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Partnerships for Anticorruption Global Forum 2025 Report



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AC4D	Anticorruption for Development Global Program
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BOT	Beneficial Ownership Transparency
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
GAO	United States Government Accountability Office
IACA	International Anti-Corruption Academy
IACC	International Anti-Corruption Court
ICHA	International Corruption Hunter's Alliance
ICAR	International Centre for Asset Recovery
IFF	Illicit Financial Flows
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INT	Integrity Vice Presidency
MDBs	Multilateral Development Banks
OCP	Open Contracting Partnership
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGP	Open Government Partnership
SAIs	Supreme Audit Institutions
StAR	Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative
TI	Transparency International
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States





Overview

Effective partnerships are essential in the fight against corruption. They bring together the resources, expertise, and influence of various stakeholders to pursue shared goals. By fostering collaboration and amplifying collective strengths, partnerships enable more innovative, resilient, and far-reaching approaches that individual institutions alone cannot achieve, ensuring that efforts to promote integrity and accountability are sustainable and impactful.

With this in mind, the World Bank Group Main Campus served as the venue for the [Partnerships for Anticorruption Global Forum](#) on April 8-9, 2025, an international event that brought together 411 participants from 97 countries (with 29,186 online visitors viewing the event page 130,144 times)—government representatives, development organizations, civil society leaders, private sector innovators, journalists and academics—united by the shared commitment to confront corruption through the cultivation of partnerships.

This report captures the Forum's objectives, themes and outcomes through summaries of each plenary session and panel discussion. It documents key messages, and highlights the momentum generated through cross-sector collaboration and the formation of new alliances and networks.



The Forum was co-hosted by the World Bank Group's [International Corruption Hunter's Alliance](#) (ICHA), led by the Integrity Vice Presidency (INT), and the [Anticorruption for Development Global Program](#) (AC4D), spearheaded by the Institutions Global Department (renamed to Governance Global Department since then). It featured seven plenaries, 16 panel discussions, and 26 World Cafés, interactive small group roundtable discussions designed to foster dialogue and idea exchange. The event served as a strategic platform for advancing collaborative approaches to integrity and accountability.

Over the course of two days, the Forum explored the key challenges and evolving landscape of anticorruption efforts, from the role of public officials and the risks to investigative journalists, to ensuring transparency of beneficial ownership and the detection of illicit financial flows (IFF). A notable keynote address by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Professor and 2024 Nobel Laureate, Daron Acemoglu, challenged participants to reimagine the role of technology, not merely as a tool for efficiency, but as an instrument for justice and institutional resilience. The [address](#) has gathered 179,930 video views to date.

Beyond facilitating the exchange of ideas about urgent global challenges, the Forum served as a catalyst for momentum in the fight against corruption. Participants highlighted tangible legislative and regulatory progress, successful cross-border investigations, and the establishment of civil society coalitions dedicated to holding institutions accountable, among numerous other initiatives.

Building on the momentum generated by the Forum, INT organized related events including the African Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Network peer learning platform with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which brought together law enforcement practitioners from African jurisdictions, the Latin American Law Enforcement Network supported by the Basel Institute on Governance, and held numerous bilateral meetings with anticorruption agencies, development institutions, non-profit organizations, and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

For the AC4D Global Program, the Forum sparked valuable networking and new collaborations. As a direct outcome, working groups on Beneficial Ownership Transparency and Anticorruption in Procurement were launched or strengthened, bringing together experts from government, civil society, academia, and international organizations for ongoing, active exchange of experiences and innovative ideas. The groups meet regularly, including at the Open Government Partnership Global Forum in October 2025.

AC4D has deepened collaboration with World Bank regional and country teams and governments, supporting assessment of opportunities for Beneficial Ownership Registries in Sri Lanka and Bhutan, as well as for public procurement transparency in the Philippines and Guatemala. The program also helped country teams implement public procurement red flag systems in Guatemala and North Macedonia, and introduced the Governance Risk Assessment Systems tool to officials from several African countries.



Collectively, these engagements underscore the Forum's vital role in advancing the global anticorruption movement rooted in shared purpose, ongoing collaboration, and strong commitment to integrity.





Left: **Mouhamadou Diagne**, World Bank Group Vice President, INT. Right: **Arturo Herrera**, World Bank Institutions Global Director

Foreword

At a time when the global fight against corruption faces mounting challenges, your participation in the Partnerships for Anticorruption Global Forum was more than timely, it was essential. The conversations we shared reflected not only the complexity of corruption as a global issue, but also the depth of commitment, expertise and collaboration across sectors and institutions. This report captures those rich discussions and the momentum they generated.

As was underscored during the Forum, corruption is a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon. A clear lesson from years of experience is that isolated interventions do not work. No single institution, including the World Bank Group, has the mandate, the resources, or the bandwidth to tackle all the dimensions at play, including strengthening political will; establishing high-quality



norms and standards; building strong institutions of accountability; promoting transparency in both public processes and private sector transactions; expanding the space for civic engagement, and more. Meaningful and sustainable progress is possible only through strong partnerships that bring together a broad range of stakeholders leveraging complementary core competencies across these different dimensions.

The Forum took place following the World Bank's update of its strategy to support countries in combating corruption. The revised approach reflects shifts in the nature of corruption, emerging challenges, and the expanded role of technology in prevention, detection, and enforcement. It strengthens the Bank's capacity to address both domestic and transnational corruption by introducing new tools, partnerships, and methods. A key pillar of the strategy focuses on global engagement and partnerships. Effective progress requires coordinated action among government reformers, civil society organizations, public agencies, academia, the private sector, international institutions, and donors.

Indeed, through strong partnerships and collective action, the anticorruption agenda has registered meaningful progress in recent years. While there is more work to be done, these gains should not be overlooked: the adoption of anticorruption frameworks across many countries, steps towards increased transparency such as right-to-information laws in more than 100 countries, stronger collaboration in areas such as mutual legal assistance and information exchanges on anti-money laundering, and the growing role of civil society in raising awareness and demanding accountability.

But we also recognize that this progress is not enough. As we know all too well in our work, corruption remains pervasive around the world. Its scope and sophistication are widening, and its impact is ever more devastating on countries and communities as the world faces unprecedented polycrises. The risk of backsliding is high. Political dynamics are shifting, often in ways that undermine the very foundations of the anticorruption agenda, which include strong political commitment, allocation of adequate resources, consensus on norms, enforcement of laws, and high-quality stakeholder collaboration.

Yet, tempting as it may be to let the current headwinds and pressures fuel a sense of pessimism, they should instead energize us. When consensus is at risk of breaking down, engagement and dialogue become even more crucial. Partnership dialogues, such as this Forum and others to come, are vital.

The flipside of risk is often opportunity. The challenges facing the anticorruption agenda present opportunities for both existing and new partners to strengthen their support. Partners can help by bolstering global standards and tools to improve accountability, especially in uncertain times when corrupt actors may feel emboldened. We also have an opportunity to enhance enforcement collaboration—at both national and regional levels—to prevent corrupt actors from exploiting gaps between jurisdictions. Additionally, empowering civil society to hold policy-makers accountable and advocate for anticorruption remains crucial.



It may seem overly optimistic to speak of opportunity in such times. But history shows that progress on global priorities rarely follows a straight line. The history of major global fights, such as the efforts to advance human rights, rule of law or environmental sustainability, suggests that the path is cyclical, marked by setbacks and surges. Some of the current setbacks may perhaps suggest a temporary downward slide, but working together in partnership will keep the momentum and ensure the long term trendline remains one of sustained advancement towards integrity and transparency.

This year's Forum was co-organized by INT and the Institutions Global Department, and was co-hosted by Transparency International, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the Governments of Sweden and Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the OECD, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Chandler Foundation, and the Open Government Partnership (OGP). We are grateful to those who contributed their time, expertise, and insights. Your collaboration made this event possible, and it is through such partnerships that we can achieve tangible results in the fight against corruption and enhance the impact of governance, development, and investment. Fighting corruption is both our moral duty and a strategic necessity. Together, we can and must do more to realize a future defined by accountability, transparency, and trust.



SUMMARY OF
Opening Remarks by Axel van Trotsenburg
Senior Managing Director, World Bank Group



Corruption remains a persistent challenge across all regions and income levels, fueling public frustration as citizens face higher costs, poorer services, and a sense of unfairness. The poorest suffer most, paying more and receiving less. As long as corruption endures, even well-designed institutions will struggle to build trust and legitimacy, demanding a strategic and collective response.

Van Trotsenburg highlighted the World Bank Group's evolving approach. For decades, corruption was considered outside the Bank's scope, viewed as a domestic issue. This changed under President Jim Wolfensohn, whose ["cancer of corruption" speech](#) marked a shift toward proactive engagement, placing transparency, accountability, and institutional capacity at the heart of development. Thirty years later, corruption remains a major challenge, requiring deeper and more adaptive efforts.

Van Trotsenburg outlined three pillars guiding the World Bank Group's strategy:

Radical transparency: The World Bank Group aims to illuminate public decision-making and resource flows, from debt reporting to procurement. Transparency deters misconduct,

exposes risks, and empowers reformers. Open data and clear reporting help citizens and oversight bodies track funds and identify problems.

Hard-edged accountability: Transparency must be matched by credible mechanisms to hold officials accountable. This involves governments, parliaments, audit institutions, civil society, and the press. Strengthening parliamentary oversight and enabling independent expenditure reviews are key to institutionalizing scrutiny and corrective action.

Long-term institution building: Progress depends on capable, rules-based institutions that prevent and detect corruption. This includes civil service reform, financial management, procurement modernization, and integrity safeguards. Embedding integrity into operations and country systems is essential for lasting change.

This agenda must be systematically integrated into country engagement, lending, and analytics. Projects should include risk assessment, targeted mitigation, and feedback loops to improve performance and reduce vulnerabilities, making corruption harder to perpetrate and easier to detect.

Partnerships are essential, as no single institution can tackle corruption alone. Van Trotsenburg emphasized the importance of governments, international organizations, foundations, and civil society, and the need to strengthen these coalitions. Partnerships share good practices, mobilize support, and protect reformers, especially whistleblowers. Engaging media, parliaments, and civic groups expands oversight and accountability.

Technology, when thoughtfully embedded, can enhance prevention and enforcement—especially in procurement and service delivery. Tools like e-procurement and anomaly detection can highlight risks, but must be supported by legal frameworks and capacity to ensure effective use and credible sanctions.

International cooperation in asset recovery and cross-border investigations is valuable, but current efforts recover only a fraction of what is lost, highlighting the need for persistent collaboration and harmonized standards.

The overarching message is realism and resolve: corruption will not disappear, but its costs and opportunities can be reduced through transparency, accountability, institution building, partnerships, and technology. The Bank's role includes financing, knowledge, and convening power. By integrating anticorruption measures and sharing lessons, the Bank can help countries achieve better outcomes.

Van Trotsenburg closed by urging candor and ambition, encouraging participants to challenge assumptions and learn from both successes and setbacks. Sustained commitment, innovation, and collective courage are needed to restore trust, strengthen legitimacy, and deliver results citizens can feel. [Watch the replay](#)



SUMMARY OF Keynote Address by Daron Acemoglu

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor and 2024 Nobel Peace Prize Winner in Economics



"I think in this world, corruption is increasing. More and more people are dissatisfied with democracy. Shared prosperity, voice, and effective public service provision [are] problematic."

Professor Acemoglu's keynote, [Harnessing Technology for Transparency, Stronger Institutions and Prosperity](#), offered a deeply contextual and research-driven perspective on the enduring challenge of corruption and the centrality of institutions in shaping development outcomes. He began by reflecting on the vast disparities in prosperity between countries, noting that these differences are not simply the result of geography or resources, but are fundamentally rooted in the quality and inclusiveness of institutions. Drawing on his own experiences growing up in Turkey and his Nobel-winning research, Acemoglu explained how historical legacies—especially those shaped by colonialism—continue to influence the effectiveness of institutions and the prevalence of corruption today.



He emphasized that while history matters, it does not predetermine a country's future. Societies that invest in building inclusive, accountable institutions and embrace democratization can achieve significant improvements in economic growth, health, and social equity. Acemoglu's research demonstrates that democratization, when accompanied by genuine reforms and citizen engagement, leads to long-term reductions in corruption and increases in prosperity. However, he cautioned that these benefits are not automatic; democracies must deliver on promises of shared prosperity and effective public services. When expectations are unmet, public trust erodes, and support for democratic institutions declines—a trend now visible in many countries, including among youth in advanced economies.

Central to Acemoglu's speech was the corrosive impact of corruption on institutional legitimacy and development. He argued that corruption undermines public trust, impedes the delivery of public goods, and perpetuates inequality. High-profile corruption scandals, he noted, can paradoxically heighten perceptions of corruption even as reforms are underway, making the fight against corruption both a technical and a political challenge. Acemoglu called for coordinated, multi-stakeholder action—reflecting the Forum's agenda—to address both domestic and transnational dimensions of corruption. He stressed that successful reforms must be locally rooted and gradual, with international organizations supporting transparency, openness, and domestic movements for change, rather than imposing solutions from the outside.

Acemoglu also explored the opportunities and risks presented by technology and innovation. He discussed how digital tools and data analytics can enhance transparency, accountability, and service delivery, but warned that technology alone cannot solve governance challenges. The benefits of innovation depend on the strength and direction of institutions and the choices made by policymakers. He urged leaders to harness technology for inclusive growth and anticorruption, while remaining vigilant about new risks such as digital divides and the potential for technology to be misused. He also highlighted the growing influence of lobbying and corporate power, particularly in advanced economies, as a systemic challenge that requires a fundamental rethink of political processes and accountability mechanisms.

