



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

144th IPU Assembly

Nusa Dua, Indonesia
20-24 March 2022



Panel discussion *International cooperation to prosecute corruption and recover stolen assets*

*Organized jointly by the IPU and the Global Organization of
Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)
Tuesday, 22 March 2022, 14:30 – 16:00
Nusantara 2 & 3, first floor, BICC*

Concept note

In 2021, the UN Member States, through a political declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its Special Session (UNGASS) on corruption, pledged to pursue a multilateral approach in preventing and combating corruption. Such an approach is justifiable, as corruption and many associated offences tend to be cross-border crimes. Moreover, the adoption of the [UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#) (UNTOC) and of the [UN Convention against Corruption](#) (UNCAC) have provided a transnational framework for dealing with such offences.

Despite the progress made with combating corruption, many powerful corrupt leaders continue to enrich themselves at the public's expense, conceal their wealth using cross-border networks, and then go unpunished. They abuse their power to gain influence and impunity with respect to their misdemeanours, while at the same time undermining the credibility of their institutions, which are designed to serve the people in good faith and with accountability. In that sense, the international community needs to strengthen its multilateral actions against corruption.

Over time, new initiatives have been introduced, including the idea to further analyse and discuss regional mechanisms for prosecution, or international mechanisms, such as establishing an International Anti-Corruption Court, as recommended by the UNODC second Global Expert Group on Corruption involving Vast Quantities of Assets.¹ Some initiatives are taking a more concrete form, such as the establishment of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network), a cross-border law enforcement hub to track, investigate and prosecute corruption, and of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), which began operations in June 2021.

An international mechanism to combat corruption will not be sufficient if countries cannot track, locate and even recover their lost assets. Various international and regional legal instruments and mechanisms for asset recovery have been implemented. These instruments could potentially benefit affected countries to allow them to rebuild what they had previously lost. Yet the path towards fair and effective asset recovery and repatriation is not always easy. During the 2021 UNGASS debate, Member States highlighted numerous challenges in recovering assets, including the conditionality imposed on asset repatriation.

¹ Oslo Statement on Corruption Involving Vast Quantities of Assets, 14 June 2019, https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/meetings/OsloEGM2019/Oslo_Outcome_Statement_on_Corruption_involving_Vast_Quantities_of_Assets_-_FINAL_VERSION.pdf

The UNCAC gives countries the opportunity to improve their international cooperation by providing scope to conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements or arrangements. However, the success of international collaboration against corruption, especially when it comes to prosecution and asset recovery, is limited by national jurisdiction. Challenges may also arise in terms of the legal system, efficiency, effectiveness and political will, among others.

Building on the work of the IPU and GOPAC in this area – including the recommendations of the 2020 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations and of the 2021 IPU-UNODC side event in the context of the UNGA Special Session on Corruption, the workshop will take stock of the current state of play, highlight good parliamentary practices and seek to identify further avenues of parliamentary action. The event is also part of efforts by both GOPAC and the IPU to strengthen interparliamentary dialogue and cooperation in accordance with [Resolution 8/14 on Promoting good practices in relation to the role of national parliaments and other legislative bodies in preventing and combating corruption in all its forms](#) adopted at the 8th session of the Conference of Parties to the UNCAC in Abu Dhabi, December 2019.

The session will address the following questions:

- What current and potential future initiatives can effectively support the international prosecution of corruption? What are the challenges, and how can parliaments address these?
- What is the current state of asset recovery mechanisms? How can parliaments work to promote fair and effective asset recovery and ensure that repatriated assets are being used effectively for the benefit of the public?
- What can the global parliamentary community – the IPU, GOPAC and national parliaments – do to keep tabs on the international anti-corruption commitments that UN Member States have made?