



13th International
Anti-Corruption Conference
IACC

Global Transparency:
fighting corruption for a sustainable future.
Athens, Greece | 30 October - 2 November 2008

Conference Opening

14:00 - 15:00, 30 October, 2008

Master of Ceremonies:

Παναγιώτατε Οικουμενικέ Πατριάρχη, Μακαριώτατε Αρχιεπίσκοπε Αθηνών και Πάσης Ελλάδος, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ της Ελλάδος, κύριε Πρόεδρε της Βουλής, κυρίες και κύριοι υπουργοί, κυρίες και κύριοι πρέσβεις, κυρίες και κύριοι.

Distinguished guests and speakers, ladies and gentleman, I would like to invite you and welcome you on behalf of the organising committee, all of you, all our guests here at the 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference which takes place, if you allow me the comment, at critical times for the planet and its climate, the world economies and the future of the global society.

Please take your seats, we are ready to start. I would like to invite the Chairman of the International Anti-Corruption Council, Mr. Barry O'Keefe.

Mr. O'KEEFE:

Your All Holliness, the Patriarch Bartholomew, members of the Global, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis, Minister of Justice Sotiris Hatzigakis, Speaker of the Parliament, Dimitris Sioufas, Ministry of Labour and National Security, other ministers, Your Royal Highness, Prince El Hassan Talao, your many excellencies, ladies and representatives of major international institutions, and of many nations, Huguette Labelle, Chair of TI International, and can I say friends and supporters of the Anti-Corruption movement throughout the world, ladies and gentleman all.

First may I thank you, Prime Minister, and your Government, the Government of the Hellenic Republic, for hosting this conference and providing such a magnificent venue for it.

I have attended many of these conferences over decades, we have never had a venue like this. It is beautiful, wonderful and I am sure will house us very well indeed. Thank you very much.

It is with the sense of great excitement and eager anticipation that I welcome you all to this the 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference.

It is a very significant year. It is the 25th anniversary of the holding of the first of such conferences, and I am sure that you will all agree that it is fitting, that it should be held in Athens Greece, the very cradle of democracy. For that it is one of the great values that we seek to protect by ensuring that it is not undermined by corruption.

And being here in the cradle of democracy is, I hope and I feel confident it will pay a great omen for the success of this conference.

In the quarter of century that has gone by, since these series of conferences commenced, the anti-corruption movement has grown. Has grown in



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size, it has grown in its global spread. It has grown in its importance and most significantly it has grown in its effectiveness.

Its voice is now heard and its recommendations, our recommendations are respected.

This 13th conference has many delegates that you will hear about, more than we have had at any other conference. And they come from 130 countries.

We have leaders of nations, leaders of committees. And we are a group whose views and potential recommendations, technical recommendations rather, are listened to.

What we do at this conference will have an effect on our collective futures. So, we must ensure that we get it right.

The object of this conference is to identify the current mechanisms of corruption, ever changing, ever becoming more sophisticated as the world goes to.

What are those current mechanisms in key areas of our lives, areas that are crucial, indeed fundamental to each of us individually and to our world.

Such things as peace and security, natural resources, climate change and sustainable globalisation. Including amongst which of course is that which is at the heart of most newspapers and most televisions shows and most radio shows today, that is a sustainable financial sector in which the world can have confident.

There can be no doubt that corruption has played a role, perhaps a crucial role, in the events that have lead to a major melt down in a world's economic situation. An melt down that touches our lives individually, and the lives of so many millions and millions of people throughout the globe.

Together, over the next four days, we will examine this phenomenon and other areas of corruption, identify causes, recommend practical measures for the short and longer term for the eradication of that ...

This conference has the potential to generate new ideas, to forge new and affective partnerships, and to show to the world that in can be, it will be a better place if we act firmly and continuously to fight corruption and restore integrity in the lives of individuals and in the lives of nations.

We, you and I and all of us are the cream of the anti-corruption movement. We have the capacity, the expertise, the influence, and most importantly the will to beat corruption. That is all combine to make this 25th anniversary anti-corruption conference the best and the most affective ever.

Master of Ceremonies:

I would like to invite the Chairman of Transparency International Hellas, Mr. Costas Bakouris.

