurement ("e-procurement") could greatly facilitate the implementation of the three principles. Additional benefits might include greater access, including by civil society institutions, to information relating to the procurement process and to specific procurement exercises; automated documentation of each procurement exercise and easier retrieval of related information; selective access to procurement information through management of electronic identities; built-in risk indicators; stricter workflow compliance; and a mandatory justification process.

33. Presenting a case study, a representative of the Secretariat highlighted some of the positive effects of implementation of e-procurement systems, including increased participation by economic operators, particularly micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, reduction in the costs of procurement exercises and wider use of information and communication technologies in procurement. It was noted that factors such as the existence of adequate legislative frameworks and information and communications technology infrastructure could facilitate the implementation of such systems.

34. The observer for the World Bank indicated that the prevention of corruption remained a crucial component of the Bank's Governance and Anti-corruption Strategy. Although the Strategy was being reviewed, public procurement remained one of its main pillars. In that regard, the World Bank was focusing on capacity-building to facilitate development of the legislative frameworks of partner countries.

The analysis of sector-specific challenges — such as those in the transport and health sectors — to the implementation of public procurement laws and regulations evidenced the need to tailor capacity-building exercises to the exigencies of each sector of public administration.

35. The observer for the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) secretariat informed the Working Group that the UNCITRAL Model Law on Procurement of Goods, Construction and Services was being revised and that the final text was to be adopted in 2011. The revised Model Law would provide a comprehensive template for national procurement legislation, thus facilitating implementation of article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention while reflecting best procurement practices. It was underlined that the goals of the revised UNCITRAL Model Law corresponded to those of article 9, paragraph 1, and other relevant provisions of the Convention. Examples of the correspondence between the provisions of the Convention and those of the revised Model Law were given. It was acknowledged that, in order to achieve the objectives of the Model Law, it was necessary for States to implement legislation consistent with its provisions, and that that process should be supported by technical assistance programmes delivered in partnership with relevant international organizations.

36. The observer for OECD presented the principles, practical guidelines and tools developed by the Organization to support the implementation of policies and measures to prevent corruption in such a way as to provide guidance to and promote good practices among practitioners. OECD supported the use of electronic means in public procurement since such means enhanced transparency and efficiency, empowered citizens to hold public authorities accountable and decreased administrative burdens and costs. The Organization was collecting specific information on the ability of e-procurement systems to reduce corruption, and to that end had established a dedicated e-procurement and integrity delivery team comprising representatives of OECD member States and non-member States in the Middle East and North Africa. The team had already produced an overview of best practices in e-procurement and integrity and in 2011 would focus on the identification of policy guidelines.

37. The observer for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat presented the work carried out by the Department in the area of e-procurement, including "e-government" surveys, which had been conducted since 2001. The surveys contained four assessment indices relating to e-government development, namely infrastructure development in information and communication technologies, human capital development, public "e-service" delivery and "e-participation". The representative outlined the lessons learned and results achieved in conducting the surveys, which included increased access of vulnerable groups to economic opportunities, enhanced social equality, strengthened democratic systems, improvement of the image of countries implementing e-procurement and greater opportunities for collective action to prevent and combat corruption.

38. The observer for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs also delivered a presentation on the United Nations Public Service Awards. He recalled that United Nations Public Service Day had been established by the General Assembly in 2003 and that awards were given for contributions made to enhancing the role, prestige and visibility of public service. The United Nations Public Service

Awards had been established with the aim of discovering the latest innovations in governance, rewarding excellence in public service, raising the image and prestige of public service, enhancing professionalism, building trust in government and sharing successful practices. A new award category, entitled "Preventing and combating corruption in the public service", had recently been established in cooperation with UNODC, supplementing the existing categories of improving the delivery of public services, fostering participation in policy-making decisions through innovative mechanisms, advancing knowledge management in government and promoting gender-responsive delivery of public services. Public-private partnerships, public organizations and agencies at the national and subnational levels and any other organization that performed public service functions were eligible for nomination. Regional awards were presented every year on 23 June on the occasion of United Nations Public Service Day.

39.   The observer for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) delivered a presentation on the numerous initiatives undertaken by that Office in the area of prevention of corruption from a human rights perspective. In particular, he drew attention to resources developed by OHCHR in collaboration with its partners, including anti-corruption measures recommended in the concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on reports by States parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on compliance with that instrument; draft guiding principles aimed at promoting the framework for business and human rights set out in document A/HRC/8/5 of the Human Rights Council; a publication of 21 case studies of governance reform; and a publication on the outcome of the United Nations conference on anti-corruption, good governance and human rights held in Warsaw in 2006. The observer for OHCHR concluded by expressing the readiness of the Office to collaborate closely with UNODC in anti-corruption efforts and to identify potential areas of future cooperation.

