

Dear Secretary General

As leaders of different faiths, we are writing to express our strong support for the UN Convention Against Corruption. We call for urgent action on the agreement of a review mechanism for the Convention, for immediate adoption at the Conference of the State Parties to be held in Doha in November this year.

UNCAC's global reach is unprecedented. Its strength lies in the balance it achieves between actions needed within a state and those required between states. The Convention is rightly ambitious in its aims and, as such, expectations are high as to its potential to reduce corruption both nationally and internationally.

Corruption is condemned by all religions. As faith leaders we believe there is a moral imperative to tackle corruption. Our religious teachings commit us to the pursuit of justice and to stand with those who are economically disempowered and socially marginalised. Corruption undermines the principles of justice and equality, eroding value systems, social cohesion and trust.

Corruption and poverty mutually reinforce injustice. Corruption undermines equitable economic growth and sustainable development. The diversion of public funds, loss of investment and the reduction in tax revenues hits the poorest and most vulnerable hardest. Put simply corruption is at the heart of people's experience of poverty. For poor communities, corrupt practices constitute an insurmountable barrier to quality education, affordable healthcare and decent livelihoods. Corruption steals opportunity and hope.

The success of UNCAC in reducing corruption will hinge on the commitment of State Parties to fully implement its provisions and the establishment of an effective review mechanism to monitor implementation. **In our view, two elements essential for a robust and credible review mechanism are transparency and the participation of civil society.**

Firstly, transparency via the publication of reports and recommendations is vital to ensure that the process is fair and effective. This will also help build support amongst citizens for country efforts to counter corruption. It is an opportunity to celebrate achievements as well as acknowledging where increased efforts are needed in countering corruption. Transparency can strengthen the relationship between governments and their citizens. Honesty and integrity are the moral values that underpin any attempts to tackle corrupt practices and a commitment to a transparent review mechanism is testimony to political leadership that is mature and accountable.

Secondly, civil society can positively contribute to the implementation of the Convention and the review process. Civil society organisations, including faith groups, provide an important link to communities experiencing poverty; the review mechanism must make room for the voices of men and women living in poverty. Indeed, if those most affected by corruption are not accorded space to feed in to the review, it will be impossible to accurately measure UNCAC's effectiveness.

A review mechanism that is founded upon the principles of transparency and civil society participation will send a clear signal to poor communities that to those they have entrusted power and responsibility are ready and willing to end the scourge of corruption for the benefit of all.