Mr. BAKOURIS:



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Παναγιώτατε, Μακαριώτατε, κύριε Πρόεδρε της Ελληνικής Κυβέρνησης, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ, κύριε Πρόεδρε της Ελληνικής Βουλής, κύριοι υπουργοί, distinguished guests, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Transparency International Greece it is an honor and a privilege for me to welcome you to Athens for the 13th International Conference Against Corruption.

We are delighted and very proud to organize this conference with the support of the Ministry of Justice, which represents the Greek Government, which is of course the host country of this important event.

On this occasion I would also like to express my appreciation to our Government, to the Hellenic Parliament, as well as to all the other companies who have contribute and have supported us in organizing this conference.

We are also delighted to report that more than 1200 delegates are participating from abroad, representing 135 countries. And this is a record and signifies the growing number of people who are committed to fight corruption.

Greece, which is my country, is equally alarmed for the levels of corruption, and it is also committed to this fight. Hosting this conference is a concrete example of this commitment because we recognize that it offers any measurable benefit to my country as well as to the entire international community.

We also believe that the time and the place are totally appropriate for hosting this conference in Athens. The current financial crisis and the recession are major economic challenges for the world.

These are the examples of lack of transparency with control mechanisms unclear accountabilities and above all absence of values or ethics on the part of the decision makers to contain the flagrant demonstration of greed.

Debating and seeking solutions to these themes of the agenda of the conference is as timely as ever.

It is also the right place because we can revisit the teachings of the classical Greek philosophers. And we can draw ideas from these eternal truths in seeking solutions to today's challenges.

If we had learned from Aristotle's Golden Mind we could have avoided the excesses that are resulted in today's crisis. It was he who said that the most important acts of injustice are committed by excessive desires and not for the satisfaction of basic human needs.

Fighting corruption for a sustainable future would not have been more appropriate for this conference since corruption is the most important issue of our time. It promotes violence, it creates uncertainty, it results in lack of confidence and ultimately in poverty.

It is an excellent question that the conference is taking place in the country where democracy was born. And it was in this democratic environment that Socrates was brought up and showed us the example of the responsible citizen.



He was innocent, yet he was convicted unjustly. We was given the opportunity to escape, but he refused and drunk the hemlock. He taught us from his life that the citizens must respect and obey the laws of the state.

He said in his Apologia: "but even then I did not believe that because of the danger of the death penalty I must do something unethical or for a free man, even now, I don't regret the manner in which I defended myself. I prefer to die having done my Apologia as I did, rather living differently".

We believe that today those teachings are having greater value in searching for solutions to safety and security, to climate change, to energy and to a sustainable development.

We must go back to the basic virtues of Aristotle in an effective way of fighting corruption. ...for the last time, he said: man is not only obligated to habituate to ethical behavior, but he should acquire a measure so that he can always determine the content and the objective of ethics.

Thank you very much.

Master of Ceremonies:

Thank you, Mr. Costas Bakouris. I would like to invite the Chairwoman of Transparency International, Mrs. Huguette Labelle.

Mme. LABELLE:

Καλησπέρα, buenas dias, bonjour, good afternoon. Prime Minister, Your All Holiness, Speaker of Parliament, Minister of Justice, other ministers, excellences, Royal Highness, good friends, and all of you in this room.

It is a privilege to address this group this afternoon briefly, because addressing the inter... between corruption, resource exploitation, the environment, development and human security, our theme could not be timer as the global community reels from one crisis to another, crisis in energy supply, in the food supply, and now a financial crisis, that threatens to drug down, not just wealthy financial institutions, but to wipe out gains made by emerging economies and to put a further strain on the worlds poorest countries.

And we face the long term task of responding to climate change as well, possibly the greatest governess challenge in human history, whether it is the role of corruption that plays in illegal login, the transparency of subsidised schemes to reduce carbon emissions or the management of an increasing strain water supply.

The human cost of corruption here is real.

And of course the emerging economic crisis has been instructive as to just how integrated our world is. For example, the challenge of climate change knows no boarder. Car exhaust for half the world away melts....and the Andes, and it is away at the polar rise gap.



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And as weather patterns change, people living on the edge of deserts, find their arable land so eroded, where towns, villages and farms are lost to growing communities.

