

**PALABRAS DE INTRODUCCION
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REPRESENTANTE PERMANENTE
Día Internacional Contra la Corrupción
“Corruption in the Time of COVID-19: A Double Threat”**

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Verificar contra el discurso pronunciado

4 minutes

President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Members of the Panel, dear colleagues,

I thank you for joining us during this celebration of the “International Day Against Corruption” that the Missions of Colombia and Peru and the Office of the UNODC in New York are organizing every year.

Corruption in the time of COVID-19 is imposing a double threat to our societies.

The coronavirus presents a “perfect storm” for corruption.

The World Justice Project has clearly stated: “Massive resources are being rushed to address both the health crisis and its economic side effects, while procurement oversight and

enforcement efforts are relaxed or diminished by the exigencies of the crisis and social distancing.”

This situation has led to the deterioration of key indicators.

The 2020 WJP Rule of Law Index shows that 40% of the 128 countries studied saw their corruption score decline.

Unfortunately, the poor and the most vulnerable are the ones that are suffering its devastating effects.

Also, sectors such as public health have been affected, diminishing the quality and quantity of health care. Corruption in this item costs USD 500 billion per year in the world, according to Transparency International.

Dear colleagues,

Today, Colombia would like to reiterate its unwavering commitment to this fight.

Corruption is one of the main threats to democratic governance, security, and development.

It is affecting the rule of law and trust in public institutions.

It is eroding the fundamentals: the social contract between the State and citizens.

At this stage, I should be clear on the following: The electoral fraud that we have seen during the last weekend in Venezuela is a specific form of corruption. It undermines democratic values and institutions.

We cannot keep silent. We must speak loudly, denounce, and condemn.

Approximately 50 countries, including members of the Group of Lima, have done it. We have rejected the legislative elections that took place by an illegitimate Regime whose only purpose is to perpetuate in power and impoverish its people.

In this framework, we need to advance and take further and innovative measures against corruption in the world. We need strong anti-corruption laws and regulations, build integrity cultures, and share best practices.

There is no time to lose during this global crisis.

There is no time to lose in the fight against crime.

In fact, Colombia has approved some initiatives aimed at the elimination of domiciliary detention for the corrupt; the obligation to publish the income and assets declarations of senior State officials; the improvement of State accountability; the publication of any type of conflict of interest by public officials; and the definition of standard specifications for public contracts, among others.

Furthermore, the Colombian government presented last October to the Congress a draft bill against corruption to develop new tools that contribute to the prevention, construction of a culture of legality, integrity, and efficient use of public resources.

Excellencies,

At the international level, the Government of Colombia is deeply interested in applying the principle of shared responsibility in the fight against corruption.

This year under our leadership and with the co-sponsorship of 63 countries and your support, the UN General Assembly approved the Resolution on “Preventing and combating corrupt practices and the transfer of proceeds of corruption”, which is presented on a bi-annual basis.

In 2021 we face the challenge in New York of having a successful UNGASS against corruption.

It will be an opportunity to examine the limits of the current regime.

It should be the scenario to think out of the box and propose new ideas and instruments that will help us to improve the efficiency of international cooperation.

And it ought to be a scenario for action and concrete proposals to improve capacities.

To conclude, I would like to recall what Transparency International has considered the four “I”s, as key elements to winning the battle:

- More Information.
- More Integrity.
- Less Impunity, and
- Less Indifference.

I thank you for your participation in this event and give the floor to Ambassador Néstor Popolizio, Permanent Representative of Peru.