Addressing the persistent challenge of clientelism and entrenched interests, Acemoglu argued that reform efforts must focus on streamlining regulations and clarifying institutional missions to avoid excessive bureaucracy that can stifle democratic effectiveness. He emphasized the importance of local ownership and gradual change, noting that external actors should prioritize supporting domestic reformers and fostering environments of transparency and openness.

In closing, Acemoglu reinforced the Forum's agenda by calling for renewed collective action, innovation, and resilient partnerships to build institutions capable of delivering on the promises of democracy and development and to fight against corruption. He stressed that only coordinated efforts across governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organizations can help societies overcome the legacy of corruption and create a more equitable, prosperous future.



Plenary Session Summaries

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION: The Role of Partnerships in Curbing Corruption



Speakers left to right: **Arturo Herrera**, World Bank Institutions Global Director, **Mouhamadou Diagne**, World Bank Group Vice President, INT, and **Delia Ferreira**, Former Chair, Transparency International (TI)

The opening plenary, [The Role of Partnerships in Curbing Corruption](#), brought together prominent experts in the global fight against corruption to discuss the critical role of partnerships and collective action. Moderated by Delia Ferreira, the session set a collaborative tone for the Forum, emphasizing the urgency and complexity of anticorruption efforts in today's shifting global landscape.

Ferreira opened the session by acknowledging the decades-long struggle against corruption, noting both significant achievements and persistent setbacks. She underscored the increasing urgency of

anticorruption work, citing new actors and narratives that threaten progress. Ferreira framed the session's central question as: how can partnerships and collective action be used to advance the fight against corruption?

The Necessity of Partnerships

Diagne delivered a compelling analysis of why isolated interventions are insufficient for sustainable anticorruption outcomes. Drawing on years of experience, Diagne argued that effective anticorruption strategies require a multi-dimensional approach:

- **Norms and Standards:** High-quality norms are essential but must be complemented by transparency, capable institutions, and political will.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Without transparency, compliance falters; without capable institutions, accountability and enforcement are weak.
- **Political Will and State Capacity:** Even with strong institutions, lack of political will or weak state capacity undermines progress and erodes public trust.

Diagne emphasized that no single institution possesses the mandate or resources to address all these fronts simultaneously. The only viable path is through coalitions of willing partners, each contributing unique competencies. He cited successful examples such as the United Nations (UN) Convention against Corruption, the OECD Working Group on Bribery, and multi-stakeholder platforms like the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). These initiatives have translated standards into concrete actions by uniting civil society, governments, and the private sector.

At the country level, Diagne highlighted partnership examples such as Ukraine's progress in asset declarations, achieved through collaboration among the UN Development Program, the World Bank Group, the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), and Ukrainian civil society. He stressed that while perfection is elusive, real and measurable progress is possible through partnerships.

The World Bank's Multi-Pronged Approach

Both Diagne and Herrera described the World Bank Group's evolving strategy, which operates on two main tracks:

- **Shielding World Bank Group Projects:** Ensuring integrity within World Bank Group-funded projects is the first line of defense. Diagne clarified that INT is not merely the World Bank Group's investigative arm; investigations are a tool to support the broader mandate of safeguarding development resources. INT receives thousands of complaints annually, leveraging technology and data analytics for proactive risk assessment and prevention interventions.
- **Supporting Country-Level Reform:** Herrera explained that less than 1% of government budgets in developing countries are funded by the World Bank Group, making it essential to influence the remaining 99% through capacity building, rule of law, and justice sector



reforms. The World Bank Group's strategy now integrates governance and anticorruption elements into broader development frameworks, including gender and fragility strategies.

Tools and Innovations

The panel discussed several innovative tools and approaches:

- **Beneficial Ownership Registries:** These are being implemented to prevent money laundering, improve procurement, and combat tax evasion. Herrera noted the challenge of not just establishing registries but equipping them to be effective.
- **E-Procurement Systems:** Digital procurement reduces corruption risks and increases transparency.
- **Data Analytics/Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Both speakers highlighted the growing use of data and AI to identify corruption risks and loopholes, moving beyond traditional transparency and accountability measures.

The Role of Civil Society

Diagne addressed the challenge of civil society isolation, especially in politically sensitive contexts. He described the World Bank's Global Partnership for Social Accountability, which ensures civil society participation in project delivery and accountability. The World Bank Group is committed to giving civil society a seat at the table, recognizing that active civic engagement correlates with greater anticorruption progress.

Sanctions and Rehabilitation

INT's sanctions process, including cross-debarment with other MDBs, was highlighted as a deterrent against supply-side corruption. Diagne stressed that sanctions are not solely punitive; the World Bank Group also works with sanctioned entities to improve integrity compliance programs and business practices, aiming for rehabilitation and future partnership.

Challenges and Opportunities

In closing reflections, both panelists acknowledged enduring challenges:

- **Political Dynamics:** Diagne identified shifting political environments as a major headwind, affecting resources, collaboration, and enforcement. He urged the community to view these challenges as opportunities to strengthen partnerships and maintain momentum.
- **Window of Opportunity:** Herrera noted that post-election periods offer renewed commitment to anticorruption, but action must be swift to capitalize on citizen hope before frustration sets in.

Questions from the audience focused on civil society isolation, the effectiveness of partnerships in enforcement, and strategies for adapting anticorruption efforts to regional contexts. Diagne



reiterated the importance of inclusive participation and multi-level strategies, while Herrera emphasized the need for effective tools and government engagement.

This opening plenary underscored that fighting corruption is not a solitary marathon but a strategic, collective endeavor. The panelists called for steadfast commitment, innovative partnerships, and adaptive strategies to confront evolving challenges. As Ferreira concluded, collective action is not just a theme but a call to arms for all anticorruption practitioners. The session set a high bar for the Forum, inspiring participants to collaborate, innovate, and persevere in the pursuit of integrity and development.

PLENARY 1: The Role of Elected/Public Officials in the Fight Against Corruption



Speakers left to right: Moderator **Richelieu Lomax**, World Bank Group Regional Team Leader, Africa East & South Investigations, INT, **Yemi Osinbajo**, Former Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria; **Diana Salazar**, Attorney General, State Attorney General Office, Ecuador; **Amara Konneh**, Senator of the Republic of Liberia; **Nasredeen Abdulbari**, Immediate Former Minister of Justice for Sudan

Moderated by Richelieu Edwin Lomax, The [Role of Elected/Public Officials in the Fight Against Corruption plenary](#) brought together a distinguished panel of leaders from Africa and Latin America to discuss the critical role of elected and public officials in the fight against corruption. The session explored the interplay of political will, institutional reform, and civil society engagement, setting a pragmatic tone and highlighting diverse perspectives on persistent challenges.

Shared Commitment to Political Will and Reform

Panelists collectively emphasized that genuine political will is central to the success of anticorruption efforts. Drawing on experiences from Nigeria, Ecuador, and Liberia, speakers highlighted the importance of executive leadership, robust institutions, and the need for elected officials to set examples of integrity and accountability. The discussion underscored that leveraging the legitimacy of electoral mandates and building coalitions within government are vital for advancing reform agendas.

Institutional, Political, and Cultural Dimensions

The panel explored corruption through multiple lenses—structural, political, and cultural. Speakers noted that while formal systems and laws are essential, their effectiveness depends on the individuals who operate them and the broader political and cultural context. The conversation addressed the challenges posed by exclusionary politics, entrenched interests, and cultural norms that can perpetuate corrupt practices. Examples from Liberia and Ecuador illustrated how community support and political maneuvering can complicate prosecution and reform.

Civil Society and Oversight

A recurring theme was the role of civil society in driving accountability and reform. Panelists shared experiences where data-driven advocacy, public awareness campaigns, and legal empowerment led to tangible improvements in governance and justice. The importance of international cooperation and flexible mechanisms to respond to evolving forms of corruption was also highlighted, with successful prosecutions and innovative partnerships serving as models for future action.

Challenges and Opportunities

Speakers reflected on persistent obstacles, including sustaining political will, ensuring judicial independence, achieving government unity, and confronting powerful interests. The panel emphasized that overcoming these challenges requires strategic leadership, context-sensitive reforms, and active engagement from civil society and international partners.

The session reinforced that the fight against corruption is a collective responsibility, demanding collaboration across government, civil society, and international actors. Panelists called for steadfast commitment, innovative partnerships, and adaptive strategies to confront evolving challenges and foster integrity and accountability in public life.



PLENARY 2: Beneficial Ownership Transparency & Fighting Illicit Financial Flows



Speakers left to right: Moderator **Yira Mascaró**, World Bank Group Practice Manager, Finance Competitiveness and Innovation, Latin America and the Caribbean; **Carlos Melgar**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Public Finance of Guatemala; **Musa Adamu Aliyu**, Chair, Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission, Nigeria; **Isabel Vecchio**, Technical Secretary, Money Laundry Commission, Ministry of Economy and Finance of Panamá; **Ashish Kumar**, Policy Specialist, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Secretariat; **Lu Ecclestone**, Deputy Head Illicit Finance and Corruption, UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office

The [Beneficial Ownership Transparency and Fighting Illicit Financial Flows \(IFFs\)](#) plenary convened a diverse panel of international experts and practitioners to address the persistent challenge of IFFs and the critical role of beneficial ownership transparency (BOT). Moderated by Yira Mascaró, the session featured representatives from the UK, Guatemala, Panamá, Nigeria, and FATF. The discussion centered on country experiences, international standards, and practical obstacles to effective implementation, with a focus on the impact on domestic resource mobilization and development.



The Problem: Anonymous Corporate Vehicles and IFFs

The panel opened with a recognition that the abuse of shell companies and anonymous corporate vehicles remains a major obstacle to anticorruption efforts. Such structures are widely used to launder illicit gains, evade taxes, and circumvent sanctions, undermining development and eroding trust in institutions. Panelists agreed that increasing transparency around beneficial ownership is essential not only for anti-money laundering, but also for strengthening governance, mobilizing domestic revenues, and supporting financial inclusion.

International Standards and Country Implementation

As the FATF representative, Kumar outlined the evolution of global standards on beneficial ownership, noting that while technical compliance has improved, effectiveness remains a challenge. The FATF's recent reforms emphasize risk-based approaches, multi-pronged mechanisms for information access, and enhanced disclosure requirements, particularly in public procurement. However, only a minority of countries are highly effective in implementing these standards, and the gap between formal rules and practical outcomes persists.

Country Experiences: Lessons and Innovations

UK: As an early adopter, the UK shared lessons from its experience with one of the world's largest beneficial ownership registers. Challenges included unverified data and the proliferation of fictitious companies. Recent reforms require identity verification for directors and persons of significant control, improved data quality, and mechanisms to balance transparency with privacy. The UK also highlighted the importance of peer learning and context-sensitive technical assistance.

Guatemala: Guatemala is in the early stages of implementing a beneficial ownership registry, facing resistance from some sectors, notably the legal profession. The government has prioritized inclusive dialogue with stakeholders, public awareness campaigns, and learning from international best practices to address concerns about confidentiality and competitiveness. The aim is to build trust in the financial system and improve investment conditions.

Nigeria: Nigeria's reforms include leveraging international platforms to track assets held overseas by Nigerians and integrating beneficial ownership checks into procurement processes to detect conflicts of interest. The country's experience demonstrates the importance of cross-border collaboration and the use of beneficial ownership data in investigations and asset recovery.

Panama: Panama's approach involved extensive communication and collaboration between the public and private sectors, regular stakeholder meetings, and targeted training. The beneficial ownership registry now covers all active companies, with authorities able to access information directly and immediately. The process highlighted the need for ongoing adaptation and openness to change as new risks and challenges emerge.



Implementation Challenges

Panelists identified several persistent challenges:

- Ensuring data quality and verification
- Balancing transparency and privacy
- Overcoming stakeholder resistance
- Facilitating international cooperation
- Adapting to emerging risks, such as cryptocurrencies

Emerging Issues

The panel addressed new challenges, including the rise of cryptocurrencies as vehicles for illicit flows and recent regulatory changes in major economies. FATF and country representatives emphasized ongoing efforts to adapt standards and risk assessments to these developments.

The session concluded with a call for sustained commitment, patience, and collaboration. BOT is a long-term endeavor, requiring adaptive strategies, robust technical solutions, and inclusive dialogue. As countries move from policy design to implementation, the focus is shifting toward using beneficial ownership data to strengthen law enforcement, tax compliance, and procurement integrity. The panel's collective insights reinforced that curbing IFFs is a shared global responsibility, essential for promoting development, trust in government, and equitable growth.



PLENARY 3: State Capture and Corruption



Speakers left to right: **Daniel Kaufmann**, Senior Fellow, Results for Development and The Brookings Institution; Moderator **Francesca Recanatini**, World Bank, Lead Governance Specialist, Institutions Global Department; **Luis Felipe López-Calva**, World Bank Group Director, Poverty Global Department; **Jodi Vittori**, Professor of Practice, Georgetown University; **Mark Pyman**, Co-Founder, Curbing Corruption, co-author 'Sector-Based Action Against Corruption'

The [State Capture and Corruption panel](#) brought together leading experts and practitioners to explore the evolving challenge of state capture, where powerful actors shape and distort the rules and institutions of governance for private benefit, often at the expense of the public good. Moderated by Francesca Recanatini, the session featured speakers from academia, research institutions, civil society and World Bank Group. The discussion focused on conceptual developments, transnational dynamics, sectoral approaches, and the everyday impact of state capture on citizens and development.

Framing State Capture: Concept and Evolution

Kaufmann opened the session by tracing the evolution of the concept of state capture, distinguishing it from traditional administrative corruption. While corruption typically involves illicit



acts in the implementation of rules, state capture refers to the manipulation and distortion of the rules themselves—often legally—by influential actors. Kaufmann emphasized that state capture is a universal challenge, affecting countries across income levels and regions, with significant socioeconomic costs. He presented recent empirical work showing that corruption and state capture do not always overlap; some countries may be more captured than corrupt, and vice versa. The measurement of state capture now includes components such as the judiciary, policymaking, and the enabling environment, and trends show worrying increases in some countries, while others have managed to prevent or reverse capture.