So, Transparency International 2008 Global Corruption Report, which was on Watcher, qualifies the increase cost of water through bribes, kick backs, collusion and substandard work, which adds, we feel, almost 15 billion dollars US to the cost of achieving the water related targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

A lack of accountability and transparency has contributed to this crisis and threatens to further this crisis to make it even deeper.

Only at the forums, such as the IACC, and thank you Barry O'Keefe for bringing us together, can we bring the expertise, the perspective, the experience necessary to effectively rain in the corruption that threatens our common sustainable future.

New approaches and new tools are needed, particularly at the interfaces between issues, regions and sectors. In public procurement for example, which is then overlapped of the private and the public sectors, an estimated 10% of the 4 trillion US dollars spent annually are lost to corruption. That is about 400 billion dollars.

It could deal with a lot of HIV campaigns, with a lot of medications to those who don't have any, to water supply to the thousands communities around the world who do not have that.

So, during the coming days in our discussions of sectors and systems, legislations, conventions, and mechanisms, let us bare in mind that this is ultimately about human lives, it is about life, it is about death.

It is about ensuring that state revenues from natural resources goes to build the school for children, the hospitals for the sick, and roads for citizens.

It is about business and government, enriching the lives of the people in their communities rather undermining those through corruption.

And it is about ensuring access to justice for all. And it is also about civil society, governments, business sector and others working together exactly what we have in this room today.

The conference is dedicated to the people. We have the privilege to work for them, to find solutions for alleviating poverty, ...and conflict that corruption breeds.

The challenges are immense, but so is the commitment and the creativity of the anti-corruption community gathered here. Let us be inspired by the spirit of these Greek philosophers.

And thank you Mr. Prime Minister to you, your Government and to the people of Greece for their warm hospitality and for your support.

Thank you.



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Master of Ceremonies:

Thank you Mrs. Labelle. I would like to invite the Minister of Justice Greece, Mr. Sotiris Hatzigakis.

Mr HATZIGAKIS:

His All Holiness, Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch,
His Beatitude Ieronymos, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece,
President of the Greek Government,
Speaker of the Greek Parliament,
Fellow Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Consuls,
Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The phenomenon of corruption and the need to combat it extends over many areas, first and foremost the political and economic sectors. It is often said that corruption is a recent phenomenon in the fields of political and public administration. And yet, the first historical case of corruption, committed by a soldier of the King, was recorded on the tablets of Mesopotamia almost 3500 years ago. Similar cases, with harsh forms of punishment, occurred in Ancient Egypt, under the Pharaohs.

Corruption is therefore a diachronic phenomenon. The greater scope of corruption is visible in non-democratic societies and of course in totalitarian states. The historian Suetonius, for example, denounced the soldiers of the Roman Empire. In the words of Lord Atkins, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Of course, unearthing corruption in a democracy is much easier.

Examples of bribery and corruption can also be found in the history of democracy in Ancient Greece. But in those cases, both trials and punishment were public. Because in a democracy, the rule of law prevails. Because in a democracy, the rule of justice is reinforced. That is why societies were formed. In a democracy, man is not servant to a master. He is a citizen. And as a free citizen and as a free man he has the right to demand that the political powers that be respect and support the rules of justice. Especially those rules of justice that define principles and values, such as equal rights, equality before the law and freedom for all.

Corruption is therefore not just a mere illegal exchange. It is the very degeneration of political life. It is a growth afflicting society. As such, we all need to be particularly wary, especially when resorting to generalisations of corruption. Waging battle against corruption is a political act. Many times we



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digress, especially when we start rumours or make uncorroborated claims. If we do not respect the rule of law, combating corruption can lapse into the ethical murder of our fellow human beings. Because rumours, uncorroborated claims are not solid proof. Indeed, many a time we may breed a diseased environment for corrosive gossip mongering. We need to stay away from such moralising.

The best way to combat corruption is for society to raise walls around those who openly benefit from corruption. If this is not done, then corruption will continue to grow.

