

# **2025 IAACA Annual Conference**

## ***Integrity for the Future: Innovation, Collaboration & Action against Corruption***

**Doha, 13 December 2025**

### **Plenary Session**

#### **Sub-theme “*Building Bridges: Strengthening International Cooperation for a Corruption-Free World*”**

#### ***International cooperation from talk to action: building bridges through technology***

Distinguished participants, Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and honour to be here with you today at the IAACA Annual Conference. This event presents a valuable opportunity for us to discuss a range of issues that are highly relevant to our work.

I would therefore like to thank everyone who made this inspiring conference possible. Special thanks go to President Mr Danny Y M Woo, Secretary-General Mr Chin Kit Cheung and the entire IAACA Executive Committee, as well as the officials and staff who support them. Of course, a heartfelt thank you also goes to the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority of Qatar, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Independent Commission Against Corruption, who are co-hosting this important initiative.

I would also like to thank everyone present for taking part in this event. Your presence here today is proof that we all share a common agenda.

In a global context characterised by conflicts, international tensions and selfishness, it is crucial to build bridges, not walls. Walls divide, break up communities, isolate people, limit opportunities, and restrict horizons. Bridges, on the other hand, unite people, encourage sharing, open doors to dialogue and mutual understanding, and create opportunities. Therefore, if we wish to establish a more peaceful, prosperous and fairer world, the future must be built on bridges.

In the fight against corruption, building bridges means collaborating internationally, developing cross-border tools, sharing experiences and best practices, making knowledge available to colleagues in other countries, working together and networking.

In the current scenario, no State – not even those that have made the most progress – can truly expect to preserve the integrity of public space alone. And public space is above all an area where citizens can enjoy their rights and opportunities, and is therefore particularly precious.

Therefore, cooperation in the fight against corruption is a prerequisite for collaboration in any other area.

We all agree on this, as is confirmed by our presence here today.

But that's not enough. Let's stop reiterating things we already know. It's time to take a further step: we need to be more concrete. Saying we must cooperate is not constructive; we've been saying this for years.

The time has come to explain how we must cooperate, through which channels and with which tools. We must find new languages in which

to dialogue; otherwise, our exhortations will remain a vain echo in the wilderness.

### **Technology can be a valuable ally in this respect.**

Firstly, cooperation is achieved through communication, and today **technology allows us to communicate much more effectively than ever before**. Digital technologies are changing the landscape of communication and collaboration deeply, transforming their methods and scale, and overcoming geographical and temporal barriers. Consider, for instance, the possibility of using communication and collaboration tools, such as online platforms, video conferencing, shared documents, and chat.

The IAACA website is an excellent example of this with its three sections 'News', 'Newsletter' and 'e-Alerts', which provide constant, near-real-time updates on all events of interest to members and stakeholders.

Secondly, **technology fosters cooperation by facilitating translation**: both the linguistic translation of content and the technical transposition of tools. Thanks to artificial intelligence, these processes are now incredibly simple and quick, instantly removing any barriers that would previously have impeded any form of dialogue.

Ease of translation, in turn, **fosters the exchange of materials** by transcending linguistic and cultural differences. In the fight against corruption, this essentially means sharing experiences and best practices – the key to any kind of cooperation.

Fourth, technology **enables reuse**, that is, it offers the opportunity to share and pool tools. For example, consider the possibility of sharing whistleblowing platforms, such as GlobaLeaks and Whistlelink, or civic consultation software, which, thanks to artificial intelligence, can now be easily adapted to specific contexts. In this regard, Decidim is a notable case: an open-source participatory democracy software

developed by the City of Barcelona and subsequently reused in numerous countries, including Italy, which based its ParteciPa platform on it.

Fifthly, digitalisation **simplifies processes** and allows various global players to **share ways of improving efficiency**. This is an essential component of cooperation in the fight against corruption.

Sixthly, **technology is transforming the events sector**, enabling us to participate in initiatives on the other side of the world with a single click. And we all know that international conferences provide opportunities for dialogue and encounters, laying the foundation for future collaborations and synergies between entities that are geographically and historically distant.

Seventhly, **digitalisation simplifies categorisation**. Technology allows for the reuse and exchange of metadata produced by different actors, as well as cooperation between different institutions. A metadata-based approach enables us to move beyond the traditional concept of a catalogue as an ordered list based on a specific principle and predetermined structure. This allows us to present and access information in a more open and flexible way. This flexibility is an important factor in facilitating international cooperation, particularly in sectors such as the fight against corruption, where easy access to information is essential for an effective strategy.

This is linked to another benefit: the eighth one. **Technology provides standardised metrics and measurement tools**, enabling a uniform assessment of phenomena. Consider how important this could be in developing a shared methodology for measuring the risk of corruption and the effectiveness of prevention measures.

Digitalisation also **enables the interoperability of data and tools**. Where once each country jealously guarded its own records, which were often incompatible, technology now allows them to be aligned. Common interfaces, shared standards and interoperable platforms

make it possible to trace complex financial paths that cross multiple jurisdictions, thereby consolidating investigative efforts and drastically reducing the grey areas in which corruption flourishes.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook **the resources specifically offered by artificial intelligence. Advanced data analysis systems** can identify anomalies, recurring patterns and suspicious transactions that would be difficult for a human team to detect. It's like having a tireless observer working day and night, providing States with the concrete tools they need for rapid intervention. When these tools are shared across multiple countries, they form a global safety net.

Finally, digitalisation must concern **people** as well as tools. Investing in digital skills for public officials, judges, journalists and civil society members in different countries fosters a shared language and culture of integrity. When shared, culture becomes collaboration.

In conclusion, dear friends, digitalisation is not a magic wand, but it is the greatest opportunity international cooperation has ever had to build bridges against corruption.

It is the possibility of transforming political will into concrete action. Distrust into trust. Opacity into transparency. It is the chance to unite a global community that refuses to compromise on legality.

Today, we have the duty and the privilege of making this transformation a reality.

Thank you.