

Summary of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda

virtual consultation with experts on accountability, public reporting and anti-corruption measures

30 April 2020

On 30 April 2020, the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (FACTI Panel) consulted with experts on “accountability, public reporting and anti-corruption measures”. More than 95 people participated in the meeting, and about 15 speakers made statements. The speakers included academics, anti-corruption experts, representatives from governments and intergovernmental organizations, but also representatives from civil society and the private sector.

Opening

The meeting was co-chaired by **H.E Dr. Dalia Grybauskaitė**, former President of Lithuania and **H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki**, former Prime Minister of Niger and Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency. In her opening remarks, **Dr. Grybauskaitė** provided the participants with highlights of the Panel' substantive work since the launch, including the review of the background paper, the agreement on three clusters of work, the holding of virtual consultations with UN Member States as well as with civil society, and the intention to deliver the full interim report in September 2020.

She also introduced the purpose of the meeting that is to hear experts' views on key priority actions for the Panel to promote accountability and transparency and enhance the global fight against corruption as well as ideas for how the Panel can advance work in those areas. **Ms. Susan Rose-Ackerman**, coordinator of the FACTI Panel's cluster on accountability, public reporting and anti-corruption measures, indicated that the Panel wanted to know what are the most important actions needed in these areas to unlock financing for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, what is not working, and what more can be done at the international level.

Discussion

The consultation started with an initial round of interventions; the following experts made statements: Ms. Claudia Escobar (International Integrity Initiatives), Ms. Juanita Olaya (independent anti-corruption consultant) and Mr. Richard Messick (senior contributor to the Global Anti-corruption Blog). After these initial interventions, Dr. Grybauskaitė opened the floor to all other participants. In total, about fifteen experts from diverse backgrounds and locations were able to speak. Among the many inputs, the following priorities were raised by speakers.

General considerations about preventing and combatting corruption:

- Lack of independence in the judiciary can hinder prosecution of corruption and promote impunity, and the establishment of an international anti-corruption court was proposed as a solution;
- More cooperation is needed between law enforcement and anticorruption agencies;
- More prominence and rights could be given to victims of corruption (both individual and collective victims) including the right to compensation, and repairing the collective/social damage;
- Addressing the role of the private sector in facilitating corruption but also the role it can play in curbing it through enhanced compliance with standards and comprehensive preventative measures;
- Developing international minimum standards to protect whistleblowers and independent investigative journalists;

- Anti-corruption education can change mind sets, especially for youth and business communities;
- The Panel should consider strengthening the implementation of existing international anticorruption instruments and initiatives and not to duplicate, interfere with or undermine them.

On money-laundering:

- Need to remedy weaknesses in the financial system, including strengthening beneficial ownership registries and addressing secrecy jurisdictions;
- Address the challenges posed by trade-based money-laundering, including smuggling;
- The lack of sound assessment of risks on corruption-related money laundering, and the need for greater oversight of facilitators such as banks.

On foreign bribery and prosecution:

- Addressing recidivism and how to prevent companies becoming repeat offenders;
- Creation of standards for non-trial resolutions in foreign bribery cases to address the current fragmented landscape, which is source of legal uncertainty;
- Emphasis on how non-trial resolutions in foreign bribery can foster preventive measures;

On asset recovery and return:

- Remedying weaknesses in international cooperation to speed-up and facilitate the whole asset recovery process;
- Considering the management of frozen assets, given that banks which were facilitators often remain holders of assets that are frozen;
- Preventing misuse of returned assets and managing their ultimate disposal - different views were expressed: some felt property should be returned without conditionality; others suggested oversight mechanisms including the involvement of civil society to prevent misuse;

On additional transparency measures:

- Concerns about the opacity of international arbitration, which can lead to shadow and/or unfair agreements;
- The lack of transparency regarding of public procurement and the need to foster open data and civic monitoring of public procurements contracts;
- The suggestion to include minimum transparency standards as a conditionality to development lending by international development banks and agencies.

Closing

Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki thanked all speakers for their valuable inputs and then invited all participants to engage in the Panel's future activities highlighting that their participation will help the Panel present proposals that would enable the global economic and financial systems to work better for everyone and everywhere. He concluded the consultation by wishing participants and their beloved continued health.