

## Reflection on the G20 ministerial communique in particular to fighting corruption during emergency issues: overview on the future commitments

Virtual conference organised by Supreme Audit Institution of UAE in coordination with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). The title of the conference is “Challenges and approaches to prevent corruption outbreak during times of crises” with the focus on the collaboration between Supreme Audit Institutions and Anti-Corruption Authorities. The conference will see keynote addresses from a high senior official of UNODC, the President of Accounts Chamber of Russia as the chairman of INTOSAI and the President of the Austrian Court of Audit as the Secretary General of INTOSAI.

President Al Amimi, esteemed colleagues,

It is a true honor to participate to this remarkable initiative in times of great worries.

As we all know, the devastating impact of corruption on economic growth worsens during emergency situations. The Covid-19 pandemic hits all economies globally, increasing, at the same time, corruption risks. The health sector is particularly exposed to corruption because of the immediate need for medical supplies (and hence simplification of procurement rules). Bribery in the health care sector makes medical services more expensive and less accessible by the more vulnerable populations. Conflicts of interest may arise around contracts and funding for research on vaccines, clinical trial of drugs and pharmaceuticals. Corrupt practices may affect the public and the private sectors, and be related to the procurement system, bribery in medical-related services, corruption in new product research and development and fraud related to the marketing of counterfeit medical products, among others risks.

At the same time, the mobilization of massive resource to respond to the health and economic crises creates opportunities for corruption and fraud, in times when many corruption prevention and enforcement mechanisms are suspended due to the emergency.

As stated in the Anti-Corruption Ministerial Communiqué of October 2020, the G twenty is committed to promoting inclusive, sustainable and equitable growth for all through the wider participation of the private sector and of civil society and through the improvement of procurement laws, regulations and internal and external audits.

Thanks to its experience in harmonizing common standards among national legal frameworks, the G20, through its Anti-Corruption Working Group, continues to be a crucial focal point to strengthen integrity, transparency and accountability within the global fight against corruption.

The Italian G20 presidency, in line with the work of our predecessors, will work closely with all Partners to develop a strong and lasting commitment to prevent and fight corruption in times when corruption risks are most widespread, starting with the 2022-2024 Action Plan on the emerging priorities. This is particularly crucial in view of the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on corruption, scheduled for June 2021.

Special attention will be given to the protection of the financial resources that will be poured into countries: this is in fact an unique opportunity to start changing for the better and forever the machine of public investments, with the transition, for example, to native digital competitions. Public contracts are a very powerful meeting place between public and private, but a strong injection of digital innovation is needed to make a leap in the relationship between companies and public administration.

Overall, we need to overcome the assumption that simplification equals less transparency.

Anac is committed to work in that direction. The importance - underlined by the European Commission in the "Rule of law of the Union"'s report - of having brought together in a single independent authority the mandates of corruption prevention and regulation of public contracts is a strategic advantage for Italy. It is in fact a guarantee not only internally, but also towards the European institutions and other Member States, to ensure that the funds allocated to the country are truly intended for large investments and future generations in a framework of good administration, integrity and transparency.

We are looking forward to following up and further developing the remarkable work coordinated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the risks related to the Covid-19's threat both through the "Call to Action" and the "Compendium of good practices", by issuing High Principles on addressing global emergencies trough the coordinated actions of all G20 countries. Italy would like to count on Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in the coordination of this effort, which is a crucial challenge for the coming years.

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