

## **Welcome by Mr. Andrea Orlando, Italian Minister of Justice and Chair of the OECD Anti-Bribery Ministerial Meeting**

**16 March 2016 – Paris, France**

I am pleased to announce the 2016 Ministerial Conference, dedicated to the OECD Convention against foreign bribery, which I have the honor to chair this year.

This event represents a further step by the international community in the fight against corruption, in particular against bribery in international business transactions.

Over time, the OECD Convention, which entered into force on 9 December 1999, proved to be an effective tool in criminal matters, at international level.

Its 41 States Parties not only shared their experiences, but they also agreed to participate, all together and on an equal footing, in one of the most effective mutual evaluation mechanisms existing at present, carried out under the leadership of the Working Group on Bribery (WGB).

After completing its third phase of evaluations, the WGB already adopted 195 Monitoring Reports, which led to 1450 Recommendations to States Parties, without exception.

This Conference comes after the one organised in Rome in 2007 to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention and the 2009 Conference in Paris for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its entry into force.

It will provide a unique opportunity not only to celebrate the achievements so far, but also to renew the efforts of the international community as a whole in its fight against corruption.

In particular, we can ensure political support to the launch of the fourth phase of country evaluations conducted by the WGB, specifically focused on enforcement and dealing with outstanding issues in each State Party.

At the same time, the highest level of participation in the Conference of the States which have not yet adhered to the 1997 Convention, might encourage their accession given their active role they play in fight against corruption at international level.

Our expected outcomes of the Conference are: the renewed effort in cooperation between law enforcement authorities; capacity building in detecting illegal activities; preventing corruption and encouraging companies to develop compliance, through effective cooperation between public authorities and the business community.

Corruption increases costs for governments, businesses and citizens. It makes those costs unpredictable. It distorts the allocation of public resources and budgetary and expenditure policies. It decreases tax revenues and resources available for economic and social development. It lowers the quality and level of essential public services.

Moreover, corruption humiliates institutions, citizens and the rule of law.

Italy firmly believes that the fight against corruption is not only an unavoidable duty, in accordance with the principle of the Rule of Law which is the foundation of its Constitution, but also an objective interest to be promoted, considering the benefits that economic and social activities bring to society as a whole when they are legally carried out.

The fight against corruption, which is a phenomenon common to all countries, is therefore an ethical, economic and political imperative of crucial importance.

The Italian initiative to chair the OECD Ministerial Conference on the fight against corruption is a sign of the special focus our country places on integrity policies.