40.   Several examples of successful implementation of e-procurement systems were cited as evidence of the benefits of adoption of such systems, those benefits including increased scrutiny by civil society and greater access of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and local providers to public procurement. The adoption of a "social witness" system to monitor compliance in the implementation of large infrastructure projects was cited as a best practice. It was added that attention should be paid to the identification of factors arising from the adoption of e-procurement systems that might facilitate corrupt practices. Speakers also suggested that technical assistance programmes should promote a cultural change in attitudes towards public procurement, thus facilitating the adoption and effective implementation of the fundamental values enshrined in article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

D.   Cooperation among all stakeholders and sectors of society in order to prevent corruption

41.   The Secretary of the Conference introduced the background paper prepared by the Secretariat on the alignment of rules and regulations of the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to the principles of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/5). He

recalled the proposal that had been put forward by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat and UNODC during the final round of negotiations of the Convention to address the criminalization of bribery of international public officials, the role of international organizations and questions relating to privileges and immunities. Owing to the late stage of the negotiations, the proposal had not been fully considered but instead had been referred to the Conference by means of General Assembly resolution 58/4. The Conference had pronounced on the matter in its resolutions 1/7 and 2/5. In addition, UNODC had launched its Institutional Integrity Initiative in April 2007 with the aim of extending the principles and standards of the Convention to the organizations of the United Nations system. Nineteen of the 28 members of the Chief Executives Board had provided responses to the self-assessment checklist in which they had presented an overview of articles of the Convention that embodied principles of relevance to them. The call of States members of the Group of 20 to encourage coherent approaches in the various organizations to which they belonged was also noted. The Secretary pointed out that international cooperation was complex and needed to be further explored, although recent developments were encouraging, including the handling of referrals from international organizations to Member States in specific cases. The Secretary also reported on a recent agreement on cross-debarment concluded by multilateral development banks.

42.   Speakers expressed appreciation for the efforts undertaken by UNODC to implement the mandates contained in Conference resolutions 1/7, 2/5 and 3/2 and noted the usefulness of the Institutional Integrity Initiative and of the information collected from international organizations through the self-assessment checklist. They also stressed the need to consider how to advance the work undertaken by the Secretariat in accordance with the Working Group's mandate.

43.   The importance of fostering partnerships between the public and private sectors to prevent corruption and the positive impact of public-private partnerships on economies and development was underlined. Regarding public-private partnerships at the international level, speakers expressed their wish for a structured overview of activities conducted by organizations within the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations engaged in the prevention of corruption. Speakers gave examples of concrete efforts to engage private-sector stakeholders in initiatives designed to increase awareness and promote the key principles of transparency, integrity and accountability. Those efforts included the drawing up of a publicly accessible list of "pro-ethics" companies and the establishment of a committee tasked with providing policy advice on public-private partnership and guidance on the possibilities for participation by private-sector entities in public projects.

44.   The representative of the Secretariat introduced the background paper prepared by the Secretariat entitled "Best practices for promoting responsible and professional reporting on corruption for journalists" (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/6). The paper provided an overview of good practices in promoting responsible and professional media coverage of corruption and highlighted issues that might affect the freedom to seek, receive and publish information on corruption in accordance with article 13 of the Convention.

45.   The Working Group emphasized that the participation of society was key to the prevention of corruption and States' implementation of article 13 of the

Convention. In that regard, the Working Group resolved to devote greater attention to the matter at its next meeting. Speakers also stressed the crucial contribution of the media to the prevention of corruption. The role of the media was regarded as multifaceted, encompassing aspects ranging from awareness-raising to the exposure of corruption cases that might otherwise escape justice.

46. Speakers also emphasized the importance of establishing and promoting standards to foster professional and responsible reporting on corruption. It was recognized that the right to seek, receive, publish and disseminate information concerning corruption should be balanced with other equally fundamental rights and that reporting on corruption was a sensitive undertaking which often exposed media representatives to a variety of risks.

47. The Working Group encouraged the Secretariat to continue to collect information on good practices in professional and responsible media reporting on corruption and stressed the need to pursue capacity-building for journalists and programmes to foster partnerships between journalists and Governments.

48. The representative of the Secretariat presented the conference room paper entitled "Progress on youth and corruption" (CAC/COSP/WG.4/2010/CRP.1). It was noted that the paper had been prepared in accordance with article 13, paragraph 1 (c), of the Convention and paragraphs 16 and 19 of Conference resolution 3/2 on measures to prevent corruption. The Working Group noted with appreciation the attention paid by the Conference at its third session to the education of youth in the prevention of corruption, and welcomed the possibility of an event for young persons to be held in conjunction with the fourth session of the Conference. It also encouraged the Secretariat to gather information on good practices in and initiatives for educating young persons in the prevention of corruption.

V. Adoption of the report

49. On 15 December 2010, the Working Group adopted the report on its meeting (CAC/COSP/2010/WG.4/L.1 and Add.1).