Corruption is combated by means of laws, and mechanisms; but it is primarily combated by those societies, those democratic societies, that embrace the principles of law and justice and are built on the consciousness and virtues of their citizens. In the apt words of Alexis De Tocqueville, “monarchies have honour as a principle, but democracies are built on the virtue of their citizens”.¹

The battle against corruption therefore requires social virtue. That is why specific goals are required. The first and most important goal is to have a broader grasp on politics. The monitoring of politicians, political parties and the information channels of the citizen determine the path of a community. I am fervently convinced that like politicians and political parties, the mass media also need to be prudently monitored.

In the context of safeguarding institutions from unwanted influences, we in the Government, in fulfilling the orders and guidelines of our Prime Minister, Kostas Karamanlis, have voted in favour of laws against corruption and money obtained illicitly in the public, administrative and private sectors. Let me mention but a few measures we have adopted thus far. Bribery, be it passive or active, is now considered a capital offence. We have strengthened our control mechanisms by equipping them with human resources. A breach of trust in the provision of services has been converted from a misdemeanour crime into a capital offence.

Since 2004, our government has reinforced its institutional arsenal in countering the lack of transparency. We have restructured competitions in the public sector. We have fortified the capital market. We have strengthened the Hellenic Competition Commission. We have restructured and launched the mechanisms monitoring the income and assets of judicial officials. We have secured the honest ratification processes of courts. We have restructured and bolstered the supervision of courts and judges.

Our second goal is centred on justice. Because justice can breed corruption, even if a judge is not bribed. I am referring to major delays in the legal system. That is why we have adopted a number of measures. We have taken action to speed up the legal administrative process. We have laid down new rules for the voluntary resignation of judges who, due to illness or inefficiency, are unable to fulfil their duties any longer.

¹ This quotation has been translated from Greek into English.



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We have achieved reforms in the operation and organisation of the National School of Judges, thereby ensuring the best education for future judges. We have begun to abolish the systems by which the Chiefs of important Courts are elected by their equals or by their younger colleagues. That way, political ties and partisanship are eliminated.

By means of a new bill for the reform of the Code of Civil Procedure we hope to speed up civil proceedings and guarantee the efficient administration of justice.

Our third goal is to combat trafficking and the abuse of children, the most vulnerable of all social groups. We have adopted and continue to adopt certain, specific measures. We have “armed” ourselves, by means of laws protecting children against the phenomena of child labour, organ trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation and child pornography. Thanks to the new provisions of the law, the protection of personal data has been revoked, especially as regards heinous crimes, including paedophilia, violent crimes, drug trafficking and all crimes committed against the weaker social groups, i.e. women and children.

Furthermore, due to the provisions facilitating adoptions, and the bill being discussed in Parliament, child trafficking networks are being combated. Finally, by the end of the year we will have voted on the bill on the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse. We have also put together a bill to tackle cybercrime and racial violence and crimes.

Our fourth goal regards drug trafficking. It is a fact that a society allowing the souls and brains of its members, especially its youth, to become mush, is a society that has degraded itself. The draft bill we are proposing for the restructuring of the Forensic Medicine Department and which will be presented before Parliament shortly, comprises provisions for the establishment of drug rehabilitation centres for prisoners, and provisions for the integration of detention centres in the National Health System.

The provisions that are slowly being integrated into our national legislation are the decisions of the European Council regarding the severity of penalties and drug trafficking.

It is well-known that there is a form of corruption in all public spheres of life. I do not wish to affirm, nor should I affirm, that society as a whole has been contaminated by corruption. There are public functionaries and many other people that we don't know of who humbly fulfil their duty to society. I wish to express my admiration and respect to those people.

At the same time, I wish to highlight the ways in which we can combat corruption. We need not only introduce laws, but also opt for the creation of an accountable environment. Plato tells us in “The Republic” that a society wishing to take on corruption needs to seek justice, wisdom, measure and courage. Justice and wisdom for the politician, measure and courage for the citizen.



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Measure is knowing your boundaries, for beyond boundaries lies abuse. Courage is the public support of justice for humanity.

Finally, we need to know that we can succeed in the battle against corruption by establishing educational policies. Not only through simple education, which only provides people with related know how, but with profound education that teaches principles, that teaches values. Corruption is not a disease like AIDS. There is no one medicine to counter it. Corruption has its roots in the very make-up of man, where the caves of greed and obsession are found.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the following: our country is making huge efforts to tackle corruption, at national level and together with European and international bodies. We are promoting policies that will allow us to reach a plethora of positive results. Of course, it goes without saying that the road ahead is a long and weary one. I firmly believe, however, that the discussions to be held during this international conference will make a significant contribution to our work.

