

## Fighting Corruption and Building Trust

8<sup>th</sup> Regional Anti-Corruption Conference of the  
ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific  
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## Conference Conclusions

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Trust is one of the core foundations upon which all legitimate and sustainable political systems are built: it is essential for social cohesion and well-being. Particularly as a result of the economic crisis, citizens' trust in public institutions has recently plummeted in most countries. Surveys have shown that corruption is the principal reason for the decline of trust levels. The member economies of the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific recognise the need to address this growing distrust and increase compliance with the United Nations Convention Against Corruption:

1. Transparency across the board is vital to cultivate public trust in government and effectively address corruption. Fiscal transparency increases the ability of citizens to influence and monitor governments' use of public resources; transparency in government decision-making facilitates citizens' participation in, and ownership of, governmental policies; and the transparency of government institutions ensures accountability and facilitates public involvement. Increased transparency in these areas contributes greatly to deterring, preventing, and detecting corruption. The Open Government Partnership provides a platform for national reforms in these areas; increased membership by Asia Pacific countries is encouraged.
2. Moving with the times is essential for governments and the private sector to maintain citizens' trust and increase citizens' engagement. New technologies can, and should, be harnessed to more effectively and efficiently address corruption. This can range from taking advantage of social media, to using new electronic payment systems to monitor the spending of public officials and decrease opportunities for corruption. Changing with the times also requires government to adapt and respond to new developments, including by adopting creative ideas and techniques. Governments should also regularly review their anti-corruption and transparency frameworks to ensure they remain relevant and consistent with best-practice.
3. High profile examples of the private sector engaging in corruption have contributed to decreasing levels of public trust in the private sector. Governments must address this growing distrust to ensure that the private sector plays its indispensable role in economic development and growth. This can be achieved only by applying both carrots and sticks simultaneously. On the one hand, governments should actively encourage companies to adopt corporate compliance, internal controls and ethics measures for preventing and detecting corruption. On the other hand, governments must also prosecute and sanction individuals and companies that engage in corruption, and create and maintain reporting channels and whistleblower protection. The threat of enforcement is essential to convincing companies to adopt anti-corruption measures. The OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions provides a framework for

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domestic reforms in this area. Corruption in the private sector can have a trickle-down effect by attracting the abuse of power by the authorities. Sanctions against officials are also important for restoring trust when prevention measures fail.

4. Fighting corruption benefits from the collaboration of all sectors of society – the public and private sectors, civil society and media. Governments can facilitate this collaboration by establishing policies and a legal framework that promote the contributions of all sectors in preventing as well as addressing corruption. The disclosure of government data in digitized, open and useable formats can empower citizens to monitor government service provision, demand accountability and thereby close the space for corruption. Providing a right to information and protecting media freedoms facilitates journalism that exposes corruption. Harnessing mobile technology and social media can enable citizen monitoring of government projects and submission of corruption reports. Legislating corporate liability for corruption offenses and establishing an environment of enforcement incentivizes the adoption by the private sector of integrity policies. Outreach and education efforts can reduce the tolerance of the public to corruption, and build a society-wide constituency for integrity.