



Fighting Corruption

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Hello - Thanks for turning out in such force to this panel discussion on one of the great economic issues of the day - which is the fight against corruption. They must think it's important here – because apparently they've given us the biggest room, and we're on a live webcast.

Anyway it seems to me we can break the issue of corruption into two parts, each reflecting one aspect of work of being done here at the OECD.

On the one hand there is the whole question of money-laundering and the related issue of financing terrorism. That's monitored by the Financial Action Task Force (known in French as OAFI) which I think I am right is saying is not technically part of the OECD but works out of here. It's famous for journalists like myself for drawing up its so-called blacklist of uncooperative countries. But its ongoing work is propagating its 40 recommendations to governments on the proper procedures and laws to combat money laundering - and a further 9 special recommendations on terrorist financing.

And then there is the work of the Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, which was set up to draw up and monitor the Anti-Bribery Convention - which was ratified exactly ten years ago I think - so it's a good time to assess its impact. The main thrust of the convention of course is to make it a criminal offence in signatory countries to bribe a foreign official (or at least member countries commit themselves to making it a criminal offence - have they all actually done it?) Anyway just this month, the working group has issued a new policy statement, reaffirming its commitment to the convention- and noting (and I quote) that "the global economic crisis may lead to increased competitive pressure on companies to potentially engage in corruption, notably in public procurement.

Which leads us to today's discussion - because the issue I suppose is working out how in current economic circumstances the fight against corruption, money laundering is faring.

And to do that - it's a great privilege to be joined by five men (all men) who are the top people in their fields.

First of all Cobus de Swardt is managing director of Transparency International, which is the best known pressure group campaigning for tougher controls to eliminate corruption in international business. They've been in the news here in France recently with the court case brought against five African leaders (one since dead).

Then Rick McDonell, executive secretary of the Financial Action Task Force (GAFI)- so in charge of the fight against money-laundering.

For a business perspective here in France, we have Jean Monville, who is president du comite internationalisation de l'entreprise at the MEDEF - the body that represents French industry and business.

Mark Pieth will be known to many of you. He's a Swiss lawyer, who is also chair of the OECD working group on bribery in international transactions. And representing international business, we have Francois Vincke, who is head of the anti-corruption commission at the International Chamber of Commerce here in Paris.