Thank you.

Κος

Ευχαριστούμε κύριε Υπουργέ. Θα ήθελα να καλέσω τον Πρόεδρο του Ελληνικού Κοινοβουλίου, κ. Δημήτρη Σιούφα.

Κος ΣΙΟΥΦΑΣ:

On behalf of the Hellenic Parliament I would like to greet the 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference and express warmest appreciation for having your Conference in our country.

We welcome and commend you on your work. It is actually the impact of your work that greatly contributes to democracy, justice and growth worldwide.

The 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference touches on a number of issues, which are amongst those most vital in terms of the course of the World in the 21st century. This conference pursues joint answers to corruption questions and phenomena that undermine both the present and the future of nations, societies and the World Community. It looks for answers to the catastrophic impact that corruption has directly and that the tolerance thereof has indirectly on

- the peaceful coexistence between the peoples and citizen security
- the distribution and use of natural resources and energy
- climate change and environmental decline
- sustainable global growth.



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The thematic areas (streams) of this Conference regard a whole range of issues that determine

- growth and quality of life
- safety and progress for the people
- the prospects and the future of our Planet.

They pertain to Human Rights, Justice, Security, aiding peoples in need;

They pertain to capitalizing on Renewable Energy Sources, and protecting our natural wealth, forests and water resources;

They pertain to climate change and our own duty to avert imminent risks;

They pertain to conditions the new Global era puts in place, the role of international organizations and relevant agencies and citizen society mobilization that is needed.

Corruption is a chronic disease, found in every society, throughout the course of Mankind. At different locations and points in time, the rate of spread and intensity of this phenomenon may differ. Time and again, in a variety of places the world over, History tells us of periods of intense corruption, followed by periods of decline, be it social, economic or political. In each and every case, repercussions have been and still remain disastrous for states, people, communities that did give in and do surrender to the morbid phenomenon of corruption. Today, the World is going through an unprecedented era. We are living in the globalization era, a time of international interdependence and fast-paced global developments. Just like the case is with all social phenomena, corruption phenomena are acquiring new dimensions, novel significance and, above all, new repercussions. They do not simply affect the course of society alone, but they also impact on the prospects and evolution of the Globe.

It is for that reason that the thematic streams of your Conference are highly topical and timely.

They are pertinent to, first and foremost, the global financial crisis and its successive stages: from the time of the sharp increase in energy prices worldwide, the rise in raw material and staples' prices throughout the last three years, to the credit crunch that began in the fall of 2007 in the USA and which gradually spread to currently affect the entire globe. Most importantly, they pertain to the advent of a globally apparent recession and the spectre of unemployment, which is a threat to the world community. It is already widely acknowledged that, the main (if not the only) reason behind such negative developments was greed and, as a result, corruption: individual, collective and institutional corruption. In hindsight, it is widely acknowledged that what is essentially required is a new and stricter set of rules to govern global financial system operations. These are rules that should apply throughout the World and which all should comply with.

It is the exact same reason, i.e. the cankerworm of corruption, which is amongst an assortment of reasons behind the energy and environmental



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challenge. It is there in the irrational use of natural resources and the destruction of the environment. It is there in a vicious circle that is detrimental to equilibrium between climate and our natural wealth. It is all but too obvious that environmental downgrade inevitably leads to global warming and that global warming accelerates environmental demise. Thus, it is not just sustainability of growth that is undermined but quality of life as well. The existence of more forms of life is threatened. As a result, the future of the entire Planet is under threat.

Moreover, there is no question about the disastrous impact of corruption on decisions, actions or even omissions that are linked to

- the peaceful coexistence amongst the peoples
- organised criminal activities
- drug trafficking
- arms trafficking and creating conflict situations to use such armaments
- human trafficking.