Transnational Dynamics and the Role of Enablers

Vittori expanded the discussion to the transnational dimension of state capture, highlighting how globalization has enabled kleptocrats and their networks to move funds, launder reputations, and invest in assets abroad. She described the “dark side of globalization,” where enablers—including banks, lawyers, accountants, and other professionals—facilitate illicit financial flows through mechanisms such as trade-based money laundering, gold, real estate, art, and sports. Vittori noted the particular vulnerability of the international financial system, with the U.S. playing a complex role as both a gatekeeper and, at times, an enabler of state capture. She stressed the importance of civil society and investigative journalism in exposing and countering capture, especially as traditional sources of support may be retreating.

Sectoral Approaches: Practical Strategies for Practitioners

Pyman brought a practitioner’s perspective, advocating for sector-specific approaches to tackling state capture. He argued that while no sector is immune from political interference, most anticorruption work happens at the sector level, where solutions must be tailored to specific contexts. Drawing on examples from Botswana and Ukraine, Pyman illustrated how targeted interventions, such as anticorruption training and sectoral action plans, can build capacity and create critical mass for reform, even in challenging environments. He emphasized the need for data-driven oversight and the inclusion of all professional groups in anticorruption efforts, noting that sectors have often been overlooked in broader governance strategies.

Everyday Impact: State Capture and Citizens

Lopez-Calva connected the discussion to the lived experience of citizens, particularly the poor who depend on public services. He described how state capture manifests in the daily lives of ordinary people, often through the capture of service delivery systems by public officials or unions, leading to absenteeism, low quality, and inequality. Lopez-Calva highlighted the “value chain of accountability”—transparency, publicity, and accountability—as essential for breaking the cycle of impunity and improving policy effectiveness. He stressed that incomplete accountability undermines legitimacy and perpetuates poverty and inequality.



Panel Discussion and Audience Engagement

The panel addressed questions on institutionalizing state capture measurement, the role of international organizations, and the importance of supporting civil society and multi-stakeholder approaches. Kaufmann cautioned against formal institutionalization of indices, advocating for open data and collaborative use. Vittori and Pyman underscored the need for broad-based civil society engagement and for embedding anti-corruption within sectors. Lopez-Calva reiterated the World Bank Group's commitment to supporting policies that enhance accountability and reduce poverty.

Civil society, media, and multi-stakeholder coalitions are vital for exposing and countering capture but face increasing risks and shrinking space. Open recognition, data-driven diagnosis, and collective action—across government, industry, and civil society—are needed to prevent and address state capture.

The panel concluded with a call for evidence-based narratives, sectoral knowledge-building, and collaborative networks to advance citizen-focused governance and counter elite-driven capture.



PLENARY 4: Regulatory Approaches to Integrity Compliance



Speakers left to right: Moderator **Lisa Miller**, World Bank Group Manager, Integrity Compliance, INT; **Anlele Ncube**, Manager, Integrity & Prevention, Office of Integrity and Anticorruption, African Development Bank (AfDB); **Marie Mallard**, Head, Economic Actors Control Division, French Anticorruption Agency; **Eduardo Diniz Longo Staino**, Director of Compliance, Andrade Gutierrez Engenharia; **Hentie Dirker**, Chief Officer for Environmental, Social, and Governance, and Integrity, Atkins Réalis

Moderated by Lisa Miller, The [Regulatory Approaches to Integrity Compliance plenary](#) aimed to explore how companies and regulators interact when companies face sanctions, investigations, or deferred prosecution agreements, often across multiple jurisdictions. The central theme was the importance of promoting cooperation and collaboration between private sector entities and regulatory bodies, including MDBs, which, for the session, were considered “regulators.”

Company Experience: AtkinsRéalis (formerly SNC-Lavalin)

Dirker shared the company’s journey through multiple monitorships and settlements following corruption allegations, notably the Padma Bridge case in Bangladesh. The company agreed to a 10-year debarment with the World Bank Group, later reduced to eight years due to good cooperation and integrity program enhancements, as provided for in the Settlement Agreement. Over a decade, AtkinsRéalis underwent six monitorships with various regulators, including World Bank Group, AfDB, and Canadian authorities. Dirker emphasized the importance of collaboration, transparency, and choosing monitors who understand the business, noting that pragmatic, risk-based approaches are essential for effective compliance.

MDB Perspective: AfDb

Ncube described the AfDB's process for working with sanctioned entities. Their Office of Integrity and Anti-Corruption, particularly the Prevention Division, engages with companies to help them meet integrity compliance conditions. The process is guided by harmonized standards among MDBs, focusing on three core areas: identifying, investigating, and mitigating integrity risks. Ncube highlighted the need to clarify the distinction between investigation and compliance phases to companies, address resource constraints (especially for smaller firms), and tailor compliance programs to the company's size and context. The harmonized MDB General Principles for Business Integrity Programmes allow for flexibility while maintaining quality standards.

Government Perspective: French Anticorruption Agency

Mallard outlined the agency's dual mission: providing support/guidance and conducting controls to assess anticorruption program implementation. The agency can initiate preventive audits and supervise compliance programs under deferred prosecution agreements. Mallard stressed five key engagement techniques:

- Ongoing dialogue with the private sector, including sharing draft guidelines for feedback.
- Internal dialogue within the agency to share findings and best practices.
- Focus on "tone at the top," ensuring senior leadership is actively involved.
- Assessing both formal systems and practical application, with strong attention to risk mapping and regular review.
- Sector-based audits to benchmark and mobilize compliance efforts.
- Mallard emphasized that the agency aims to build a lasting culture of integrity, not just legal compliance.

Private Sector Perspective: Andrade Gutierrez Engenharia

Staino recounted the company's experience with monitorships and leniency agreements following a major corruption scandal in Brazil. He highlighted the challenge of balancing compliance requirements with operational realities, sharing examples where "over-compliance" led to inefficiencies (e.g., unnecessary training for non-risk staff, impractical due diligence for small vendors). Staino advocated for risk-based approaches and open communication with monitors, noting that compliance programs must be practical and tailored to business needs.

Key Themes and Challenges

- **Communication and Collaboration:** All panelists agreed that regular, open communication between companies, monitors, and regulators is critical. Surprises should be avoided, and companies should feel empowered to push back on impractical recommendations with reasoned alternatives.



- **Pragmatism and Risk-Based Approaches:** Compliance programs must be realistic, implementable, and tailored to the company's risk profile, size, and sector. Overly rigid or generic controls can backfire.
- **Consistency and Harmonization:** The harmonized business principles among MDBs help promote consistency, but differences in national standards and regulator expectations remain a challenge. Using common monitors and sharing best practices can help.
- **Capacity Building and Education:** Regulators and MDBs should invest in ongoing capacity building, not just for companies but also for project implementation units and public officials. Mentorship and peer learning are valuable.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Agencies and companies should engage in post-monitorship feedback to refine compliance programs and share lessons learned. Industry alliances can help identify precise risk scenarios.

Opportunities for Collaboration

- **Mentorship and Peer Learning:** Companies that have undergone monitorships can mentor others, reducing stigma and sharing effective practices.
- **Industry Alliances:** Collaboration on risk identification and scenario planning can improve sector-wide integrity.
- **Public Procurement and Compliance Audits:** Embedding compliance requirements in public procurement, with regular audits, can raise standards.
- **Regulator Education:** Regulators should understand business realities and the full spectrum of "tone at the top," not just CEO involvement.

The panel concluded that successful integrity compliance depends on ongoing dialogue, pragmatic risk management, harmonized standards, and a willingness to learn and adapt. Regulators, MDBs, and companies must work together to build effective, sustainable cultures of integrity, with education and feedback as central pillars.



PLENARY 5: Role of Partnerships in Building Accountability and Integrity Ecosystems



Speakers left to right: Moderator **Maria Poli**, World Bank Group Senior Specialist, Coalitions for Reform; **Sanjay Pradhan**, Global Ambassador, Open Government Partnership (OGP); **Mark Robinson**, Executive Director, Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); **Anabel Cruz**, Founding Director, Institute for Communication and Development; **Joseph Asunka**, CEO, Afrobarometer

The [Role of Partnerships for Building Accountability and Integrity Ecosystems](#) plenary convened global leaders and practitioners to examine how partnerships—across government, civil society, and the private sector—can build robust accountability and integrity ecosystems. Moderated by Maria Poli, the session drew on the experience of major international initiatives and research organizations, focusing on lessons learned, evolving challenges, and the way forward in a context of shrinking civic space and rising public distrust.

Framing the Role of Partnerships: Lessons and Evidence

Pradhan opened the discussion by underscoring that governments cannot effectively combat corruption alone. He highlighted the Open Government Partnership model, which brings together national and local governments with thousands of civil society organizations to co-create reforms. Pradhan presented evidence that such partnerships yield more ambitious reforms and stronger results, citing Nigeria's beneficial ownership register and Armenia's mining sector transparency as examples. He emphasized that citizen engagement—beyond organized civil society—is critical, as demonstrated by citizen-led monitoring initiatives in Nigeria that improved service delivery and accountability.

Pradhan also stressed the importance of protecting civic space, which is under threat globally, and investing in leadership capacity for reformers. He called for nurturing ethical values and supporting coalitions of integrity, referencing the World Bank's own experience in the Philippines, where broad alliances led to procurement reforms and improved outcomes.

Multi-Stakeholder Models: Building Trust and Inclusion

Robinson described the EITI multi-stakeholder approach, which brings together government, private sector, and civil society in 54 countries. Robinson argued that these platforms provide rare safe spaces for collaborative discourse, especially where civic space is limited. He noted that EITI's data-driven model enables oversight of extractive sector revenues and spending, and that trust-building among diverse actors is foundational.

Robinson advocated for greater diversity and turnover in multi-stakeholder groups, including more voices from outside capital cities, youth, and women. He outlined EITI's efforts to hold private sector actors to high anticorruption standards and to broaden engagement to state-owned enterprises and Southern multinationals.

Enabling Conditions and Organizational Resilience

Cruz emphasized that open civic space, strong and accountable institutions, and equitable partnerships are prerequisites for success. She noted that only a small fraction of the world's population lives in open civic space, and that funding cuts threaten the resilience of civil society organizations. Cruz called for collective action and organizational support to sustain anticorruption efforts and open government reforms, warning that the consequences of underinvestment will be felt in coming years.

Public Attitudes and Data-Driven Advocacy

Asunka shared insights from Afrobarometer's surveys, showing that Africans increasingly value accountable government over mere effectiveness, as corruption and declining trust in institutions erode satisfaction. He highlighted the corrosive impact of local-level corruption on public trust and described Afrobarometer's Data for Governance Alliance, which aims to build data literacy and joint



advocacy among civil society, academia, and government. Asunka stressed that partnerships must be credible and inclusive, reflecting citizens' needs and building trust through the involvement of respected actors.

Panel Discussion and Audience Engagement

The panel addressed questions on adapting multi-stakeholder models to new social contracts, ensuring meaningful local participation, and building trust in polarized societies. Pradhan and Robinson emphasized the need to democratize partnerships, amplify citizen voices, and bring platforms closer to communities. Cruz and Asunka highlighted the importance of inclusion, resilience, and data-driven advocacy. The panelists agreed that success depends on moving beyond the “usual suspects” and engaging a broader range of stakeholders, including women, environmental groups, and marginalized communities.

Key Takeaways and Forward Agenda

- **Partnerships are essential** for building accountability and integrity, but must adapt to shrinking civic space, polarization, and declining trust.
- **Multi-stakeholder models** provide safe spaces for collaboration, data-driven oversight, and policy innovation, but require greater diversity and local engagement.
- **Civic space, organizational resilience, and funding** are critical enablers; underinvestment threatens progress.
- **Data literacy and joint advocacy** empower civil society and citizens to hold institutions accountable.
- **The World Bank and donors** have a vital role in convening, resourcing, and supporting inclusive, locally owned reforms.

The panel concluded with a call to move from rhetoric to action, unlock resources, and build resilient, inclusive coalitions for accountability and integrity. Evidence-based narratives, sectoral knowledge-building, and collaborative networks are needed to advance citizen-focused governance and counter elite-driven capture.



PLENARY 6:

Helping Countries Fight Corruption: A Dialogue with World Bank Regional Vice Presidents



Speakers right to left: **Carlos F. Jaramillo**, World Bank Group Vice President, Latin America & the Caribbean; **Martin Raiser**, World Bank Group Vice President, South Asia; Moderator **Pablo Saavedra**, World Bank Group Vice President, Prosperity; **Manuela Ferro**, World Bank Group Vice President, East Asia & Pacific

The Helping Countries Fight Corruption plenary brought together three World Bank Group Regional Vice Presidents for a candid dialogue on the evolving challenge of corruption across East Asia & Pacific, South Asia, and Latin America & the Caribbean. Moderated by Pablo Saavedra, World Bank Group Vice President, Prosperity, the session explored the gap between improvements in anticorruption measures and persistent public perceptions, regional nuances, sectoral challenges, and the critical role of partnerships and technology in advancing the fight against corruption.

Framing the Challenge: Progress and Persistent Perceptions

Saavedra opened the session by highlighting a paradox: while many countries have made tangible progress in transparency, access to information, and reducing bribery in specific sectors, public

perceptions of corruption remain stubbornly high. He invited the regional VPs to reflect on this disconnect and share insights from their regions.

