

Statement by Finland in the high-level segment of the International Anti-Corruption Conference 2018 in Copenhagen

The issue of joint effort and responsibility in anti-corruption measures cannot be over-emphasized. Finland would like to take this opportunity to stress that all countries regardless of levels of corruption, must play an active role in this regard. In short, there is no room for complacency, inaction or short-sightedness in any society. Due to the severe adverse effects of corruption, such commitment is needed across borders, in the south and the north, across sectors and levels of society.

Finland is firmly committed to the fight against corruption both nationally and abroad within all of our international cooperation. As a country, we are highly aware of the fact that we simply cannot lean back and enjoy our seemingly excellent ratings of low corruption.

Corruption is often linked to other economic crime, and more attention should be paid to identification of corruption in connection with crime of this nature. Identification not only requires knowledge of the essential elements of offences but also an ability to detect typical or abnormal practices for different operating environments. Cases that come to the knowledge of the law enforcement authorities and other authorities show that there is a high risk of corruption, particularly in public procurement carried out at the local level.

On 28 April 2016, the Government appointed a parliamentary monitoring group for tackling the shadow economy and economic crime. The monitoring group's task is to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for Tackling the Shadow Economy and Economic Crime for 2016–2020. Measures of key importance were selected for the action plan in order to meet objectives of the strategy. One of the key measures is *enhancing the prevention, identification and detection of corruption*.

More precisely this measure aims to:

- promote detection of corruption offences and imposition of criminal liability through targeted education and by preparing corruption identification guidelines for all authorities involved in the process of combating crime
- support, besides measures to combat corruption, further development of cooperation between criminal investigation and other authorities and thereby enhance the process of combating crime
- prevent corruption by enhancing monitoring of procurement and expanding procurement units' access to information as well as by increasing procurement units' opportunities to intervene in cases of corruption they detect. Corruption will be prevented both through legislative reforms and guidance, and particularly by providing practical information to procurement units

- facilitate anonymous/confidential reporting of suspected corruption, strengthen the capacity of authorities receiving reports of corruption to process the reports effectively and confidentially, reinforce cooperation between the authorities, and strengthen key structures for protecting whistle blowers.

In an effort to increase the effectiveness of our anti-corruption work even further, we are in the process of drafting a national anti-corruption strategy, the first of its kind in the Finnish context. The aim of the strategy is to:

- reinforce institutional structures and capacities,
- increase awareness and transparency,
- promote research and detection, and
- ensure that corruption-related legislation is adequate.

The preparation of the strategy is in line with the recommendations issued by the UN, the OECD, the Council of Europe and the EU to Finland to reinforce its anti-corruption work. We are doing our utmost to ensure that the fight against corruption is mainstreamed across government and its activities. In the process, we are building partnerships across sectors and levels of society, acknowledging that this is a project that must bring the whole of society together.

During this ambitious but necessary process, we have adopted a facts-based approach. It goes without saying, that recommendations from different international organisations and their evaluation teams have been instrumental when planning ahead.

Keeping Finland's high level in civil service ethics needs continuous work. The goal is that Finland will also in the future be among the top OECD countries in integrity and ethics. The goal of the Finnish Open Government work is to increase the trust of citizens towards government and to stabilize it on high level. This is only possible if the structures of the government, its functions, the services it provides and its reforms are understandable to citizens and if participation in policy-making, service planning and in the development of the welfare society is possible. Enhancing open government needs to be part of all work and development of the public administration.

In international relations, including development cooperation, Finland will continue to support the implementation of SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions both at global level as with the partner countries. For example, in order to help developing country partners Finland has established a Tax and Development Action Program (TDAP). The implementation of the programme aims at coherent policies, financial and technical support to curb the illicit financial flows. In the Addis Tax Initiative we have committed to doubling Finland's support for strengthening developing countries' domestic resource mobilization by 2020.

Finland has no tolerance for corruption and will fully implement the international anti-corruption commitments in development cooperation. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will establish a comprehensive risk management policy in line with the international and national recommendations. These commitments require continuous awareness raising, and capacity

building of all stakeholders. Effective and responsible development cooperation calls for an open distribution of information by both donors and recipients of aid. Citizens and the media in both developing and donor countries have the right to know where and how public funds are spent. Transparency reduces the risk of misuse of funds.

Finally, Finland acknowledges that unless a Government is serious about tackling the challenges of corruption there is only a limited amount of success that civil society, the press, civil servants and the judiciary will have rooting out the problems related to corruption.

Strong Anti-Corruption work contributes to the strengthening of good governance and democracy and building transparent, effective and accountable institutions, at the same time creating an environment, which supports investment and boosts entrepreneurship. This is in our mutual benefit.