The aforementioned make up a dangerous setting at the start of the 21st century, a setting we need to redefine, rather than let modern history repeat itself, let alone 20th century history in particular. We are certainly aware that corruption cannot disappear completely. It is an integral part of human nature. Still, this does not mean that we should submit ourselves to a fatalistic approach about its existence and spread. This rather signifies an even stronger clash with it. It means even more powerful transparency institutions, with marked prestige and clear applications to combat it. It marks more effective prevention, control and oversight mechanisms. It signifies a stronger relationship between the state and its citizens. It means more Democracy everywhere, through pro-transparency institutional provisions for, at the local, national and global level, both within the states and as regards relations among the states, for communities and citizens alike.

Today, the duty of us all is to take a firm stance against corruption. It is now more imperative than ever before. It is all about the future, of not simply any given society, but rather the course of the World, our Planet and Mankind. It is needed and required as a precondition for a more just World, a more sustainable future. With these thoughts in mind, let me, on behalf of the Hellenic Parliament and all fellow MPs from all political parties within it, greet this Conference, which we co-host. I would like to congratulate the Chair of Transparency International, the national bureaus thereof, and all who fight for the same cause. Let me also commend Transparency International –Greece on the excellent organization of this Conference and the Greek Government as the patron of this event. We look forward to the outcome of your deliberations and work being a compass for the World. Congratulations once more and, rest assured, we stand by you.



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Mr KARAMANLIS

Your All Holiness,
Your Beatitude,

First of all, I welcome the Ecumenical Patriarch, distinguished politicians from friendly countries, the Board of Directors of Transparency International, the Boards of the National Chapters of the Organization, the scientists and researchers who are here to submit ideas and proposals. We thank you warmly for your decision to hold this Conference here in Greece, and I congratulate the organizers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The thematic streams that are the focus of this year's Conference are extremely timely and of great importance for the progress of peoples. The outbreak of the most serious post-war economic crisis leaves no room for doubt. Until recently, the global community was faced with repeated, steep increases in the prices of energy, raw materials and basic foodstuffs. It was faced also with growing inflation, high prices and with an indescribable food crisis in dozens of regions of the so-called "Third World".

A month and a half ago, the world was gripped by an unprecedented financial crisis that broke out in the U.S. and spread to Europe and Asia. In the face of this terrible turn of events, European and global interventions sought to avert a more general collapse, designating the following as the basic guidelines of the common effort:

- More systematic supervision of financial institutions
- Improved transparency in the management of capital
- Ensuring the accountability of management

While these measures have halted the crisis for the present, it is clear that the deeper problems of the underlying economy remain. The global community is now on the threshold of a recession of unpredictable intensity and duration. This is a bleak reality that brings with it heavy responsibilities for all concerned, dictating these essential steps:

- To identify and deal with the basic causes of the problem.
- To create strong defensive mechanisms against hidden dangers.



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- To support the basic economy, employment and citizens in the greatest need.

The developments that are shaking the global economy are clearly the result of many interacting factors. But there is a reason common to the international mushrooming of prices and to the financial crisis. It is the inadequacy of transparency regulations and the confusion that is being deliberately created as to the most fundamental principle of the free market: the principle that a free market is not an unaccountable market. What we confront is the lack of transparency, greed and unbridled global speculation.

So there can be no doubt as to what needs to be done on a global level. Corruption has proved to be highly infectious in the international markets. It has shown that a new architecture for the global economy is an essential prerequisite not only to deal with the current crisis, but also to avoid similar risks in the future; an architecture whose foundation is the strict implementation of the principles and rules of transparency. It is this that gives great importance to any discussion of:

- the role to be assumed by the international economic agencies.
- transparency in the operations of financial institutions.
- reinforcing international cooperation against so-called "tax havens".
- improving the efficiency of supervision mechanisms and transparency institutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Conference's thematic streams on natural resources and energy, the environment and climate change are also exceedingly timely. Particularly when the discussions address:

- the penetration of corruption into strategies for protecting the environment.
- the impact of corruption on the effectiveness of planned actions.
- the role of corruption in destroying natural resources and threatening the environment.

I have no hesitation in saying that while the economic crisis exerts stifling pressure today and in the immediate future, destruction of the environment and climate change are a dreadful threat to the very roots of the Global Community. They are a threat of mounting intensity to:



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- sustainable development,
- our quality of life,
- the very existence of our planet.

