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**Conference room paper submitted jointly by the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Enhancing synergies between anti-corruption peer review mechanisms – Joint message by the secretariats**



## **Enhancing synergies between anti-corruption peer review mechanisms - Joint message by the secretariats**

**Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption**

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions**

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption**

Twenty-five years ago, corruption was not a topic regularly discussed in international fora. Bribes were tax deductible in some countries and facilitation payments widely considered acceptable. Around the turn of the millennium, States agreed on not one, but on six international treaties against corruption, demonstrating the need and the will to combat corruption domestically and internationally. Today there is global consensus that corruption undermines the institutions and values of democracy, ethics and justice, and jeopardizes sustainable development and the rule of law, and States have unanimously decided to convene a special session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) on challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation.

Peer reviews have played a vital role in raising awareness of and addressing corruption issues on a country, regional and global level, by providing technical and objective entry points for the assessment of action taken, issuing recommendations and guidance, and facilitating dialogue with and between governments, as well as the private sector and civil society. Peer reviews provide methodologies and platforms to identify challenges in implementation, as well as good practices in preventing and combatting corruption, and serve as fora for the exchange of experiences and ideas.

Over twenty years of peer reviews have resulted in a unique overview and documentation of the challenges countries face in the implementation of treaties and soft-law instruments. As the secretariats of three of the major peer review mechanisms, it is our responsibility to assist States in assessing each other's progress and challenges, and support them in tackling corruption at domestic, regional and global levels.

Together, our respective review mechanisms cover every geographic region and almost all countries of the world. For over ten years, we, the secretariats of the international anti-corruption peer review mechanisms, have engaged in regular dialogue to discuss common issues and challenges. In the past year, this dialogue has extended to address the particular challenge of maintaining the effectiveness of anti-corruption peer review mechanisms in a time of crisis.

In the UNGASS political declaration, States underlined the importance of continued coordination between relevant international and regional organizations in the field of anti-corruption with a view to further facilitating and enhancing synergies. We use the opportunity of this call by States to renew our commitment to work together to achieve our common goals, and to combine our knowledge and

experience to strengthen our synergies, in particular to strengthen implementation of the Conventions of our respective Organisations.

In particular, we commit, within our respective mandates, rules of procedure and terms of reference, to:

- Continue to exchange and combine our experience, expertise and knowledge, with a view to supporting the development and dissemination of anti-corruption tools, products and guidance
- Strengthen our active dialogue with a view to enhancing the performance of the anti-corruption review mechanisms, maximising the effectiveness of our work and avoiding duplication of efforts, including by sharing experience on good practices and challenges in the conduct, development and planning of peer reviews
- Enhance information sharing amongst Secretariats about meetings of our review groups, country visit schedules, country monitoring reports and guidance produced
- Continue to explore the possibility, where feasible and desired, of conducting country reviews or visits jointly
- Make use of, and refer to, the findings of other peer review mechanisms where appropriate and relevant
- Work towards further streamlining internal mechanisms for ensuring quality and consistency of country review reports, including using simple, measurable and practicable recommendations that focus on core issues and provide criteria for assessing progress in implementation
- Improve cooperation in particular with a view to enhancing follow-up to recommendations, at the request of our Member States, such as through assisting in the development of follow-up action plans, exploring the possibility of return country visits to present reports and garner support for recommendations, including for the purpose of technical assistance where appropriate and requested
- Further explore practical measures to exchange primary information, such as legislation and statistics
- Ensure the information collected and experience and knowledge gained through the country reviews are used to support implementation of recommendations and inform country, regional and global anti-corruption efforts.

We also welcome the cooperation with the other monitoring mechanisms, including those of the Organization of American States, the African Union and the League of Arab States, and will continue working towards increasing synergies and collaboration with their secretariats.

Our Member States' continuous commitment to and support for the peer review mechanisms is essential to ensure real progress and illustrates the political will of the global community to work together in combatting corruption and to share experiences, good practices and lessons learned. We are committed to supporting our Member States in making full use of these peer review mechanism and assisting one another in addressing challenges to achieve incremental policy transformations and credible and long-lasting sustainable results. We also reiterate our commitment to work together with our respective Member States to continue to support efforts towards enhancing synergies between the peer review mechanisms.

As the Secretariats of three of the major mechanisms, we pledge to continue to join forces to maximize impact, towards our common goal of substantially reducing corruption in all its forms.