

Media Update

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United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

New York, 9 December 2020

In recent years, anger and frustration have erupted at corrupt leaders and governments. In some countries, people have taken to the streets with demands for social justice and accountability.

Amidst these deep concerns, the COVID-19 crisis creates additional opportunities for corruption. Governments are spending rapidly to get economies back on track, provide emergency support and procure medical supplies. Oversight may be weaker. And the development of vaccines and treatments adds to the risk of bribery and profiteering.

Corruption drains resources from people who need them, undermines trust in institutions, exacerbates the vast inequalities exposed by the virus, and hinders a strong recovery. We cannot allow stimulus funds and vital emergency resources to be diverted.

Recovery from the pandemic must include measures to prevent and combat corruption and bribery. We need broad partnerships to strengthen oversight, accountability and transparency, building on the global anti-corruption tools provided by the United Nations Conventions against Corruption.

Action against corruption should be part of broader national and international reforms and initiatives to strengthen good governance, tackle illicit financial flows and tax havens, and return stolen assets, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. We must take the opportunity for ambitious reforms and

initiatives at the first-ever General Assembly special session against corruption next year.

On International Anti-Corruption Day, all of us – governments, businesses, civil society and all stakeholders – must resolve to work together to promote accountability and end corruption and bribery for a more just and equal world.

UNODC

Message by Executive Director (UNODC), Ms Ghada Waly

Message for International Anti-Corruption Day

9 December 2020

VIENNA, 9 December (UN Information Service) — The 2020 International Anti-Corruption Day comes as our world has been shattered by a global pandemic that continues to unfold.

The COVID-19 crisis threatens to push more than 100 million people into extreme poverty this year alone.

To save lives and livelihoods, governments are spending and fast-tracking economic stimulus packages. Corruption is targeting these emergency measures, weakening vital health and social systems, with lethal consequences.

People have lost jobs and social protection in the crisis, giving rise to dangerous frustrations and turmoil. In our time of greatest need, corruption is fuelling even greater instability.

Now more than ever, governments need to use the tools provided by the UN Convention against Corruption to further strengthen anti-corruption bodies, improve oversight over stimulus investments, and increase transparency and accountability.

As guardian of the Convention, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime has supported 179 countries to date to implement this global framework, and we are working with governments to promote anti-corruption action in the COVID response and recovery.

A world made poorer and more fragile by the pandemic cannot afford to let corruption compromise our efforts to build forward, or our hopes for a fairer future.

We need to stand up for justice, and stand united against corruption.

Countries of destination and origin need to work as partners, to deny safe haven to the corrupt, stop illicit financial flows and return stolen assets.

Together, we can unleash the power of diversity and inclusion by engaging all actors – women and youth, the private sector, civil society and academia – to protect our systems against corrupt networks and practices, and end impunity.

In advancing anti-corruption action, we can build more resilient societies, and get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

On this year's International Anti-Corruption Day, let us commit to recovering better by recovering with integrity.

UN Women

PRESS RELEASE

Ending gender-based violence crucial for peaceful and just society, say religious scholars

PESHAWAR: Religious leaders and scholars from different faith groups on Tuesday emphasized ending all forms of violence against women and girls terming it critical to building a peaceful society and maintaining and promoting interfaith harmony. They were invited for a dialogue by UN Women, Provincial Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and ERAW Alliance KP as part of commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV), a global campaign that runs from 25 November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women – to 10 December, the International

Human Rights Day. The event was attended by religious scholars, members of ERAW Alliance, UN officials and civil society.

Religious scholars discussed the issue of GBV in detail and jointly signed a declaration condemning gender-based violence and pledging to play their role in sensitizing communities in order to prevent and eliminate GBV. They observed that, women, being the most vulnerable segment of the society and deprived of their basic rights, were more prone to violence followed by transgender community. “There is a need to strengthen state-run social protection networks and ensure the provision of required support to the vulnerable groups,” the scholars underlined.

“For prevention of gender-based violence, the State has primary responsibility to protect its citizens and religious leaders have a strong potential to influence the lives and behaviour of those who follow their faith and share their beliefs,” stressed the participating scholars.

Zainab Qaisar Khan, Provincial Head UN Women KP, said that like other parts of the world, GBV was also rampant in Pakistani society. “It can happen anywhere, anytime and across all classes irrespective of education level and income status. It can happen against boys, men, elderly and transgender but mostly the target are women and girls,” she remarked, while adding that GBV included, but was not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence including rape and honour crimes.

Qamar Naseem, Co-Chair ERAW/G Alliance, threw some light on the role of religious leaders, while stating that religious leaders had great influence and could play a significant role in shaping the behaviours of local communities. He said, “It is essential to engage religious scholars from different faith groups, as a practical strategy, to raise awareness on gender-based violence and address the issue.”