How does corruption impact the destruction of the environment, the energy market, climate change? Through what strategies and modes of international cooperation can we provide definitive solutions? How can we achieve these solutions without delay? These are questions that require comprehensive answers; and action. The challenges confront our every step. The environment and its protection is a vital concern. Combating corruption, an enemy of life itself, is a duty we have to our children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The thematic stream on the peaceful co-existence of our peoples and the security of citizens is also of major importance at this Conference. Terrorism, organized crime, drug and arms trafficking, human rights abuses, Security and Justice, and the functioning of state institutions are some of the basic aspects of this stream. It is generally accepted today that corruption is facilitated by:

- lack of humanitarian education,
- tensions created by the lack of social homogeneity.

Corruption is facilitated by bureaucratic procedures, overlapping legislation and incomplete state structures. It can be found in both the public and private sectors. It is a political problem, an economic problem, a social problem. It is the woodworm that:

- eats away at the social fabric and threatens social justice.
- undermines the functioning of the state.
- encourages the unequal distribution of income.
- increases social inequalities, social injustice and social distrust.

Your discussions on the strategies and synergies required to fight on this vast front will be extremely useful on a worldwide scale. All countries still need to do much more. I assure you that the Greek government takes The Transparency International's proposals under serious consideration and proceeds to the necessary reforms.

As we heard earlier, we have already improved the deterrent legislative framework.



- We have made it a felony to engage in acts of corruption to the detriment of the public sector.
- We have enacted strict laws to confront corruption in the private sector.
- We are promoting a comprehensive plan to accelerate the dispensing of justice.
- We are strengthening supervision mechanisms.

With regard to economic activity and fiscal policy:

- We have established transparent procedures for awarding public projects and procurements.
- We have introduced safeguards for the transparent operation of state enterprises and organizations.
- We have incorporated the Special Accounts into the General Budget.

As Transparency International has pointed out, Greece has gone from retreat and stagnation to the gradual improvement of its Corruption Perceptions Index. Year by year, it is improving its score. But I must confess that we have not yet achieved the results we want and we are committed to stepping up the pace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Transparency International, as we know, does not measure the corruption in a given country, but the perceptions of corruption that exist in society. Obviously, these perceptions may sometimes underestimate or exaggerate the reality of the situation. And this is because the perceptions in a given country are not always shaped by personal experience alone. They are also shaped by the publicity given to individual instances of corruption. At the same time, these perceptions are also influenced by the standard of living, education and quality of democracy enjoyed by a society. The most critical issues arise when citizens are made to stay silent. They arise in states with authoritarian regimes. There, any notion of respect for economic, social and cultural rights is suppressed by the action of corruption centres. There, the prohibition of freedom of expression is an unshakeable fact. Poor and oppressed citizens increase in number. Instances of social injustice multiply. This cannot but be a global problem. These peoples have a right to the assistance of the developed world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all want citizens' quality of life to be enhanced by an improved natural environment. We all want citizens to enjoy the benefits of development in conditions of peace, stability and security. We all want a world with a high level social justice. In the effort to achieve these goals, we have a common enemy: global corruption. It is a high obstacle that we cannot simply circumvent. So we



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IACC

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need to confront it. We need to acknowledge the fact that it decides the fate of millions of people. We need to admit to ourselves that it is blocking the path to a more just future.

We all know that corruption is linked – negatively – with the greatest global challenges:

- with the armed conflicts and insecurity in the global community;
- with the destruction of the environment and climate change;
- with the exacerbation of poverty in the World and within nations.

We all agree that we need to guarantee responsibly the future of coming generations. We all agree that our point of departure on this endeavour must be to designate the combating of corruption as the central guideline. We may sometimes think that a problem that has been with us since ancient times may never be eradicated completely. But this cannot mean that we should surrender. Quite on the contrary, it dictates an even greater response, even more intensive action. It makes imperative our persistence and a systematic effort on both the national and global levels.

Transparency International and its National Chapters are doing vital work in this field and opening up new directions. With these thoughts, I welcome the opening of the 13th International Anti-Corruption Conference. It is my conviction that your conclusions and proposals will be universally welcomed. For our part, it is a commitment that we expressly undertake.