Ferro emphasized the East Asia & Pacific region's remarkable development gains over the past decades, including lifting a billion people out of poverty. Yet, with economic progress has come greater demand for transparency and accountability, and a "straining of the social contract." Corruption remains a major impediment, especially in public service delivery, health and education, where a third of families report paying bribes for access. She noted wide disparities across countries, with the Pacific Islands and Papua New Guinea showing the highest perceptions of corruption and highlighted the role of entrenched coalitions and business interests in impeding reform.

Raiser cautioned against conflating general dissatisfaction with specific transactional corruption. In South Asia, rapid development has raised public expectations, but reforms often lag behind, leading to persistent perceptions of corruption and disempowerment. He stressed that changes in government do not always yield rapid improvements, and that strengthening institutions, while necessary, may not immediately shift public sentiment. Raiser also pointed to the region's "transactional" expectations of government, such as the provision of freebies, which can undermine longer-term governance reforms.

Jaramillo described the diversity of the Latin America region, where some countries are perceived as deeply corrupt and others much less so. He recounted the impact of high-profile scandals, such as the Odebrecht case, which dramatically increased perceptions of corruption across the region. Jaramillo's main concern is the erosion of public trust, which undermines civic engagement and democracy. He noted that some countries, like Uruguay, have managed to maintain lower corruption indicators and stronger social compacts.

Sectoral Challenges and Opportunities

The panel delved into specific areas where opportunities for corruption are most acute—tax administration, public expenditure, permitting, and procurement.

Ferro highlighted the Philippines' ambitious state-wide reforms, prioritizing digitalization of government services, tax collection, and procurement to reduce discretion and opportunities for corruption. She underscored the importance of digital IDs and infrastructure as tools for both efficiency and anticorruption, and noted that reforms are often driven by committed leaders who act as entry points for change. Public procurement, she argued, is increasingly seen as a driver of transparency, with countries like China and Indonesia modeling reforms on global best practices. Disclosure of conflicts of interest and beneficial ownership are also gaining traction.

Raiser discussed South Asia's challenges in tax collection, with the region collecting significantly less revenue than its economic structure would suggest. He pointed to distortions and exemptions in tax policy, and the need for digital business registration and data-driven oversight. Raiser cited successful e-procurement reforms in Bangladesh, which improved competitiveness and saved



billions, but noted persistent difficulties in reforming state-owned enterprises due to entrenched interests. He highlighted India's Goods and Services Tax and Unified Payments Interface reforms as examples of how digital tools can boost transparency and tax buoyancy.

Jaramillo raised the growing threat of organized crime, which now extends beyond drug trafficking to illegal mining, weapons, and other sectors, fueling corruption at all levels. He emphasized the need for advanced data analytics and AI-driven tools, such as Brazil's Governance Risk Assessment System, to detect fraud and collusion in procurement. Jaramillo warned that technology is a double-edged sword, as criminal networks also exploit new tools to evade detection.

Partnerships: Building Coalitions for Reform

The panelists agreed that no organization can tackle corruption alone. Effective partnerships span governments, civil society, academia, business associations, and international organizations.

Ferro described the World Bank's commitment to transparency in its own operations and the importance of engaging a wide range of partners, including multilaterals, bilaterals, civil society, and communities. She highlighted the value of working with the private sector, especially small and medium enterprises, and leveraging the expertise of the International Finance Corporation and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

Raiser shared examples from Pakistan and Brazil, where the Bank collaborated with think tanks, universities, and civil society to shape public debate and policy reform. He stressed the importance of enforcement—transparency alone is insufficient without legal action and prosecution. Raiser also noted the critical role of the International Monetary Fund in governance assessments and anticorruption commissions.

Jaramillo emphasized the hard work required to move from plans and alliances to real impact, noting that implementation is key to changing perceptions. He called for continued investment in digital improvements and transparency, while recognizing the sophistication of those seeking to evade anticorruption measures.

Audience Engagement and Reflections

Audience questions focused on the role of education in building anticorruption consciousness, the need for more robust support for civil society, and the importance of contract management beyond procurement. Panelists agreed that education is vital for empowering citizens to demand accountability, and that the Bank must do more to support civil society's technical capacity and resources for monitoring projects.

The discussion also addressed the need for the World Bank to use more direct language on corruption, rather than euphemisms, and to bring the message "to people's doorsteps" so that citizens understand the personal impact of corruption.



Key Takeaways and Forward Agenda

- **Progress in anticorruption measures** is real, but public perceptions remain stubbornly high, driven by both lived experience and high-profile scandals.
- **Digitalization and technology** offer powerful tools for reducing opportunities for corruption but also present new challenges as criminal actors adapt.
- **Sectoral reforms** in tax, procurement, and public services are critical, but require committed leadership and tailored approaches.
- **Partnerships**—across government, civil society, business, and international organizations—are essential for sustained impact.
- **Education and public engagement** are vital for building a culture of integrity and mobilizing citizens as active participants in the fight against corruption.
- **Implementation and enforcement** are key: plans and transparency must be matched by legal action and accountability.

The panel concluded with a call for continued vigilance, innovation, and collaboration, recognizing that the fight against corruption is complex, evolving, and requires persistent effort at all levels.

SPECIAL SESSION: Insights and Strategies, A Dialogue with Slagjana Taseva and Alan Bacarese



This unrecorded session featured a dialogue between **Slagjana Taseva**, Dean of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), and **Alan Bacarese**, World Bank Group Director at INT. Bacarese opened by emphasizing the critical role of education in combating corruption and reflected on the strong partnership between the World Bank Group and IACA, recalling the Academy's rapid growth since its founding in 2010 and his own experience during its launch.

Professor Taseva described IACA's mission to educate anticorruption professionals, highlighting its four master's programs, tailored trainings, and commitment to inclusiveness through multilingual and diverse offerings. She also outlined IACA's current research priorities, including measuring the effectiveness of anticorruption agencies and addressing corruption risks in sectors like aid and sports. A major upcoming initiative is a UN conference in New York focused on advancing the Vienna Principles for measuring corruption.

Both speakers agreed on the importance of collaboration, technical support, and investing in the next generation of integrity leaders. The session concluded with a shared commitment to education and international cooperation as essential foundations for sustainable progress against corruption.



PLENARY 7: Collective Action for Anticorruption



Speakers left to right: Moderator **Roby Senderowitsch**, World Bank Practice Manager, Public Administration, Institutions Global Department, and **Jean Pesme**, World Bank Group Director, Finance, Competitiveness & Innovation Global Department

The final [Collective Action for Anticorruption plenary](#), moderated by Roby Senderowitsch, focused on the urgent need for collective action in the fight against corruption. Senderowitsch opened with a story illustrating how coordination, whether for good or ill, can be powerful, and emphasized that effective anticorruption efforts require partnerships across sectors. Senderowitsch shared several key learnings from the Forum and his own experience emphasizing that corruption is a collective challenge and disproportionately affects the poor.

The session was interactive, with participants from government, civil society, and the private sector sharing perspectives on the value and challenges of collaboration. Speakers highlighted that working together brings strength, safety, and efficiency, especially in risky environments. Civil society was recognized for its role in relaying messages, acting as informants, and providing protection and support to public sector actors. The private sector was seen as a catalyst for capacity building and

technical assistance, while public prosecutors stressed the importance of integrity and being a beacon for others.

Key themes included the importance of trust—both among partners and in public institutions—and the need for partnerships that leverage diverse skills and expertise. Participants agreed that effective collaboration requires understanding what each partner brings to the table and how they can complement one another.

Pesme closed the session by underscoring the sense of urgency around the anticorruption agenda. He emphasized that partnerships are essential not only within government but also within civil society and the private sector, and highlighted the need for innovation, knowledge sharing, and international cooperation. Asset recovery, Beneficial Ownership Transparency, and cross-border collaboration were identified as critical areas for progress. Pesme concluded by reminding participants that anticorruption work is a long-term effort, requiring persistence, incremental progress, and mutual support.

The plenary ended with a call to continue building partnerships, exchanging information, and supporting each other to advance the anticorruption agenda and foster development.





Breakout Sessions

1. Fighting Corruption in a Conflict Zone

SPEAKERS:

Arkan El Seblani, Regional Chief Anti-Corruption and Integrity Advisor and Programme Manager, UN Development Program, Regional Hub for Arab States

Kelley Swift, Manager, Investigations Unit, United Nations Office for Project Services

Jocelyne Jabbour, World Bank Group Senior Procurement Specialist, Latin America and Caribbean Region

Akingbolahan Adeniran, Legal and Program Director, Project Expedite Justice, and Former Attorney-General of Ogun State, Nigeria

Tyler Hodgson, World Bank Group Regional Team Lead, Middle East, North Africa and West Africa Investigations, INT

This panel explored how corruption undermines development efforts in countries affected by conflict and fragility, and discussed strategies for the international community to support more effective governance in these challenging environments. The conversation emphasized that corruption is not only a barrier to peace and stability, but also a major obstacle to achieving development goals, as it diverts resources away from essential services and erodes public trust.

Panelists highlighted the complex relationship between corruption and fragility, noting that corruption can both fuel and result from conflict. In many cases, persistent corruption increases the risk of conflict relapse and undermines the legitimacy of institutions. Examples from Afghanistan,



Nigeria, and the Central African Republic illustrated how state capture, bribery, and weak oversight have contributed to cycles of instability and hindered progress.

A key theme was the need for context-specific approaches. The panel stressed that there is no universal solution; anticorruption strategies must be tailored to local realities, taking into account the diversity of fragile settings and the unique challenges they present. Panelists called for a shift away from standard, short-term interventions toward more nuanced, medium-term strategies that address both immediate risks and underlying incentives for corruption.

The discussion also underscored the importance of mobilizing resources and ensuring their transparent and effective use. Protecting funds from mismanagement and corruption is essential, and anticorruption measures should be central to national development strategies. The panel advocated for strengthening accountability mechanisms, supporting investigative journalism and civil society, and enhancing legal frameworks for asset recovery and anti-money laundering.

International cooperation and capacity building were identified as critical to success. Panelists encouraged greater coordination among governments, donors, and non-governmental actors, and highlighted the value of technical assistance and risk management tools tailored to fragile contexts. Civil society's role in monitoring, advocacy, and technical support was recognized as vital, though concerns were raised about declining resources for these organizations.

Finally, the panel called for coordinated action to ensure that anticorruption remains a cross-cutting priority in development efforts in conflict-affected and fragile settings. By investing in resilient institutions, fostering inclusive governance, and supporting reformers, the international community can help break the cycle of corruption and conflict, and maximize the impact of available resources for sustainable growth.

2. International Cooperation and Legal Instruments to Recover the Proceeds of Mozambique's Tuna Fleet Corruption Scandal

SPEAKERS:

Angelo Matusse, Deputy Attorney General, Republic of Mozambique

Keith Oliver, Head of International & Partner

Sarah Gabriel, Partner, Peters & Peters Solicitors LLP

Nicola Bonucci, Former Director for Legal Affairs, OECD

This session provided an in-depth, operational look at the Mozambique "tuna bonds" corruption scandal, focusing on the legal battles, challenges, and lessons learned from one of the largest and most complex transnational bribery cases in recent years. The panel featured senior legal practitioners and Mozambique's Deputy Attorney General, who together navigated five years of litigation across multiple jurisdictions.



The case centered on \$2 billion in loans obtained by corrupt Mozambican officials, Credit Suisse bankers, and the shipbuilder Prinvest, ostensibly for maritime projects. In reality, funds were misappropriated, contracts were inflated by up to 800%, and much of the financing was hidden from international partners, triggering a major economic and diplomatic crisis for Mozambique. The scandal's exposure led to criminal investigations, trials, and convictions in Mozambique, as well as high-profile litigation in London's commercial courts.

Panelists described the extraordinary evidentiary and procedural challenges, including massive document disclosure requirements, translation issues, parallel proceedings in multiple countries, and attempts by defendants to shift disputes to private Swiss arbitration. The current outcome for Mozambique—settlements with banks, landmark Supreme Court rulings, and asset recovery efforts—was attributed to the government's unwavering commitment, strong international cooperation (including with the US, IMF, and World Bank), and the resilience of the legal team.

Key lessons highlighted include:

- The critical importance of transparency and regular communication, both within government and with the public, to build trust and maintain support for anticorruption efforts.
- The need for robust systems for document storage and institutional handover, as litigation often spans years and involves multiple government actors.
- The value of international legal cooperation and mutual assistance, which proved essential in gathering evidence and navigating complex cross-border issues.
- Caution regarding arbitration clauses in public contracts, as confidentiality can hinder transparency and accountability in corruption cases.

A strong theme of collaboration and determination emerged, with Mozambique's government, legal advisors, and international partners working together to pursue justice despite immense challenges. The panel concluded that people—committed individuals in government, law, and international organizations—were central to sustaining the fight and setting a global example for anticorruption action.





3. Institutional Checks to Combat Corruption: The Role of Supreme Audit Institutions

SPEAKERS:

Jonas Nyrop Henriques, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark

Sowmya Kidambi, Director, The Barefoot College, India

Dorothy Perez, Comptroller General, Chile

Tonita Gillich, Assistant Director, General Accountability Office, US

Edward Akol, Auditor General, Uganda

Emilio Barriga, Special Auditor, Supreme Audit Institution, Mexico

MODERATOR:

Joseph Kizito, World Bank Group Practice Manager, Latin America and the Caribbean, Institutions Global Department

The panel convened to discuss the vital role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in detecting, preventing, and reducing corruption, with a particular focus on capacity building, technological innovation, collaboration, and public engagement.

The session began by emphasizing the importance of SAIs in providing fiscal oversight through credible and timely audit reports, which are essential for transparency and accountability in government operations. The discussion highlighted that strong, independent SAIs are a cornerstone of democratic systems, fostering public trust and strengthening the social contract.

