

International Anti-Corruption Conference 2012
“Mobilising People: Connecting Agents of Change”
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IACC 2012 OPENING ADDRESS
Deputy Secretary-General Richard Boucher

- Ministers, Excellencies, fellow panelists. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.
- I want to start by thanking our Brazilian hosts, especially President Dilma Rousseff and Comptroller General, Minister Jorge Hage for their commitment to combat corruption, and to thank them and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transparency International, the Ethos Institute and Amarribo for organising this extraordinary conference.
- It is an honour and a privilege for me to be here with all of you today.
- I wish to congratulate you on the commitment you all have made to combating and preventing corruption around the globe.

Global context:

- As our economic forecasts say that the world economy is weak, especially in Europe. where there is growth, China, India and Brazil for example, it is losing momentum, and growth in the US is still not stable and strong. The recovery process will be long and challenging with many downside risks.
- In many countries, inequality has also grown before and during the crisis, leading to questions about whether the system is fair, whether governments support all their citizens or merely protect the privileged.
- Public trust between government and the people has been severely damaged. In the global Occupy Wall Street and the recent Spanish *Indignados* movement, people demanded greater accountability. In last year’s Arab Spring, people took to the streets to demand open government. Now more than ever, governments need to meet the expectations of societies for fairness. Stopping corruption makes the system more fair.
- Even if you're not taking to the streets, where budgets are tight and demand for accountability is growing, taxpayers expect more efficiency and more transparency when it comes to their money.
- So, transparency is critical for government to recapture the trust of their people. Public confidence, in turn, animates the economy and strengthens stability.

- Those of us who come to these conferences have an opportunity to collaborate in order to achieve better results.
- First and foremost, we must share information. We must learn from one another's good practices and promote common efforts. Restoring trust is extremely difficult, and there are a few "quick wins". Building trust requires good policies, built on robust evidence and drawing on good practice.
- This is where the OECD can help. At OECD, we learn from each other in seeking what we call "better policies for better lives."
- The OECD has undertaken important steps at assessing the progress achieved by states, aiding them in identifying gaps, ensuring comprehensive implementation and tracking performance based on international benchmarks, for example in areas such as lobbying, public procurement and conflict of interest.
- CleanGovBiz, our new integrity toolkit, supports governments to build integrity and fight corruption together with business and civil society. At the website, cleangovbiz.org, and through our work with individual countries, we provide practical tools to improve public sector integrity, public procurement, company practices, the prosecution of bribery, and a dozen other areas to prevent and stop corruption.
- OECD peer reviews in specific areas like regulation or corporate governance enhance structural reforms by offering a framework to compare experiences and examine best practices.
- Of particular note are the 40 members of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, including Brazil and South Africa, who have committed to combat corruption by making it illegal to offer, solicit or give bribes to foreign officials. The anti-bribery working group conducts demanding evaluations that include meetings with law enforcement authorities, key public institutions, the private sector and civil society.
- As you know from our recent reports, the working group stresses, above all, the actual enforcement of anti-bribery laws. To date, 210 individuals and 90 entities have been sanctioned for foreign bribery and more countries are starting investigations and prosecutions. But, this is clearly not enough since bribery is still all too common in international transactions.
- The countries with the most effective enforcement records are the ones where prevention and detection measures – including whistleblower protection mechanisms, lobbying regulation, conflict of interest and private disclosure policies, to name a few – are the strongest. A comprehensive approach is essential; and a comprehensive approach must include enforcement.
- The G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan endorses the UN Convention and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and calls on its countries to actively engage with the OECD in fighting foreign bribery. So, we are working with China, India and Indonesia as they pass and implement anti-bribery laws. We will welcome them at OECD to participate in the same review process as their peers.

- Let me take a moment to applaud Brazil for leading the charge in its work against corruption. Brazil has a comprehensive approach to fighting corruption and a commitment to implement its commitment and laws.
- Brazil was the first G20 country to carry out an OECD *Public Sector Integrity Review* in 2010. The OECD is now conducting a peer review of Italy. Yesterday, we presented to Latin America's auditors a peer review of Brazil's supreme audit institution (the Federal Court of Accounts) looking at its important contribution to government accountability in comparison with the practices in a dozen or more other countries.
- Brazil, the United States and six other countries founded the *Open Government Partnership* in 2011, a multilateral initiative to promote transparency and harness new technologies for good public governance. Brazil also founded the *Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency* in 2012, a multilateral initiative to enhance transparency, citizen engagement and accountability in fiscal management.
- So what can you do as citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations? Civil society plays a crucial role. First, by demanding transparency and accountability. Second, by placing pressure on governments to end impunity for corruption. Third by monitoring, analyzing and reporting on what you see and what we release.
- The OECD makes sure that citizens have an important say in evaluating countries' performance on good governance, integrity, fighting corruption and stopping foreign bribery.
- Recent events show that you have power. You have the power to blow the whistle. You have the power to demand accountability. You have the power to demand transparency. And let's not forget that you also have the power to demand more from your government, and to support those who provide a transparent and healthy environment for government, for business and for society.
- You are the agents of change. We stand ready to support efforts that mobilise people toward a future where we can achieve together our goal of better policies for better lives. All of you play a vital role. All of us play a vital role.
- Thank you very much.