



## ***UN Convention against Corruption Conference 8 December 2006, Sarajevo***

### ***Rationale***

The last decade has been marked with significant international efforts across all countries of the world in confrontation to and fight against corruption in order to overcome one of the biggest global obstacles of international development and poverty reduction process.

By recognising repercussion of the problems caused by corruption and its terrible consequences, especially on the poorest population, large number of governments, international, national and local civil society organisations have been working together in order to establish general standards and universal responses for corruption as one the major problems of the contemporary world.

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), adopted on 31 October 2003 by the UN General Assembly, represents a global response to corruption. It is a first global, legally binding instrument about corruption and a comprehensive document which contains measures for prevention, criminalization and international cooperation.

The signing ceremony of this key instrument was held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2003, in Merida, Mexico. Ever since, increasing number of countries around the globe are celebrating this day as the International Anti-corruption Day.

The fact that the UNCAC is included in legal systems of 77 countries confirms the Convention as global foundation for fight against corruption and its implementation as one of the pre-requisite for fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Transparency International (TI) had given a significant contribution during the UNCAC negotiation process and is active today in promotion of signing, ratification and implementation of the UNCAC in many countries. Further more, TI is a partner organisation for creation of mechanisms for successful monitoring of the UNCAC implementation. TI calls on anti-corruption practitioners and activists world wide to join in advocating these steps.

In order to initiate and support signing, ratification, and implementation of the Convention, Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina has been organising UNCAC Conference for the last two years on the 9 December – the International Anti-corruption Day. In that way 9 December has become the Day for revision of progress made in the Convention

implementation and planning of actions to be carried out in the future, by assessing and assigning responsibilities to the representatives of all governments levels and the political leaders in BiH.

The Regional Secretariat of the Stability Pact Anticorruption Initiative (based in Sarajevo) implements a *Regional Project for supporting the process of signing, ratifying and implementing the UN Convention against Corruption*. Within the Project framework series of Pre-ratification and thematic conferences were held and a standard regional compliance matrix was developed. Since the initiation of this project all 8 member countries became signatories and four of them already ratified it focusing more on implementation.

Furthermore, it is expected that through the continued enhanced level of information exchange and professional experience, the countries of the region will be in the position to speed up the process of harmonizing the national legislation with the standards set forth within the UN Convention against Corruption.

The political will of the SPAI member countries to implement the Merida Convention was expressed as the highest political level during the Ministerial Conference organized by SPAI within the European Parliament, in Brussels, May 2005. The 8 participating ministers endorsed the Declaration on 10 Joint measures to curb corruption in SEE. The first measure refers to “signing, ratifying and starting implementing UN Convention against Corruption” within one year timeframe.

Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina (TI BiH) in cooperation with the Stability Pact of Anticorruption Initiative for Southeast Europe (SPAI) is organising the UN Convention against Corruption Conference (UNCAC) on the 8 December, a day prior to the International Anti-corruption Day.

The Conference presents a follow-up of the last-year Conference and it is dedicated to the improvement made in BiH regarding the Convention. Although BiH has signed and ratified the Convention, the true actions are yet to be made. Key topics of the Conference are corruption prevention and corruption proceedings, and property confiscation as very important segments of corruption prevention in general. Prevention is in general the best way to fight corruption. Creation of the environment in which corruption is highly risky activity with low possibility for successful realization is ground for society development and poverty reduction.

Therefore, the Conference's goals are to analyse current status of corruption in BiH and measures undertaken to implement the Convention. The aim is to enhance the exchange of regional experiences and to recommend future actions for anticorruption in the region. The Conference agenda envisage also presentation of the National Integrity Study 2007 that is a result of the project supported by the Open Society Initiative in BiH and implemented by TI BiH during 2006. The Study analyse legal framework for corruption and efficiency of all governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisation relevant in sector of prevention and fight against corruption. Results and recommendations of the Study are the foundation for defining strategic priorities in fight against corruption.

The Conference will host a number of the relevant parties for curbing corruption in different fields and the expected outcome is a clear action plan for ratification and monitoring of the UNCAC in BiH.