A recurring theme was the need for SAIs to adapt to technological change. As corruption evolves and public sector processes become more digitized, SAIs must enhance their capacity to audit IT platforms, analyze large datasets, and keep pace with new mechanisms of fraud. The Chilean experience illustrated this challenge: while auditors and inspectors are increasingly skilled in financial and accounting issues, technology often advances faster than their ability to respond. To address this, SAIs must invest in training personnel not only in data and AI but also in practical IT systems, ensuring that more staff—not just a specialized elite—can conduct audits using digital tools.

Concrete examples were provided, such as audits of public safety and education systems in Chile, where IT platforms revealed irregularities like deceased persons receiving weapons permits and improper student enrollments. The need for broader training was underscored, especially as administrative decisions become more automated through AI.

The panel also discussed the importance of presenting audit results in accessible formats. Lengthy, technical reports are often inaccessible to citizens. In Chile, the introduction of concise, one-page summaries of audit findings—such as cross-checks of child support payments and driver's license issuance—had a significant impact, leading to widespread dissemination via social media and prompting corrective action from local governments. This demonstrated that sometimes, simple changes in communication can mobilize public demand for accountability.

The Mexican experience showcased the transformative effect of digital modernization. By moving from in-person, paper-based audits to fully digital processes, including electronic signatures, digital mailboxes, and big data analysis, Mexico's SAI dramatically increased its audit coverage and accuracy. In just four years, the proportion of cities audited rose from 4% to 40%, and the accuracy of audits exceeded 90%. Technology also enabled the recovery of misused public funds, with digital tools helping to identify and reclaim diverted resources.

The panel addressed the challenge of measuring the impact of SAIs. While it is difficult to quantify the preventive effect of audits, improvements can be tracked through follow-up reports and the correction of identified issues. In Mexico, the use of technology allowed for more precise detection and recovery of misused funds, while in Chile, follow-up audits assessed whether recommendations had been implemented.

Collaboration emerged as another key element. Effective public audits require SAIs to coordinate with multiple agencies, including anticorruption bodies and legislatures. Formal frameworks, such as memoranda of understanding, are essential for guiding cooperation, information sharing, joint activities, and capacity building. Issues of confidentiality, financial arrangements, and governance structures must be addressed to ensure successful partnerships. Regular review and adaptation of collaboration strategies, annual work plans, and governance arrangements, such as working groups and steering committees, were highlighted as best practices.

The panel also discussed the importance of public engagement. Social audits and civil society involvement were presented as ways to make audit findings more relevant and actionable for



citizens. In India, for example, social audit standards require information to be put in the public domain and verified by citizens, making the audit process more transparent and participatory.

Persistent challenges remain, including political interference, limited operational independence, and inconsistent legislative oversight. Panelists shared experiences of overcoming these barriers through professional judgment, clear protocols, and ongoing engagement with parliament and other stakeholders. In Uganda, procedural reforms ensured that if parliament did not review audit reports within six months, the auditor general's recommendations became mandatory for the executive.

4. Implementation of Beneficial Ownership Transparency Reforms: Country Experience

SPEAKERS:

Jens K. Kristensen, World Bank Group Lead Public Sector Specialist, Eastern and Southern Africa Region

Srbuhi Galyan, Minister of Justice, Armenia

Grace Malera, Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman, Malawi

Reida Kashta, General Director, Public Procurement Agency, Albania

Michael Hegarty, Policy Adviser, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, UK

Monica Chipanta Mwansa, Deputy Director General, Anticorruption Commissions, Zambia

MODERATOR:

Thom Townsend, Executive Director, Open Ownership

This panel explored how beneficial ownership transparency (BOT) is emerging as a critical tool for fighting corruption, improving governance, and supporting development objectives. The conversation emphasized that anonymous corporate structures have long enabled illicit financial flows (IFFs), tax evasion, and the diversion of public resources, and that increasing transparency around the real owners of companies is essential for protecting public funds and building trust in institutions.

Panelists highlighted the complex relationship between BOT and broader governance reforms. They noted that while BOT reforms are technically and politically challenging, they are increasingly being adopted as part of anticorruption strategies, public procurement reforms, and efforts to mobilize domestic resources. Examples from Armenia, Malawi, Albania, Nigeria, and the UK illustrated the diversity of approaches and the importance of tailoring reforms to local contexts.

Armenia began its BOT journey in the extractive sector, launching a pilot program for mandatory disclosure of beneficial ownership in mining companies. Supported by the World Bank and Open Ownership, Armenia developed an electronic declaration system and a public register, making ownership information accessible to all citizens. Legislative amendments have since expanded mandatory disclosure to all sectors, with a unified register now operated by the state register of



legal persons. Armenia's experience highlights the importance of strong political will, technical capacity, and phased implementation. The country's reforms have been recognized as making "satisfactory progress" toward international standards.

Malawi has leveraged partnerships with the World Bank, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and other donors to drive BOT reforms as part of its broader fiscal governance strategy. The country is integrating beneficial ownership registers into its business registration systems and e-procurement platforms, aiming to make ownership information available for 80% of contracts awarded through e-GP and for mining and logging licenses. Malawi's approach emphasizes alignment with national development priorities, skills transfer, and institutional strengthening. However, challenges remain in system interoperability and capacity building, and the sustainability of reforms depends on embedding them in national budgets and building local expertise.

Albania has used public procurement as a strategic lever to enforce beneficial ownership disclosure. Since 2022, companies must register their beneficial owners to participate in public tenders, with compliance verified through e-procurement systems. Albania is also working to redesign its procurement system to incorporate AI features, further enhancing transparency and effectiveness. The country's experience demonstrates how procurement can drive broader governance reforms and highlights the value of cross-institutional collaboration.

Nigeria introduced beneficial ownership requirements in 2019 as part of a bill to reform the private sector, leveraging international commitments and policy platforms. The Corporate Affairs Commission is now tasked with collecting beneficial ownership information for all Nigerian companies and making it publicly available. Nigeria's experience shows how international standards and sectoral transparency commitments can catalyze reform, even in challenging environments.

UK was one of the first G20 countries to launch a public beneficial ownership register, maintained by Companies House, in 2016. The UK's digital-first approach allows companies to register and update their beneficial ownership information online, with data accessible to the public and downloadable in bulk. The register has been accessed billions of times, supporting anti-money laundering, corruption investigations, and business due diligence. The UK's experience also demonstrates the economic value of open beneficial ownership data and the importance of continuous improvement, with recent reforms introducing identity verification and enhanced powers for Companies House.

A key theme was the need for context-specific approaches. The panel stressed that there is no universal solution; BOT strategies must be tailored to local realities, taking into account legal frameworks, technical capacity, and political economy. Panelists called for a shift away from standard, short-term interventions toward more nuanced, medium-term strategies that address both immediate risks and underlying incentives for opacity.

International cooperation and capacity building were identified as critical to success. Panelists encouraged greater coordination among governments, donors, and non-governmental actors, and highlighted the value of technical assistance and peer learning. Civil society's role in monitoring,



advocacy, and technical support was recognized as vital, though concerns were raised about declining resources for these organizations.

5. Supporting Country Commitments in Financing for Development

SPEAKERS:

Mats Benestad, Policy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Kaushal Kishor Ray, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal, United Nations

Mathias Huter, Managing Director, United Nations Convention Against Corruption Coalition

Catherine Anderson, Team Lead for Governance for Development, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Emmanuel Mathias, Governance & Anticorruption, Legal Department, International Monetary Fund

MODERATOR:

Elsa Gopala Krishnan, World Bank Group Specialist, Stolen Assets Recovery, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

This panel focused on how the international community can support country commitments in financing for development, with a particular emphasis on anticorruption and combating IFFs. The discussion highlighted the significant gap in financing required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), noting that only a small fraction of targets is currently on track. Corruption and IFFs were identified as major obstacles, draining resources that could otherwise be invested in development priorities such as health, education, and infrastructure.

Key points included the need for both mobilizing additional resources and ensuring their effective and transparent use. Protecting funds from inefficiency, mismanagement, and corruption is essential, and anticorruption measures must be central to national development strategies. The panel underscored the importance of international cooperation, regulatory reforms, and capacity building to address these challenges. The draft of UN's Financing for Development outcome document includes regulating professional service providers, strengthening accountability mechanisms, supporting media and civil society in exposing IFFs, and enhancing asset recovery and anti-money laundering efforts.



The discussion also emphasized the importance of systems approaches, combining transactional reforms with institutional strengthening, and the need for tailored technical assistance and risk management tools. Civil society's role in monitoring, advocacy, and technical support was recognized as vital, though concerns were raised about declining resources for non-governmental actors. Overall, the panel called for coordinated action across governments, international organizations, and civil society to ensure that anticorruption remains a cross-cutting priority in financing for development, and to maximize the impact of available resources for sustainable growth.



6. MDB Harmonization in the Global Sanctions System: Working Together to Ensure Integrity and Accountability

SPEAKERS:

Jodi Tuer Glasow, World Bank Group Executive Secretary, Sanctions Board

Jamieson Smith, World Bank Chief Suspension and Debarment Officer, Office of Suspension and Debarment

Juan Ronderos, Sanctions Officer, Inter-American Development Bank Group

Mariam Diawara, Executive Secretary, Sanctions Appeals Board, AfDB

Marie-Anne Birken, Chair, Integrity Enforcement Committee, Asian Development Bank

Moderator: **Jelena Madir**, Managing Director, Chief Compliance Officer, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

This panel explored the evolution, impact, and future directions of harmonization among MDBs in their sanctions regimes, focusing on integrity and accountability in the use of development funds. The discussion centered on the mutual enforcement of debarment decisions, shared definitions of



sanctionable practices, and the practicalities and challenges of harmonizing systems across institutions.

MDB sanctions regimes are designed to protect development funds from corruption, fraud, collusion, and coercion. These regimes are administrative rather than criminal, reflecting the MDBs' unique international status and fiduciary responsibilities.

Since 2010, five major MDBs have mutually recognized debarment decisions for core sanctionable practices, amplifying the impact of sanctions and deterring misconduct across the development finance sector. Harmonization is not strict standardization; each MDB retains its own procedures and legal frameworks, but applies common principles and definitions.

Core Principles: Fairness, independence, and transparency are foundational to all MDB sanctions systems. These principles ensure procedural integrity, clear rules, and independent decision-making, which are critical for maintaining trust and credibility.

Cross-debarment is widely implemented, with most sanctions recognized across institutions. Differences remain in areas such as publication of sanctions, treatment of first-time offenders, and the use of conditional release or compliance programs. Sanctions typically extend to controlled affiliates, increasing the deterrent effect.

While harmonization has been successful, each MDB's system reflects its institutional culture and legal environment. Decision-making bodies vary in composition and terms, and approaches to publishing decisions differ. There is ongoing collaboration and learning, with trends toward more joint supervision of compliance programs and settlements.

The panel discussed the potential for further harmonization, including expanding definitions of sanctionable practices, integrating new MDBs into the agreement, and standardizing compliance program oversight. There is interest in exploring restitution and support for victim communities, though legal and practical complexities remain.

MDB sanctions are administrative and protected by privileges and immunities, limiting recourse to national courts. However, MDBs may refer cases to national authorities for parallel civil or criminal proceedings.

The harmonized sanctions system has increased deterrence and promoted self-disclosure among companies. There is recognition of the need to adapt to new challenges, such as environmental and social misconduct, and to continue strengthening cooperation, technological investment, and capacity building.

Overall, the panel concluded that harmonization among MDBs has significantly enhanced integrity and accountability in development finance, with ongoing efforts to refine and expand these systems to meet emerging needs and expectations.



7. Corruption Risks in Procurement Systems, a Comparative Approach

SPEAKERS:

Adea Pirdeni, State Minister for Public Administration and Anticorruption, Albania

Mihaly Fazekas, Director, Government Transparency Institute

Mare Bogeva Micovska, Director, Procurement National Authority, Republic of North Macedonia

Letacio Guedes Junior, Secretary General of the Government of Paraiba, Brazil

Georg Neumann, Head of Communications, Open Contracting Partnership

Moderator: **Simon B. Chenjerani Chirwa**, World Bank Group Practice Manager, Procurement

This panel explored corruption risks in public procurement systems through a comparative, international lens. Procurement was recognized as a central area of government spending and a frequent target for corruption, state capture, and inefficiency. Strengthening regulatory frameworks—by establishing clear, stable rules and aligning with international standards—was identified as a foundational step for ensuring compliance and integrity.

Digitalization featured prominently in the discussion. Mandatory e-procurement systems and open data policies were highlighted as effective means to increase transparency, enable real-time monitoring, and provide public access to procurement information. Automated “red flag” indicators, which signal risk factors such as single-bid tenders, direct awards, and frequent contract modifications, were presented as valuable tools for early detection and prevention of corruption. The integration of complaint mechanisms and independent oversight bodies further supports accountability and helps safeguard the procurement process.

Internal audit and compliance functions were discussed as essential components of risk management. Effective auditors were described as collaborators who work with procurement teams to improve processes and mitigate risks, rather than simply acting as enforcers. The integration of national databases and automated compliance checks can help identify vulnerabilities such as shell companies and conflicts of interest.

AI is increasingly being piloted to automate and enhance procurement processes, from bid evaluation to contract implementation and fraud detection. While technology can reduce human intervention—a common source of error and corruption—the panel cautioned against over-reliance on AI. Ongoing human oversight, training, and certification of procurement officials remain crucial to ensure integrity and case-sensitive decision-making.

Measuring success in anticorruption efforts was acknowledged as challenging. The panel advocated for outcome-focused metrics, such as reductions in red flags, lower prices, increased market participation, and greater public trust, rather than simply counting reports or investigations. Citizen-led monitoring initiatives and civic engagement were cited as important for holding authorities accountable and fostering constructive dialogue.



