

Welcome Mr. Mohamed Bachir Rachdi, Chairperson of the National Authority for Probity, Prevention and Fight Against Corruption in Morocco. Seize the opportunity to congratulate him for his appointment.

Welcome national partners including representatives of the INPLCC, the Ombudsmen institution, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Administration Reform, Central Bank, and the General Delegation of the Penitentiaries and Reinsertion Administration (DGPAR).

Welcome Representatives of Anti-Corruption Agencies, ministries and civil society from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Tunisia + experts from partner countries including Moldova, Ukraine and Italy.

Corruption robs public institutions such as schools, hospitals and others of vitally needed funds and directly affects the availability and quality of public services. It is present in all countries, rich and poor, developed and developing, in varying degrees. The costs of corruption are substantial. Although these costs are hard to measure properly, a sense of the size of this phenomenon can be gauged from bribes paid every year in both developing countries and advanced economies. The annual costs of corruption can reach up to \$3.6 trillion in the form of bribes and stolen money according to the statement of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

More countries in the Arab region are paying attention to anti-corruption in recent years. Several steps forward have been made. In the latest Corruption Perception Index 7 Arab countries progressed. However, challenges persist across the region, in different shapes and forms, but so does the desire to achieve additional progress.

UNDP had been at the forefront of anti-corruption and integrity cooperation with Arab countries for many years. We are committed to continue our work to contribute to related reform efforts.

This regional workshop, we are convened for here today, constitutes an important milestone in the framework of this partnership.

The importance of this workshop manifests itself its three dimensions:

- First, it brings together governmental and non-governmental practitioners, thus reinforcing the critical value of a participatory approach in preventing and combatting corrupting and the added value of collective action to tackle this phenomenon.
- Second, it focuses on prevention. Indeed, traditional anti-corruption approaches have always restricted related actions to punitive approaches and criminal law enforcement. While that is important, comparative experiences show us clearly the importance of prevention. Prevention is not only limited to awareness like many people might think but is holistic and targeted approach centered around concrete standards and practical tools.
- The third dimension is innovation. The workshop will showcase the latest innovations in corruption prevention and their successful applications around the world including management of corruption risks, behavioral insights, use of technology, social accountability, collective action, and corruption proofing of legal texts.

Our gathering here today is not just an event. It is part and parcel of a larger process. The conclusions and recommendations of your workshop will serve as the basis for follow-up support to governmental and non-governmental actors across the region.

This follow up will be implemented in the framework of the new phase of the UNDP regional project on “Anti-Corruption and Integrity in Arab Countries”, which UNDP announced, in partnership with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), on 9 December 2019 – on the International Anti-Corruption Day.

ACIAC’s main objectives are: (1) Support the development and implementation of laws required by the UN Convention against Corruption; (2) Institutionalize corruption prevention methods at the level of priority government sectors to enhance their effectiveness and (3) Mobilize knowledge and capacities to contribute to the achievement of SDG 16.

With your valuable contributions and the commitment of the UNDP-ACIAC team to its partnership with each and every single one of your institutions, this regional workshop will undoubtedly be a great opportunity to enhance cooperation among all stakeholders

and across sectors, including here in Morocco, but also elsewhere. In this country, our Office is committed to the closely collaborating with the government, the national authority and civil society in this regard, building on the good work that has been done in the past, and the current projects that we are implementing now.

I conclude by thanking the National Authority for Probity, Prevention and Fight Against Corruption (INPLCC) and Morocco as a whole for hosting this regional event and thank you all for being a part of it, wishing you good luck and fruitful deliberations!

Stay safe and enjoy your stay in this beautiful city.