Welcome to the 12th International Anti-Corruption Conference. This year, the IACC asks a critical question: Why is corruption still blocking the way to a fairer world?

The question contains two important concepts. "Still" recognises a sad fact: the IACC has not yet been able to work itself out of a job. "Fair" indicates certain timeless ideals that unify our cause: justice, human rights, equality. These shared values underpin the global fight against corruption.

The first IACC was held in 1983 in Washington, DC, and examined issues in law enforcement and strategies to deter and investigate official corruption. More than two decades later, this year's IACC features eight thematic streams, that address corruption in different sectors and looks at how to strengthen anti-corruption tools and devise more effective strategies.

The IACC provides a forum for people around the world, from various fields and backgrounds, to share their experiences and knowledge of fighting corruption. It is an opportunity to assess where the fight stands, to ask what has worked and what has failed, and to understand why.

The anti-corruption movement has made tremendous strides. A major success is increased awareness. Voters in CNN's exit polls identified corruption as the number one issue in last week's mid-term elections in the USA. Awareness of corruption's devastating effects has also increased: Knowledge that it deepens poverty, distorts development, diverts humanitarian assistance; that it fuels transnational crime and undermines economic growth is now widespread.

Many effective tools to fight corruption already exist. Legal instruments such as anti-corruption conventions are in force at the regional and international level. Now the challenge is to apply these tools in the most effective way.

And yet, despite these successes, corruption remains a serious global ill. What more can be done? Where should we concentrate our efforts and what is blocking the way? The 12th IACC offers the global anti-corruption movement an opportunity to assess the roadblocks on the path to a world free of corruption. It challenges us to come up with innovative and effective solutions.

As Chairman of the IACC Council, together with my partners Guatemalan President Oscar Berger Perdomo, Chair of Transparency International Dr. Huguette Labelle and Lic. Hugo Maul Figueroa, Commissioner for Transparency against Corruption, I thank you for being part of the solution.

Barry O'Keefe

Did you know?

Coffee is the second most-valuable export of developing countries, second only to oil. Each year, over 500 billion cups of coffee are served around the world- and many of them have their origin here. Famous for its coffee, Guatemala is the world's eighth greatest coffee-producing nation. You can get yours outside each of the workshop and plenary rooms throughout the day.

Today’s Programme

09:00-11:15 Opening plenary (Convention centre, 2nd floor)
11:15-11:30 The declaration of Guatemala for a corruption-free region (Convention centre, 2nd floor)
12:30-14:00 Lunch
14:00-16:30 Workshops *
1.1. The implementation puzzle (Onix)
1.2. Human rights and anti-corruption strategies (Jade / Bronce)
1.3. Corruption hotspots (Oro/ Esmeralda)
1.4. Private interest politics (Asturias)
1.5. Enhancing anti-bribery standards in the private sector (Izabal)
1.6. Research on corruption in humanitarian assistance (Amatitlan)
1.7. Defence industry initiative against corruption (Atitlan)
1.8. Mobilising civil action to fight corruption (Peten Itza)

Special training session: Fighting clientelism in targeted social programmes (Obelisco)
Panel debate: Overcoming systemic corruption (Independencia)
17:00-18:00 Global Corruption Report 2006 Spanish edition launch (Izabal)
19:00-22:00 Opening ceremony TI Integrity Awards ceremony (Convention centre, 2nd floor)

* Workshop names have been shortened from their full titles.
Catching the corrupt: Law enforcement unites to fight corruption

Corruption is a crime. But it goes beyond that: corruption is “often a significant factor in terrorism and other international crime”, according to the Secretary General of Interpol, Ronald Noble. “It is imperative, therefore, that Interpol and its member country police services attack corruption in a focused, sustained and global manner.”

The international criminal police organisation Interpol voted unanimously to establish the first anti-corruption academy at their 75th General Assembly in September. Due to open in Vienna, Austria, in 2007, the Interpol Anti-Corruption Academy will help Interpol’s 186 member nations fight corruption through training, education and technical assistance. Officers will be taught to prevent, investigate and prosecute corruption cases, while in broader terms, the academy will help enforce the UN Convention against Corruption.

The idea for the creation of a specialised anti-corruption academy came from the Interpol Group of Experts on Corruption (IGEC). Composed of representatives from law enforcement organisations, the judiciary, the private sector, academia and international organisations, the IGEC designs anti-corruption initiatives for Interpol and its member countries acts as an advisory body to the Interpol Secretary General.

IGEC Chair Mark Gough (Deputy Director for the Investigations Division of the Office of Oversight Services at the United Nations) said “the fight against corruption has to seek innovative ways to bring together the anti-corruption community to support the UNCAC and other legal instruments. To this end, IGEC works to ensure that improved practices are shared by all”.

IGEC has taken advantage of the IACC to have one of their semi-annual meetings.

A workshop on the Role of law enforcement in the facilitation of anti-corruption instruments will take place on Friday 17 November from 11:30-14:00 in Atitlan.

Spanish launch of Global Corruption Report 2006

Transparency International will launch a Spanish edition of its Global Corruption Report 2006, focussing on corruption in the health sector, on Wednesday afternoon from 17:00-18:00 in the room Izabal.

The Global Corruption Report 2006 maps the causes and effects of corruption in the health sector, from the influence of pharmaceutical companies on medical purchasing to hospital-level bribery for access to ‘free’ health care. The Spanish edition launch will feature Malcolm Sparrow of Harvard University, speaking on the vast losses to corruption and fraud in America’s health system; Karen Hussman of the United Nations Development Programme, on corruption risks in different types of health systems; and Carlos Fonseca of Proética, the Transparency International chapter in Peru, on a recent study of procurement of medicines in Peru.

The IACC will host a workshop on Health and corruption Thursday 16 November, from 15:00-17:30 in the room Jade / Bronce.

12th IACC draft declaration

The 12th IACC invites participants to be involved in preparing the conference declaration. A draft of the declaration has been circulated in paper format. Submit your comments directly onto the draft declaration and deposit into the large wicker baskets outside the plenary room. Comments will be accepted until Friday 17 November, 12:00 noon.

More copies are available in the IACC office (Cafetal II).

For help with:

Logistics (computer problems, problems with technology for workshops, lost badges or meals tickets), contact the IACC organising company in the Cafetal I.

12th IACC programme (workshops, plenary sessions, social activities), contact the IACC staff in the Cafetal II.

Internet: Computers and internet access available free of charge in the Salón Próceres.

Photocopies: Copiers are available in the Salón Próceres.

Speakers preview room: Open from 09:00-17:00 for speakers to check presentations. Computer, printers and IT technician on hand.

Lost and found: To inquire about lost and found items contact Housekeeping.