Best practices for transparency include publishing timely, accessible procurement data, integrating red flag systems, and ensuring that transparency leads to meaningful action. Legislative reforms, stakeholder engagement, and open contracting standards were identified as critical for systemic change. The panel concluded that while digital tools and AI are powerful, the ultimate success in combating corruption depends on skilled professionals, engaged citizens, and committed leadership working together to build transparent and resilient procurement systems.

8. Accelerating International Cooperation and Asset Recovery

SPEAKERS:

Oscar Solorzano, Attorney, Head of Latin America, Basel Institute on Governance International Center for Asset Recovery (ICAR)

Michael Petkov, Deputy Head, International Anticorruption Coordination Centre (IACCC)

Alina Zhovnytska, Prosecutor, Ukrainian Specialized Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office

Gilbert Phiri, Director of Zambian Public Prosecutions

Yara Esquivel, World Bank Group Senior Financial Sector Specialist, Financial Integrity Unit

The panel brought together leading practitioners and policymakers to discuss the evolving landscape of international cooperation in asset recovery.

Panelists highlighted the growing effectiveness of multi-agency and multinational operational models, such as those employed by the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR), ICAR, and the IACCC. These organizations support countries through intelligence sharing, case mentorship, and joint investigations, enabling faster and more coordinated responses to asset recovery challenges. The discussion emphasized the importance of both formal and informal exchanges and sustained operational support, which help convert intelligence into actionable evidence and facilitate case-specific training.

Legal complexities were a central theme, particularly the enforcement of non-conviction-based confiscation across jurisdictions. Speakers shared experiences with legislative reforms, compatibility studies, and the use of human rights frameworks to overcome barriers. Country case studies illustrated practical solutions: Ukraine's success with joint investigation teams to recover assets abroad, Zambia's interagency coordination framework leading to the return and productive use of recovered assets, and Switzerland's evolving legal approach to non-conviction-based confiscation.

Trust-building among practitioners and continuity in cooperation, even amid institutional changes, were identified as critical factors for success. The panel also addressed audience questions on continuity, fairness, civil asset recovery, sharing costs of investigations and forfeitures, and the challenges of targeting current officials, underscoring the need for legal innovation and capacity building.



Overall, the session underscored that sustained partnerships, adaptive legal frameworks, and investment in practitioner capacity are essential to overcoming obstacles in asset recovery and ensuring that returned assets contribute meaningfully to development goals.

9. Gender and Inclusive Approaches to Anticorruption

SPEAKERS:

Irais Barreto, Director, Secretaria de Anticorrupción y Buen Gobierno, México

Monica Kirya, Deputy Director, U4-Anticorruption Center, Chr. Michelsen Institute

Mariam Galstyan, Acting Chair, Corruption Prevention Commission of Armenia

Ana Maria Munoz Boudet, World Bank Group Lead Economist, Gender Team

This session explored the complex intersections between gender, inclusion, and anticorruption, drawing on research, policy experience, and practical innovations from diverse country contexts. Panelists emphasized that the relationship between gender and corruption is nuanced: while early studies suggested that higher female representation in government correlates with lower corruption, subsequent research has shown that institutional context, regime type, and prevailing gender norms are critical mediators. In democratic settings with strong institutions and inclusive policies, women's participation can disrupt entrenched networks and foster integrity, but in more autocratic or corrupt environments, the effect is less pronounced.

The discussion highlighted that women are not only involved differently in corruption but are also affected differently, often facing greater barriers to power and harsher consequences when implicated. Corruption can be a vehicle for discrimination, with women and other marginalized groups disproportionately exposed to practices such as sextortion and exclusion from decision-making. Panelists stressed the need for more gender-sensitive data collection, including disaggregation by gender, age, disability, and geography, as well as qualitative research to capture the lived experiences of those most affected.

Innovative policy measures were shared, such as integrity checks for public officials, gender quotas in political party financing, and targeted training programs for women in government. These approaches aim to both prevent corruption and promote women's leadership, with a focus on changing norms and building capacity from the local to the national level. The importance of working with civil society, education systems, and ministries focused on women's affairs was underscored as key to sustaining progress.



Audience questions and comments reinforced the urgency of addressing sexual corruption, improving data collection, and ensuring that gender is central and not peripheral to anticorruption strategies. The panel called for greater male engagement, cross-sectoral collaboration, and mainstreaming gender considerations into governance and anticorruption agendas. Ultimately, the session concluded that building inclusive institutions and enabling environments is essential for effective anticorruption, and that gender-sensitive approaches must be integrated into both policy and practice.



10. Partnering with Civil Society Organizations to Enhance Governance and Combat Corruption

SPEAKERS:

Tetiana Khutor, Chairwoman, Ukrainian Institute of Legislative Ideas

Lora Georgieva Mateeva, Senior Legal Expert and Legal Program Coordinator, Bulgarian Anticorruption Foundation

Daniëlle Goudriaan, Partner, Ivy Corporate Defense & Investigations

Polina Lysenko, Deputy Director, Ukrainian National Anti-Corruption Bureau

Marek Svoboda, Director of Programs, The Central and Eastern European Law Initiative Institute

Drago Kos, Chair, Istanbul Anticorruption Action Plan, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

The panel explored the evolving and multifaceted role of CSOs in enhancing governance and combating corruption, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. Civil society was portrayed as an indispensable partner to law enforcement and government agencies, not only in monitoring and reporting corruption but also in shaping policy, advocating for institutional integrity, and educating future generations.



The discussion highlighted how CSOs have become deeply embedded in anticorruption infrastructure, especially in Ukraine, where they participate in oversight commissions, selection processes for law enforcement agencies, and disciplinary reviews. Their analytical work often provides the basis for investigations, and their advocacy helps protect the existence and independence of anticorruption institutions during times of political instability or external threats. This partnership is characterized by open dialogue, mutual criticism, and a shared commitment to improving practices and outcomes.

For example, the panel noted how CSOs have played a crucial role in exposing high-level corruption within judicial networks, conducting detailed investigations, and providing evidence to authorities. However, their efforts are frequently stymied by a lack of prosecutorial will and institutional resistance, underscoring the limits of civil society's influence when political will is absent.

Capacity building emerged as a recurring theme, with recognition that CSOs vary in professionalism and resources. Some are highly skilled and influential, able to engage effectively with international organizations and governments, while others require further development to ensure their contributions are credible and actionable. Training, joint activities, and digitalization—such as electronic case management systems and secure communication channels—were identified as important tools for improving coordination, transparency, and public engagement.

The panel emphasized the importance of trust and mutual understanding between CSOs and state actors. Joint training sessions and collaborative projects help bridge gaps in knowledge and expectations, making civil society's work more relevant and useful for enforcement agencies. Both sides share the ultimate goal of detecting, investigating, and prosecuting corruption, and recognizing this common purpose is key to successful partnerships.

Despite the challenges, the narrative was one of cautious optimism. Civil society's engagement is high, and its contributions are increasingly recognized by international partners. However, the impact of CSOs depends on institutional openness, political will, and ongoing capacity development. Digitalization and constructive dialogue offer promising avenues for strengthening these partnerships. Ultimately, the panel concluded that solutions to governance and corruption are within reach if institutions are willing to listen and engage with civil society as true partners.

11. Investigative Journalism: Identifying Clean Promises and Dirty Links in Big Investments

SPEAKERS:

Thomas Bart, Freelance Journalist

Bruna Bronoski, Freelance Journalist

Gustavo Faleiros, Environmental Investigations Editor, Pulitzer Centre

Anna Koens, Impact and Outreach Manager for Earth Investigations, Journalism Fund Europe

Alan Bacarese, World Bank Director, INT



This interactive session highlighted the critical role of investigative journalism in uncovering corruption and environmental risks within major investment projects, particularly those linked to climate finance and large-scale infrastructure. The panel brought together journalists and editors with experience in cross-border investigations, focusing on two case studies: an oil pipeline project in Uganda and the use of “green bonds” for agribusiness expansion in Brazil.

Participants were invited to step into the shoes of investigative journalists, working in teams to simulate the process of identifying key actors, gathering evidence, and tracing financial and environmental impacts. The exercise underscored the complexity and time-intensive nature of such investigations, which often require collaboration across disciplines and geographies, as well as the use of open-source intelligence, financial data analysis, supply chain mapping, and engagement with local communities and experts.

The Uganda case illustrated how infrastructure megaprojects can threaten ecosystems and communities, and how opaque networks of subcontractors and shell companies can obscure accountability and facilitate corruption. The Brazil case demonstrated the challenges of tracking financial flows behind “green” investments, revealing how sustainability claims may mask deforestation and land grabs affecting indigenous territories. Both investigations relied on triangulating public records, financial disclosures, environmental data, and input from NGOs and local stakeholders to build a comprehensive picture.

Panelists emphasized that investigative journalism not only produces high-quality, actionable complaints for enforcement agencies, but also plays a vital role in informing the public and driving policy change. However, they noted that such work is increasingly difficult due to resource constraints in media organizations, the need for specialized skills, and the risks faced by journalists. The session concluded with a call for stronger partnerships between journalists, civil society, and institutions like the World Bank, as well as greater support for transparency, data access, and protection for those who expose wrongdoing.

12. Corruption in Fragility, Conflict, and Violence-Affected Contexts

SPEAKERS:

Chiara Bronchi, World Bank Group Practice Manager, Institutions Global Department

Vira Mykhailenko, Chief Judge, High Anticorruption Court, Ukraine

Francesca Recanatini, World Bank Group Lead Governance Specialist, Institutions Global Department

Alexandra Zoe, Anticorruption Commission, Liberia

Jim Anderson, World Bank Group Lead Governance Specialist

This panel brought together experts and practitioners to discuss the complex relationship between corruption, conflict, and governance, with a particular focus on fragile and conflict-affected settings. The session began with an overview of the global landscape, highlighting alarming trends: poverty is



increasingly concentrated in fragile states, violent conflicts are on the rise, and forced displacement has reached unprecedented levels. Data presented underscored the strong link between corruption and fragility, showing that corruption not only fuels conflict by sustaining war economies and weakening institutions, but also undermines efforts at peace building and reconstruction.

Panelists shared experiences from three diverse country contexts—Ukraine, Liberia, and Papua New Guinea—each facing unique challenges. In Ukraine, the ongoing war has tested not only the resilience of the military but also the strength of institutions. Despite the invasion, anticorruption reforms have accelerated, with judicial institutions continuing to function and public trust in governance growing. The Ukrainian experience demonstrates that maintaining accountability and the rule of law during conflict is essential for both national security and future reconstruction.

Liberia's journey from civil war to peace building illustrated the difficulties of prioritizing anticorruption in post-conflict environments. Initial efforts were driven by donor agencies, which imposed governance frameworks to safeguard resources. Over time, Liberia established its own anticorruption commission and enacted reforms to rebuild citizen trust. However, challenges persist, including limited resources, political interference, and a culture of impunity. The panel emphasized the importance of broad stakeholder engagement—including civil society and the media—in sustaining progress.

Papua New Guinea's context is marked by internal resource-driven conflicts and complex tribal dynamics. Corruption has contributed to unequal wealth distribution and fueled grievances, sometimes leading to violence. Recent efforts have focused on institutional strengthening, joint leadership, and public engagement, with a particular emphasis on education to instill values of integrity in future generations. The panel noted that building trust requires inclusive approaches and that local ownership of reforms is critical.

A cross-cutting theme was the cyclical nature of corruption and conflict: each perpetuates the other, making it difficult to break the cycle. The panelists and moderator stressed that rebuilding after conflict should not mean restoring the status quo, but rather reimagining institutions and resource allocation to prevent relapse into violence. Data and evidence-based policymaking were highlighted as essential, but capacity gaps in data interpretation remain a challenge.



In closing, the discussion underscored that effective anticorruption strategies in fragile contexts require context-specific approaches, strong institutions, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to transparency and accountability. Building sustainable peace and development depends on breaking the cycle of corruption and conflict, investing in institutional resilience, and fostering public trust.



13. Partnering to Address Demand-Side Bribery, an MDB Perspective

SPEAKERS:

Mouhamadou Diagne, World Bank Group Vice President, INT

Paula Da Costa, Director, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Office, AfDB

John Versantvoort, Head, Office of Anticorruption and Integrity, Asian Development Bank

Michael Bushell, Head, Investigations Division, European Investment Bank

Matthew Fowler, Chief, Office of Institutional Integrity, Inter-American Development Bank

MDBs face complex challenges in addressing demand side bribery, particularly when it involves public officials. Their investigative and sanctioning mechanisms are well-developed for private sector entities, but do not extend to public officials acting in their official capacity. This limitation stems from the unique relationship MDBs have with their client countries, which are also their shareholders. In addition to practical limitations to MDB jurisdiction over member governments, directly investigating public officials could also undermine trust and cooperation, and risk accusations of overreach, potentially jeopardizing the development objectives these institutions seek to achieve.



Despite these constraints, MDBs do not ignore the problem of demand side corruption. Instead, they rely on a set of indirect tools to address situations where public officials may be implicated. These tools include suspending or cancelling financing, increasing project oversight, and raising concerns with governments when suspicions arise. While MDBs may uncover evidence of public officials' involvement during investigations into private entities, they generally refrain from formally investigating or sanctioning public officials unless those individuals are involved in a private capacity, such as being shareholders in a company.

Support for companies facing demands for bribes is available, but such companies are often hesitant to approach MDBs due to concerns about damaging their relationships with government counterparts. Typically, companies only seek assistance in extreme circumstances, when other options have been exhausted.

A key strategy for MDBs in tackling demand side bribery is the referral of cases to national authorities. When investigations reveal potential violations of national law, MDBs often notify the relevant authorities in the hope that appropriate investigative steps will follow. The effectiveness of these referrals varies widely. In some instances, national authorities respond and take action, while in others, referrals are met with inaction, often due to a lack of political will or challenging political contexts. To improve outcomes, MDBs are increasingly adopting risk-based approaches to referrals, focusing on the most egregious cases and implementing structured follow-up processes to ensure that referrals are not simply ignored.

