

Multi-Stakeholder Regional Consensus Conference
The preventive dimension in the fight against corruption and new forms of organized crime

A G20 ACWG Side-Event - Brasília, June 12, 2025

Welcome and Opening Speech

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Your Excellencies, Esteemed Colleagues, Distinguished participants, Dear Friends,

it is a great pleasure and a true honor for me to speak at this initiative, which reinforces the principles of international cooperation in the fight against corruption, within the framework of the ambitious goals of the G20 and of the European Union's "El Pacto," under the umbrella of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

A special thanks to the Italian-Latinoamerican International Organization (IILA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy for their excellent cooperation, which has allowed us to carry out important technical assistance initiatives and to intensify and deepen our country's friendly relations with the Institutions of Latin America. Indeed, Italy can boast a very special cultural and historical closeness with all Latin American Countries; a bond [*bound: legame*] that now, thanks to El Pacto, will also acquire a European dimension. And also a global dimension in the G20 framework.

Legal diplomacy is a fundamental tool not only for spreading a good culture in the fight against corruption and organized crime but also for laying the foundations of relations between nations and fostering dialogue and mutual enrichment among peoples. It can act as a bridge between national institutions and global forums, so that strategic decisions made at the highest levels can then be translated into effective local policies.

As President of the ***Italian National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC)***, I want to confirm our commitment and interest in working with the colleagues of authorities and institutions in Latin American countries that are involved in the fight-against and prevention of corruption.

As a President of **European Network of Public Ethics and of the Network of Integrity**, I can testify to the importance of horizontal cooperation between authorities and institutions engaged in preventing corruption and promoting the culture of ethics. And also how such forms of cooperation constitute a valuable tool for exchanging good practices, learning from each other, and strengthening our institutions to pursue our common goals more effectively, at national and international level.

We all know that corruption has a big negative impact in our economies. But is not only that. Corruption erodes democracy, frustrate trust in institutions, weaken rule of law, undermines human rights. It is also a fundamental obstacle to eradicating

poverty, it exacerbates inequalities and has a negative impact on security and stability at all levels.

Today, corruption is even more dangerous because it adopts techniques, has learned to manage new technologies, and in many cases is linked to organized crime and mafia. Indeed, old and new criminal organizations have now incorporated corruption into the mafia method, using it, when possible, instead of intimidation and violence.

Today, the suitcases full of cash have given way to creative financial tricks, cryptocurrencies, fictitious consultations, fake contracts, and clientelistic favors.

In any case, Corruption mostly continues to be an elusive phenomenon, that grows in opacity and thrives in collusion. For this, today more than in the past, it is crucial to invest in **prevention and** to refine the tools to intercept risks and prevent corrupt behavior, before it occurs and infects society and institutions. We have then to reinforce our prevention techniques and share our best practices.

But also that is not enough. Let me to highlight another key element that is crucial to achieve consensus and reinforce commitment of all stakeholders and qualified actors that we need as allies in pursuing our goals: for that reason, it is essential to **avoid that anti-corruption rules are applied and perceived as a bureaucratic burden**. On the contrary, they should be designed so that, in addition to preventing illegal conduct and wast of public money, they also help ensure greater efficiency in the activities of public administration- And that is easier today thanks to digitalization.

In conclusion, in light of our experience, we can confirm that the goal of an effective anti-corruption strategy must be not only to prevent corruption crimes but also to affirm a new public ethics that restores trust in institutions, through which public officials are not mere executors of obligations, but know how to create value through innovation, dialogue, collaboration, and interaction with citizens and the many souls of society.

In this sense, preventing corruption is also a fundamental element to create a participatory, stable, and just democratic environment.

We, ANAC, IILA, and all Italian and European institutions represented in “El Pacto,” stand by the institutions and citizens of Latin American countries interested in embarking on or completing this path. This is part of the friendship that unites us and of a consolidated relationship that can thus be enriched with new and challenging perspectives.

Thank you very much for joining us on this fascinating journey, and thank you for your attention.