

ICHA 2023: Abidjan's Call for Collective Action in an Era of Crises

16 June 2023

The World Bank Group wishes to thank His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, for welcoming us in African hospitality, to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on June 14, 2023, for the fifth edition of the International Corruption Hunters Alliance (ICHA);

On June 14-16, 2023, responding to the challenges presented by the damages caused by corruption but also the opportunities arising from intensification of global interest in effective measures to address it, and taking advantage of the convening power of ICHA, the fifth meeting provided leaders from national government agencies, anticorruption authorities, investigatory and prosecutorial agencies, regional and international organizations, the private sector as well as civil society and academia a platform for dialogue on anticorruption challenges and priorities, in support of advancing the global anticorruption agenda.

Participants exchanged ideas and expertise to identify shared priorities that all stakeholders can seek to advance – whether through policy, diplomacy, foreign assistance, or other action – follow the Forum's conclusion. The Forum discussions contributed to areas for heightened collaborations across, with a focus on implementation and real-world impact.

Reaffirm the important role of ICHA and similar anticorruption gatherings as global platforms for bridging the gap between dialogue and action, to showcase knowledge from all corners of the world, and to convene important actors to draw attention to best practices, solutions, and forward-looking recommendations in the fight against corruption;

Underscore the importance of addressing corruption as a development problem. Corruption risks can be found across all sectors and in all countries, but they can be particularly devastating for the poorest and most marginalized people in society, and have pernicious impacts in the context of fragility and conflict and during the response and recovery efforts for emergencies;

Emphasize that combating corruption is a shared responsibility of both developing and developed countries, and there is a need for both to take action as a matter of urgency;

Acknowledge the growing convergence between the global community's work to advance financial transparency, accountability, and integrity standards, particularly through anticorruption coalition building;

Commend efforts and acknowledge progress made in the fight against corruption, through effective collaborations and joint engagements of several institutions, such as joint capacity building between the World Bank Group, UNODC, OECD and civil society organizations, including Transparency International and Accountability Lab;

Recall the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the United Nations, and in particular SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, United Nations Declaration against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) 40 recommendations;

Recognize the importance and impact of accountable institutions and the rule of law in addressing corruption. Transparency has value in its own right, but without accountability it will not be sufficient to control corruption. Justice and the rule of law are the foundations for anticorruption deterrents, while bringing other benefits in terms of economic and human well-being. Building and sustaining the capacity and independence of institutions, particularly the judiciary and justice system, are also key elements;

Acknowledge the importance and impact of enhancing beneficial ownership transparency helps reduce opportunities to conceal the proceeds of corruption, illicit financial flows, and cross-border transfer of corrupt and stolen assets;

Recognize procurement and contract management persist as areas of corruption risk that warrant continued attention, including efforts to make open contracting a global norm;

Encourage social accountability in the fight against corruption through training, whistleblower protection programs, and promoting zero tolerance for corruption at the societal level, with more focused consideration of women and youth as essential to anticorruption efforts;

Emphasize the important role of the private sector – from serving as a source of advocacy and collective action to promote reform, to adopting compliance programs to business contributions to capacity building – and support further engagement between government and business and civil society to those ends.

Promote anti-corruption measures by active involvement and participation of anticorruption practitioners, national government agencies, anticorruption authorities, investigatory and prosecutorial agencies, regional and international organizations, private sector as well as civil society and academia, with a focus on FCV countries to build resilient and strong institutions.