MDBs also leverage the findings from their investigations to inform integrity risk management and prevention efforts. Proactive integrity reviews are conducted during project implementation to identify vulnerabilities and recommend improvements. There is a growing emphasis on using investigative findings more systematically and in a targeted manner, such as through thematic reviews and risk scoring tools, to concentrate resources on areas of highest risk.

Within some MDBs, decisions to refer cases to national authorities are made independently by the integrity and anticorruption departments, without involvement from boards or management. While executive directors are kept informed for communication purposes, they do not participate in the decision-making process, preserving the independence of these functions.

In designing systems and metrics, MDBs are increasingly focused on creating environments where acting with integrity is easier than engaging in corruption. This involves reinforcing positive behaviors and making corrupt arrangements more difficult to execute, thereby shifting incentives toward ethical conduct.

Overall, MDBs must maintain a delicate balance between promoting integrity and respecting the sovereignty of their client countries. While their ability to take direct action against public officials is limited, they employ a range of indirect tools, referrals, and preventive measures to address demand side bribery and strengthen integrity in development projects. Continued innovation, collaboration, and risk-based approaches are essential to maximizing impact in the ongoing fight against corruption.



14. Private Sector Initiatives for a Clean Business Environment

SPEAKERS:

Gabriela Ocampo, Manager, Governance and Anticorruption, United Nations Global Compact

Vanessa Hans, Head, Private Sector, Basel Institute on Governance

Soji Apampa, Co-Founder/Chief Executive Officer, The Convention on Business Integrity, Nigeria

Phrommet Bencharongkit, Project Director, Thai Private Sector Collective Action Against Corruption

Prince Nwankwo, Counsel, World Bank Group Integrity Compliance Specialist, INT

The session explored how private sector initiatives can promote transparency, accountability, and combat corruption, with a particular emphasis on the concept of collective action. Collective action, originally coined by the World Bank in 2008, refers to multi-stakeholder approaches where businesses join forces with other actors, such as government, civil society, and international organizations, to address corruption and foster integrity. Over time, the concept has evolved to encompass a range of activities, but its core elements remain: active private sector involvement, a focus on solving corruption issues, and the development of joint standards for business integrity. Importantly, collective action is voluntary, going beyond regulatory requirements to create solutions tailored to specific sectors, regions, or countries.

Three main categories of collective action initiatives were highlighted: engagement-focused efforts that build trust and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders; standard-setting initiatives where industries or sectors develop codes and guidelines; and assurance mechanisms, such as external certification or independent monitoring, which provide credibility and accountability.

Examples from around the world illustrated how collective action can be adapted to local contexts. In Thailand, the Thai Private Sector Collective Action Against Corruption (CAC) was established to create a transparent business ecosystem and promote anticorruption compliance programs. The CAC developed standards based on global frameworks like the OECD guidelines and ISO 37001, but localized them to be practical for both large companies and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Over time, the CAC has worked closely with government agencies, culminating in the inclusion of its standards in public procurement regulations and the development of joint strategic roadmaps. Incentives such as tax deductions and preferential loan rates for certified companies have been introduced to encourage participation, and mechanisms for whistleblowing and knowledge-sharing have been strengthened.

In Nigeria, the Convention on Business Integrity began with the principle that “integrity pays,” aiming to demonstrate tangible benefits such as better access to markets, finance, and technology for companies that adopt ethical practices. Initially, the initiative functioned as a club for credible companies, but scaling up required mainstreaming integrity standards. Collaborations with the stock exchange and regulatory bodies led to the development of a corporate governance rating system, which expanded the reach of integrity initiatives across the private sector. Another notable success



was the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network, which, through partnership with government agencies, dramatically reduced corruption-related costs and delays for shipping companies.

The panel emphasized that the sustainability of collective action initiatives depends on their ability to deliver clear, measurable benefits to participants. Tangible outcomes, such as cost savings, improved business opportunities, and enhanced reputation, are crucial for securing ongoing support from companies and stakeholders. For SMEs, participation can be challenging due to limited resources, time, and expertise. To address these barriers, initiatives have developed user-friendly solutions, such as online certification platforms, free e-learning, hands-on workshops, and financial support through partnerships with banks. These efforts help SMEs access the benefits of integrity programs without prohibitive costs.

The Bank's Integrity Compliance Office also contributes to collective action by facilitating mentoring programs, knowledge-sharing platforms, and self-assessment tools for companies seeking to improve their compliance practices. These resources are designed to foster peer learning and capacity development, making it easier for companies to identify and address integrity risks.

Throughout the discussion, the importance of incentives was repeatedly highlighted. While some countries offer concrete incentives like tax breaks or preferential loans, others rely on market-driven incentives, such as access to supply chains or public recognition for ethical companies. The panel noted that incentives tied directly to business operations are more effective than speculative benefits, such as leniency in enforcement actions.

Finally, the panel addressed the role of assurance mechanisms, such as independent monitors, in collective action. While these can enhance credibility, their cost can be prohibitive, especially for smaller companies. The discussion suggested that more affordable and accessible models—potentially involving civil society or government agencies—could be explored to broaden participation.

In summary, the panel underscored that collective action is a dynamic, multi-stakeholder approach that adapts to local needs and delivers tangible benefits. Its success depends on trust, collaboration, and the ability to demonstrate real value to businesses. By leveraging incentives, fostering peer learning, and tailoring solutions to different contexts, collective action initiatives can play a vital role in promoting integrity and reducing corruption in the private sector.

15. Selling Secrecy — Tackling the Infrastructure that Enables Corruption

SPEAKERS:

Jean Phillip-Priminta, Director General, Financial Intelligence Authority of Malawi

Maira Martini, Chief Executive Officer, TI

Bruce Searby, Partner, Searby PLLC

Brooke Harrington, Professor of Economic Sociology, Dartmouth College



Ashish Kumar, Senior Policy Analyst & Advisor, Financial Task Force Secretariat
Elizabeth David-Barrett, Professor of Governance and Integrity, Board Member of TI
Harald Mathisen, The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

This panel delved into the persistent challenge of professional enablers and the systems that facilitate the concealment of illicit assets and the evasion of laws. Despite decades of progress in anticorruption reforms, strengthening institutions, legal frameworks, and norms, the infrastructure that enables secrecy remains a stubborn obstacle, undermining both economic development and good governance.

The discussion began by framing offshore finance not merely as a tax haven issue, but as a broader system of law evasion. Ultra-wealthy individuals and politically exposed persons use offshore structures and professional enablers (lawyers, accountants, wealth managers) to hide assets, launder money, and circumvent regulations. The secrecy these systems provide enables activities ranging from stashing bribes and violating campaign finance laws to sidestepping environmental protections. The consequences are profound: billions in lost tax revenue, hollowed-out democracies, and deepening global inequality. Leaks such as the Panama, Paradise, and Pandora Papers have exposed the scale of these practices, but accountability remains elusive, as enablers are skilled at operating within the letter of the law while violating its spirit.

TI's research into African corruption cases highlighted the transnational nature of asset concealment. Corrupt funds are often moved through multiple jurisdictions, facilitated by enablers whose services frequently fall outside the country where the corruption occurred. The analysis revealed that the same types of services, company formation, real estate transactions, asset management, are provided by a range of professions, and that regulatory loopholes are routinely exploited. Major economies have yet to fully implement anti-money laundering obligations for non-financial professions, and resistance from professional bodies, such as legal associations, further impedes progress.

FATF's approach was discussed, emphasizing activity-based regulation for designated non-financial businesses and professions. While standards exist, global compliance and effectiveness remain low. Many countries lack a clear understanding of the risks, have insufficient preventive measures, and weak supervision. FATF is now moving towards more targeted, risk-based evaluations and country-specific recommendations, aiming to spotlight high-risk professions and ensure more effective follow-up.

A case study from Malawi illustrated both the challenges and the potential for progress. High-risk sectors, lawyers, real estate agents, and dealers in precious stones, have traditionally been difficult to regulate, especially in cash-based economies with large informal sectors. Collaboration between regulatory authorities and professional bodies has helped improve compliance, with measures such as mandatory anti-money laundering training, joint inspections, and changes to codes of ethics and legislation. Overcoming resistance, particularly regarding confidentiality and privilege, has required nuanced reforms to ensure that legal privilege does not shield criminal activity.



Academic research into the legal profession's role in enabling kleptocracy revealed a spectrum of attitudes, from gatekeeping to neutral technical service. The debate centers on whether lawyers should prioritize client interests or public duty, and how to balance individual accountability with collective responsibility. The lack of clear guidance and regulation allows for selective interpretation and potential abuse, especially in environments where state capture or weak law enforcement means criminal activity is rarely prosecuted.

From a prosecutorial perspective, successful enforcement against enablers requires robust evidence and overcoming barriers such as attorney-client privilege. Prosecution, civil asset forfeiture, and professional discipline are key tools, but the high evidentiary standards and technical complexity of cases make accountability difficult. The panel noted that while legal privilege is important for genuine legal advice and defense, it should not extend to services that facilitate criminal activity or law evasion.

Audience questions explored the challenges of regulating enablers, the role of other professions like accountants, and the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches. Examples were given of effective business-led anticorruption advocacy and international cooperation centers that facilitate intelligence sharing across jurisdictions. The panel emphasized that changing incentives for enablers, improving enforcement, and closing regulatory loopholes are essential for tackling the infrastructure of secrecy that enables corruption.

In summary, the panel called for stronger regulation, supervision, and enforcement against professional enablers, greater international cooperation, and a shift in incentives to ensure that expertise is not used to undermine the law. Addressing these challenges is critical to advancing anticorruption efforts and restoring public trust in institutions.



World Cafés



World Cafés—small, highly interactive roundtables—enabled an informal, participant-led exchange across government, development institutions, civil society, private sector, academia, and World Bank Group staff. The setup was intentionally simple: multiple tables running in parallel on distinct topics and a topic lead at each table. Participants rotated, building cumulative insight and cross-pollinating ideas with the aim not just to share knowledge but to produce concrete takeaways that can scale—policy ideas, AI, data or tooling needs, collaboration proposals, or next step commitments.

World Cafés complemented the plenaries and breakout sessions by focusing on urgent, practice-oriented anticorruption topics that benefit from multistakeholder engagement—such as BOT, integrity in procurement and contract management, tackling illicit financial flows (IFFs), and the use of data and technology (including AI) for prevention, detection, and enforcement. Structured to encourage collaborative problem-solving and new ideas, the World Café sessions embodied the Forum’s theme of collective action and innovation and emerged as participant favorites, setting a strong example for future Forum editions.

1. Managing Seized and Confiscated Assets: A Guide for Practitioners

Session Lead: Lisa Bostwick (STAR/World Bank Group and UN Office on Drugs and Crime)



Summary: The session underscored that freezing and confiscation are only half the battle—without sound pre-seizure planning and value preserving management, society loses twice. The new [Guide](#)¹ distills international practice on lifecycle asset management, from custody to disposal, including how to grow capacity to manage complex assets. Discussion focused on practical governance, market-aware disposal, and safeguards to prevent deterioration, drawing on cross-jurisdictional lessons and expert interviews to strengthen results on asset recovery.

2. Taxing Crime: A Whole-of-Government Approach to Fighting Corruption, Money Laundering, and Tax Crimes

Session Lead: Yara Esquivel (World Bank Group)

Summary: Participants examined how coordinated action among tax administrations, Fiscal Intelligence Units, and law enforcement can better detect and recover proceeds of tax evasion, corruption, and money laundering. The session stressed the developmental stakes—lost revenues, inequity, and eroded trust—and showed how shared data, joint operations, and legal gateways raise hit rates across interconnected crimes. The “whole-of-government” model advances the Forum’s partnership and transnational dimensions by aligning mandates to deliver measurable deterrence and recovery.

3. Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWOs): Toward a New Frontier in Asset Recovery

Session Lead: Jean Pierre Brun (Finance, Competitiveness & Innovation Global Practice/World Bank Group)

Summary: This discussion mapped how different jurisdictions deploy [UWOs](#)² to compel suspicious asset-holders to explain their wealth, positioning UWOs among the broader toolkit. It highlighted prerequisites—legal thresholds, due process, and institutional readiness—and when UWOs are most impactful. The takeaway: integrate UWO mechanisms within a comprehensive policy framework tailored to national contexts. This aligns with the forum’s capabilities and delivery focus by clarifying fit-for-purpose legislative options for asset recovery.

4. Non-Conviction Based Confiscation (NCBC)

Session leads: Oscar Solórzano (Basel Institute/ICAR)

Summary: ICAR shared practical experience using NCBC to target illicit assets when criminal convictions are not feasible, emphasizing case strategy and cross-border judicial

¹ <https://star.worldbank.org/publications/managing-seized-and-confiscated-assets-guide-practitioners>

² <https://star.worldbank.org/publications/unexplained-wealth-orders-toward-new-frontier-asset-recovery>



cooperation. Success factors included evidence standards, rapid mutual legal assistance, and asset tracing tactics; challenges centered on capacity, timelines, and political economy. The session advances the Forum's transnational and partnership pillars by showing how NCBC can unlock results in complex corruption cases through sustained international collaboration.

5. Integrity Compliance Knowledge Sharing Platform

Session Leads: Jihoon Cho, Joseph Mauro, New Doe Kaledzi (INT/World Bank Group)

Summary: INT presented a publicly [accessible platform](https://www.integritycomplianceknowledgehub.org/)³ for small and medium enterprises, project implementation units and government agencies to strengthen integrity compliance. The platform aims to reduce fraud and corruption risks in World Bank Group-financed operations by standardizing risk assessments and practical guidance. Discussion focused on usability for smaller firms and integration into project lifecycles. This supports the Forum's delivery and capability pillars by providing access to integrity compliance resources and network.

