

Address by Mr. Philippe Marland,
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France welcomes this celebration of the tenth anniversary of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention because, as you know, France is heavily involved in battling cross-border corruption. In recent years, this commitment has been reflected in the ratification and transposition of numerous international instruments relating to the fight against bribery:

- France ratified the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions in July 2000.
- In July 2005, France was the first G8 country to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which is the first criminal instrument having universal scope in this area.
- By an act of February 2005, France authorised the ratification of the Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption.
- By an act of 13 November 2007, France transposed the final stipulations of the Council of Europe conventions and of the Merida Convention.

Against this backdrop, and more particularly with regard to the OECD Convention, business enterprises in our countries are perfectly justified in showing concern that the rules be applied uniformly, and in proclaiming great vigilance towards the risk of unfair competition that could be engendered if the Convention were enforced unevenly, especially if its interpretation or the amount of pressure exerted to apply it were to vary from one contracting State to another.

It is for this reason that France is especially keen to advocate fair and uniform rules in this area.

Within the OECD, as regards bribery, France would now like to see the Working Group focus on close monitoring of the Convention's transposition and enforcement by the 37 contracting States. This monitoring mechanism has shown its effectiveness, prompting States to take specific legislative actions to combat the bribery of foreign public officials. In this area, the expectations of civil society, NGOs and international bodies like the G8 are high. It is for this reason that it would now seem crucial for the Working Group to prepare for the future evaluation phases that will make it possible to extend and enhance the work that the Group has accomplished over the past ten years.

Lastly, and as you know, the contracting States are currently exploring the possibility of revising the OECD anti-bribery instruments. This undertaking should enable the Working Group to take stock of its action and highlight how those documents could be improved. This would be a salutary exercise in self-criticism, which, were it not to be carried out, might send the wrong signal about the contracting States' willingness to continue making the Convention a model in the fight against corruption.

France will continue actively, within the OECD but in all other relevant international fora as well, to promote the fight against bribery, just as it has been doing.

To this end, France is putting special emphasis on the implementation of mutual surveillance mechanisms once States have taken on obligations to fight corruption.

Moreover, a very important challenge for the future is to integrate emerging States into the process of fighting corruption as it is implemented, for example, by the OECD Working Group on Bribery. Efforts need to be stepped up to convince these countries, which enjoy substantial economic advantages, that orderly integration into the world economy and full adherence to OECD standards are in their own best interest. Here, it is encouraging to note that the OECD Convention is already exerting its influence beyond the Organisation's membership, insofar as seven other States (including, most recently, South Africa) have become contracting parties in addition to the 30 OECD member countries. It is necessary to forge ahead in this direction, because in a globalised economy the fight against corruption is more than ever the responsibility of one and all.