

Remarks by Richard Boucher, Deputy Secretary General of the
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

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- Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour and a great pleasure to join you here in Palermo, where ten years ago the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime was signed. I would like to especially thank the Italian delegation to this Assembly for its invitation to join the panel on the Fight against Corruption. Thank you, also, to the Sicilian Regional Assembly for hosting us.
- Parliaments and the OSCE are important partners in the fight against corruption. You all know better than I do that corruption has a devastating effect on our economies, our governments and the citizens that you serve. In developed and developing countries alike, corruption opens doors to other crimes and in the end, its victims are the most vulnerable, those who pay the price are the poorest.
- We at the OECD take our responsibility seriously. For ten years, we have led the fight against the bribery of foreign public officials in cross-border business deals with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.
- The Convention, as many of you know, is the first and only international instrument that focuses on foreign bribery, which is a very specific form of corruption. However, foreign bribery is one that occurs repeatedly in big international business transactions, such as winning a construction contract, an oil or gas concession, or an operating license.
- This kind of corruption distorts global competition and global markets. Second, it causes tremendous harm to the countries where it occurs.
- Thirty-eight countries have committed themselves to the fight against foreign bribery: the 34 OECD members plus Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, and South Africa. Each of these countries has committed to prosecute those who offer or give bribes to foreign public officials and subject them to effective penalties including heavy fines or even prison time. Companies must also be sanctioned.
- Since the Convention's entry into force in 1999, we can say there has been real progress. For example, countries no longer offer tax deductions for bribe payments. There has also been progress on enforcement: 225 companies and individuals have

faced sanctions for the bribery of foreign public officials in international business deals. These statistics should rise in the coming years, as another 280 investigations are ongoing.

- We are also working with members of the G-20 to ensure we are on the same page. For example, China, India and Indonesia regularly join us in Paris for the meetings of the Working Group on Bribery. We work with them and others through regional efforts such as a program we undertake with the Asian Development Bank. And we have a special relationship with Russia, which is in the process of joining the Anti-Bribery Convention.
- We reach out to those on the front lines of the fight against corruption: businesses and nongovernmental organisations. The Working Group on Bribery, for example, meets twice a year with representatives from the private sector and civil society, who let us know how we can improve our anti-bribery tools. A recent recommendation provides the most comprehensive guidance ever provided to companies and business organisations on how they can prevent and fight corruption.
- We're doing a lot, but there's a lot more to do.
- The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention is a solid base to fight corruption. However, to win this fight, we need to take an even more comprehensive approach.
- Within the OECD, we are bringing together a series of tools that can help governments, corporations and civil society first to immunize systems from the threat of corruption; second, to detect corruption; and third to sanction and punish corrupt acts. These tools range from cleaner procurement systems to strengthened prosecutions.
- In addition to bringing together our own tools, we're also looking to work with others in the international community. There are numerous international commitments against bribery and corruption. Implementation is vital and that is the focus of our new effort. To do so more effectively, we want to work with others, especially the UN Office of Drug and Crime and the World Bank, to make sure that all our efforts are mutually reinforcing.
- We all understand that in the end, commitments must be matched by implementation if we are to stop corruption. Maybe we'll never get there, but every one of us can do a better job.
- Thank you for including me, and I look forward to your questions.