6. Emerging Technologies Combatting Corruption

Session leads: Cheri-Leigh Erasmus, Shally Baloch (Accountability Lab)

Summary: The Lab showcased four civic tech tools from Latin America and Asia that strengthen transparency and citizen engagement, illustrating replicable design features and implementation pathways. Participants discussed scaling, localization, and partnerships with government reformers. The session amplifies the Forum's innovation and partnership agenda by connecting grassroots tech innovators with practitioners seeking adaptable, community-driven solutions.

7. Haystack: Responsible AI Leadership Consortium

Session Leads: Hari Mulukutla (Responsible AI Leadership Consortium); Ramakrishna Evani (8th Element)

Summary: Haystack proposed a framework for domain-tuned, low-latency Large Language Models to help ministries, Financial Intelligence Units, and oversight bodies analyze large datasets, triage Suspicious Activity Reports, and detect patterns of fraud and corruption. The concept hinges on integrating institutional knowledge with global data sources, deployed within government clouds for secure, on-demand insights. The approach advances the Forum's technology and delivery pillars, contingent on responsible AI governance, data access, and cross-agency adoption.

³ <https://www.integritycomplianceknowledgehub.org/>



8. INT AI Agent and Agentic Framework

Session leads: Krishna Kesari, Pooja Chandrasekara (INT Data Lab/World Bank Group)

Summary: INT's Data Lab introduced innovative AI agents to streamline document analysis, translation, and drafting using INT specific documentation, with human-in-the-loop oversight. The framework emphasizes quality, consistency, and governance to ensure trustworthy outputs. Discussion examined scale-up, safeguards, and potential extensions. This is a concrete example of the Forum's innovation-for-delivery theme, showing how institutional AI can raise productivity while preserving integrity.

9. BridgeGap: Bridging Gaps in Evidence, Regulation and Impact of Anticorruption Policies

Session Leads: Francesco Mureddu (The Lisbon Council)

Summary: BridgeGap presented an EU-funded interdisciplinary effort providing datasets, tools, training, and policy advice to address state capture, IFFs, and integrity gaps. The "Follow-the-Money" search engine, powered by 336 data sources covering 92 million companies and 86 million individuals, underpins cross-border investigations and risk analytics. The session reflects the Forum's transnational and capability pillars by translating research into actionable tools for practitioners.

10. Governance & Integrity Anti-Corruption Evidence (GI ACE) Research Programme

Session Leads: Elizabeth David Barrett, Mihaly Fazekas, David Szakonyi (University of Sussex/GI ACE)

Summary: GI ACE shared insights from 34 projects spanning illicit flows, procurement risks, state capture, and integrity systems, emphasizing coproduction with practitioners to ensure uptake. The discussion highlighted how context sensitive evidence can sharpen reform design and political feasibility. This advances the Forum's capabilities and delivery pillars by aligning rigorous research with real world decision points.

11. U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre

Session Leads: Rosa Revilla (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center)

Summary: U4 presented selected workstreams and resources developed with global research networks, highlighting practitioner-oriented outputs. Participants discussed applying this knowledge to live portfolios and policy dialogues. The session supports the Forum's partnership and capability pillars by connecting donors and implementers to independent, field-tested insights.



12. Industry Alliances to Tackle Corruption

Session Leads: Mark Robinson, EITI; Olusoji Apampa (Convention on Business Integrity/Maritime Anti-Corruption Network Partner, Nigeria)

Summary: This conversation showed how sector alliances set transparency norms, reduce bribery risks, and improve integrity outcomes through shared standards and monitoring. Cases from extractives and maritime illustrated how multi-stakeholder governance and local coalitions drive behavior change. It embodies the Forum's partnerships and delivery pillars by leveraging collective action to shift incentives across entire value chains.

13. International Organizations: Partners in Fighting Corruption

Session leads: Steve Zimmermann, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, UN Children's Fund; Martha Monterrosa, OECD; Marco Cerletti, Inter-American Development Bank

Summary: The session mapped investigative functions across MDBs and UN entities and introduced law enforcement networks hosted by international organizations. It emphasized practical pathways for national authorities to initiate cooperation. This aligns with the Forum's partnership pillar, emphasizing interaction and informal connections.

14. Role of Civil Society in Supporting Law Enforcement

Session Leads: Kush Amin, Adam Foldes (TI)

Summary: TI described working with journalists and civil society partners to help transform their findings into investigations, navigating legal avenues across jurisdictions when authorities are unable or unwilling to act. Discussion covered risk management, evidentiary standards, and victim remedies. The session advances the Forum's partnerships and delivery focus by operationalizing civil society-law enforcement collaboration in complex cross-border cases.

15. Youth Innovations Pitch Workshop

Session Leads: Khadijah Chang (Accountability Lab) with student innovators (Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and American University School of International Service)

Summary: Young professionals pitched solutions in two tracks: creative anticorruption approaches and the skills ecosystems youth need to lead reforms. Audience feedback is going to inform how Accountability Lab and OGP support youth leadership. This contributes to the Forum's capability and partnership pillars by cultivating a pipeline of innovators and embedding their voices in reform agendas.



16. Proactive Investigations

Session leads: Bert Denolf, David Hawkes (INT/World Bank Group)

Summary: INT outlined the rationale and methodologies for proactive investigations, including analytics led targeting, red flags, and sectoral risk scans to surface misconduct earlier. Participants discussed balancing resources, prioritization, and safeguards. This strengthens the Forum’s delivery pillar by emphasizing prevention and early detection to protect development outcomes.

17. U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO): Resources on Corruption and Fraud Risk Management

Session Lead: Irina Carnevale (GAO)

Summary: GAO presented its legally mandated Fraud Risk Framework and online Antifraud Resource, offering federal managers structured practices, case libraries, and standards to mitigate corruption and fraud. The session explored adaptation to development programs. It supports the Forum’s capabilities pillar through standards-based, replicable risk management.

18. OECD Anti-Corruption Task Team (ACTT): Corruption Risk Management in Practice

Session Lead: Catherine Anderson (OECD/ACTT)

Summary: The exchange focused on “informed risk-based approach” to management of corruption risks, from design to implementation, and on reconciling zero-tolerance principles with delivery. It provided practical guidance on effective strategies for managing corruption risks while maximizing development impacts, one of the key topics of the Forum.

19. Establishing the International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC)

Session Leads: Rebecca Shoot (Citizens for Global Solutions); Carly Kabot (Georgetown University)

Summary: The session made the case for an IACC to prosecute high-level corruption when domestic systems fail, focusing on treaty design, coalition building, and asset recovery. Debate centered on complementarity with national jurisdictions and feasibility. This speaks to the Forum’s transnational and partnership pillars by proposing an institutional architecture for accountability across borders.



20. Red Flags in Public Procurement: Use Cases for Open Contracting Data in Government and Civil Society

Session Lead: Georg Neumann (Open Contracting Partnership)

Summary: Corruption risk indicators can help governments prevent corruption in public spending before it occurs. In this session, Open Contracting Partnership (OCP) introduced how to use public procurement data to calculate corruption risk indicators, explored what data is most useful to calculate red flags and provided a step-by-step guide on implementing them in practice. The session leader shared examples from the open contracting community, facilitating Forum's focus on exchange of best practices.

21. Transparency in Sustainable Infrastructure Procurement

Session Leads: John Hawkins, Evelyn Hernandez (Infrastructure Transparency Initiative)

Summary: Infrastructure Transparency Initiative presented findings on what stakeholders need to evaluate sustainable infrastructure procurement, introducing new OC4IDS data points across economic/financial, environmental/climate, institutional, and social modules. The conversation focused on providing publishers and data users a flexible tool to assess sustainable infrastructure.

22. Connecting Procurement and Beneficial Ownership Data

Session Leads: Paul Maassen (Open Government Partnership); Kathryn Frauscher (Open Contracting Partnership); Thom Townsend (Open Ownership)

Summary: These three organizations have consistently urged reformers to connect the dots between procurement and beneficial ownership data, to achieve anticorruption objectives as well as to help deliver on other objectives such as economic inclusion. This session spotlighted examples from and highlighted the key factors of success including building a multistakeholder team and focusing on goals and digital solutions driven by standardized open data (such as the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard and the Open Contracting Data Standard). This session encouraged participants to be strategic and prioritize data interoperability and interconnectedness.

23. INT Climate Working Group

Session Leads: Vedran Aladrovic, Wolfgang Koehling (INT/World Bank Group); Doa Biddine, Valentine Farin (INT Fellows, Sciences Po-Graduate Students)

Summary: The Working Group shared progress on mapping climate related actions, building a typology of integrity risks in climate projects, examining carbon finance risks, and revisiting restitution within climate contexts. Discussion invited collaboration to refine tools



and governance. It aligns with the Forum's delivery and capability pillars by strengthening safeguards where volumes and urgency are rising.

24. Integrity in Climate Finance & Action — Knowledge Report

Session Leads: Alexandra Manea (Office of Suspension and Debarment/World Bank Group); Felipe Rocha dos Santos (Sanctions Board/World Bank Group)

Summary: Building on a multistakeholder symposium, the Knowledge Report outlines why tailored integrity mechanisms are needed in climate finance and how MDBs, donors, and corporations can coordinate to uphold accountability at speed and scale. It provides a roadmap for a high-integrity climate financing system and invites partnership for the next symposium. This bridges the forum's climate, partnership, and delivery pillars.

25. Budget Execution Controls and Corruption Perception

Session Leads: Prof. Mehmet Serkan Tosun (University of Nevada); Srinivas Gurazada, Victor Bonsu, Ashikur Rahman, Aminata Mansaray (Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability/World Bank Group); Zeynep Baykal (University of Maryland)

Summary: The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability program, used in over 156 countries, is the gold standard for assessing public financial management. It has become a global knowledge hub, with many assessments available on www.pefa.org. There is a strong correlation between effective budget execution and lower perceived corruption levels, highlighting the importance of robust budget mechanisms in reducing corruption risks. This session explored the relationship between government budgets and corruption perception, offering insights from both research and practitioners' experiences streamlining cross-sectoral collaboration.

26. Who Controls the Judiciary? The Role of the Justice System in Combatting Corruption.

Session leads: Erica Bosio, Virginia Upegui Caro (Global Program on Justice and Rule of Law/World Bank Group)

Summary: New comparative research on selection methods for highest courts (in 205 countries and territories) shows that involving at least two branches in appointments tends to yield better outcomes for judicial independence and rule of law. Discussion centered on implications for institutional design and anticorruption strategies. This supports the Forum's capability pillar and transnational perspective by providing evidence to guide reforms in core accountability institutions.



FINAL REMARKS BY
Managing Director and World Bank Group Chief
Administrative Officer Wencai Zhang



I want to extend my gratitude to each of you for your participation and invaluable contributions over the past two days. It has been an incredible honor to have such a diverse group of anticorruption stakeholders here at the World Bank Group for a rich exchange of ideas, experiences and strategies from various perspectives—an approach that is key to our collective fight against corruption.

As you well know, the World Bank Group takes its anticorruption efforts very seriously. It is imperative that funds earmarked to support the poorest and most vulnerable among us are used as intended, without interruption.

Over the years, we have worked to both mitigate and reduce integrity risks in the projects we finance in various ways. We use instruments and initiatives designed to fight systemic corruption and collaborate with both public and private sectors and civil society on prevention efforts, and have improved remedies to address wrongdoing when identified. We also work toward improving the behaviors, norms and standards needed to sustain anticorruption efforts.



But as we also know, corruption is a global problem that requires global solutions, a fact which underscores the importance of a forum such as this. This forum has allowed direct exchanges between anticorruption partners and practitioners, government leaders, academia, civil society, the private sector and other international organizations.

The convergence of diverse actors not only fosters collaboration and partnership, but it also amplifies the strength of collective efforts in combating corruption. It has created an environment where innovative solutions can be developed, and successful strategies can be shared, replicated and built upon across different regions, sectors, organizations and agencies.

Take AI for example. I want to emphasize the pivotal role that strategic collaborations in AI will increasingly play in enhancing our collective ability to manage integrity risks with precision, speed, and foresight.

By forging partnerships within the World Bank Group and with our external stakeholders alike, we will not only be scaling our efforts but also setting new benchmarks in risk management that will help safeguard project outcomes for our clients. These collaborations have the potential to empower us to leverage AI and other cutting-edge technologies to analyze and predict potential risks. It ensures that we uphold the highest standards of integrity, and, as a result, deliver improved outcomes for our clients and greater impact in our fight against corruption.

As the World Bank Group intensifies its focus on local job creation, private sector involvement becomes indispensable, making it more crucial than ever to forge partnerships—including partnerships between the public and private sectors—around initiatives that uphold compliance and high integrity standards. Creating cleaner business environments operating under common integrity standards helps countries attract investment, encouraging sustainable economic growth and ultimately leading to a stronger private sector and increased local job development—a crucial component to building a flourishing economy.

As we move forward, let us continue to support the resilience of countries by building strong institutions that underpin anticorruption action. Let us build on the momentum of the Forum to find new ways to work together—both informally and formally—to detect, deter and prevent corruption at every level.

And let us continue to strengthen the connections made during our time together to foster future collaborations. There is no doubt that these relationships are invaluable, and by continuing to work together, we can amplify our efforts and drive meaningful change.

I encourage each of you to stay engaged, with us and each other. Continue to share your experiences, knowledge and lessons learned and explore new avenues for partnership and cooperation. Together we can continue to make a significant impact in the fight against corruption, and pave the way for a brighter, more transparent future.

[Watch the replay](#)



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