

**Remarks of Joseph Gangloff
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**FIFTH GLOBAL FORUM ON FIGHTING CORRUPTION AND SAFEGUARDING
INTEGRITY
SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA
APRIL 2, 2007**

Minister Fraser-Moleketi, Your Excellencies, Ministers, Deputies, Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Ladies and Gentlemen, All Protocols Observed:

The United States welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Fifth Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity.

For me personally, it is a particular pleasure and honor to have been invited to participate in this opening plenary session.

I have had the privilege of participating in each Global Forum since the process began in 1999. Having served as a planner and presenter in the previous Forums, I deeply appreciate the enthusiasm of participants to share experiences in order to better understand the challenges that we face. I am confident that each of us will be energized and inspired during this Forum.

The United States thanks our hosts, the Government of the Republic of South Africa, for its efforts in planning this Global Forum.

Before I begin my formal presentation, I would like to note that my delegation will be releasing its national statement tomorrow. That statement will provide detailed information about the domestic and international anticorruption efforts of the United States.

This afternoon, I would like to suggest some practical observations that may help guide us in our discussions this week as we address the most significant common challenges of effectively confronting corruption.

The theme for this Global Forum -- "Fulfilling Our Commitments: Effective Action Against Corruption" -- is particularly timely.

The theme reflects the substantial progress that has been made in meeting the initial objectives of the Global Forum process that was launched at the First Global Forum on Fighting Corruption held eight years ago in the United States.

The UN Convention Against Corruption: a New Framework for Global Action

At the time of the First Global Forum, there were few international commitments relating to corruption.

The first anticorruption treaty -- the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption -- had been finalized only three years earlier. The OECD Convention Against Bribery in International Business Transactions was only in its infant stage.

How times have changed.

As you know, shortly following the Second Global Forum in 2001, more than 130 nations gathered in Vienna to develop the first truly globally negotiated treaty against corruption. The result was the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

The Convention was completed soon after the Third Global Forum in 2003. It entered into force in 2005 -- the same year as the Fourth Global Forum.

The United Nations Convention goes far beyond any previously existing international anticorruption commitments.

It provides a comprehensive and formal vehicle for global action against corruption.

The theme of this Global Forum is action.

As we move forward with collective and individual action, the comprehensive commitments of the United Nations Convention provide the clear path. The Convention provides the framework for effective global action.

The Global Forum process deserves high praise for moving the international community to where we are today. We should congratulate the International Organizing Committee and the various Global Forum host nations.

The Global Forum process has achieved far more than its original goals of focusing high-level governmental attention on the shared problem of corruption, increasing international cooperation in this area, and promoting global anticorruption standards and actions.

Now, it is time to move beyond the Global Forum process to focus global resources on the United Nations Convention and its implementation.

A new global intergovernmental process began in 2006 -- the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention -- which we believe will take the original goals of the Global Forum on Fighting Corruption to a new level -- reaching beyond political commitment to achieve effective global action.

Shared Actions

Everyone here recognizes that the fight against corruption cannot occur in isolation. This has been the message of past Global Forums, as well as of international agreements such as the United Nations Convention.

Nations must work together on a number of fronts.

Over the period spanned by the past two Global Forums in Seoul and Brasilia, the international community has recognized that combating high-level corruption and tracing stolen assets are efforts of great importance to us all. Denying safe haven to the illicit proceeds of corruption and to individual corrupt actors is critical.

Numerous multilateral groups -- such as the Group of Eight (G8), the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the OECD-UNDP "Good Governance for Development in Arab States" (GfD) Initiative -- have embraced the concept of denying safe haven to corrupt actors and to the proceeds of their corruption.

Denying safe havens can only work if there is cooperation and joint action among multiple nations. Otherwise, corrupt actors will simply look elsewhere, identifying and taking advantage of vulnerable gaps.

The international community must give prompt, effective attention to those involved in grand corruption. This particularly lethal level of corruption robs nations and citizens of their hopes and future.

Shared Responsibility

Each of us must take responsibility for ensuring that corruption does not flourish within our own backyards.

The United Nations Convention provides a framework: the Convention calls for targeted prevention measures and for clear actions to criminalize corrupt conduct.

Moving to action means honoring these commitments -- and also ensuring that criminal laws are enforced and applied equitably.

Recently, the Africa Forum on Fighting Corruption emphasized the importance to the region of speedy ratification of, and accession to, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

We should all cooperate with and support those countries that are committed to establishing and implementing laws that will give practical effect to the letter and spirit of this instrument.

Moving Forward

Although we come from different backgrounds and political systems, we all understand that safeguarding our economic and political systems is critical to long-term peace and prosperity.

A cornerstone of the Global Forum process has been our shared desire to develop and to implement strong anticorruption principles.

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption is the most ambitious international anti-corruption effort in history. Notably, the asset recovery chapter of the Convention provides the first intergovernmental framework for cooperating in asset recovery cases.

In closing, we are indebted to the leading countries and distinguished officials who through the Global Forum and other intergovernmental processes have shared a unifying conviction to reject a culture of corruption in every corner of the world.

There is a saying that “a rising tide lifts all boats.”

Our collective vision -- carried through the Global Forum process and leading to the United Nations Convention -- has been that rising tide, lifting our communities closer to the ultimate goal of government without corruption.

Thank you.