Press Release July 11, 2024

** Honour African Anti-Corruption Day by Committing to Create an International Anti-Corruption Court**

On African Anti-Corruption Day 2024, commemorating the 21st anniversary of the African Union’s (AU) adoption of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), Integrity Initiatives International (III), Club de Madrid, Good Governance Africa (GGA) and the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU) call on leaders of the African Union to honour the spirit and commitments of the AUCPCC. We call on leaders to work towards the establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC).

“Truly, a lot more work in many fronts is required. For example, civil and public servants must be ethical and professional at all times. The private sector must contribute in curbing corruption. The international community needs to close safe havens. The judiciary requires more impetus. Perhaps, an International Anti-corruption Criminal Court is needed,” said then President of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari on African Anti-Corruption Day 2022.

Grand corruption has long held Africa back, diminishing public trust in institutions and preventing citizens from enjoying even the most basic public goods and services.

“Grand corruption holds Africa back. It diminishes public trust in institutions and prevents our people from enjoying even the most basic public goods and services they deserve. By hollowing out governments, it foments public health crises, starvation, deprivation, and even war. Corruption kills. Our leaders must come together to answer the calls for an International Anti-Corruption Court that can deter grand corruption and secure the return of looted public resources to benefit the people,” said Richard Goldstone, former Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and Vice Chair of III.

Following Former President Buhari’s emphasis on the need for an International Anti-Corruption Court, the current Nigerian administration reiterated this commitment in October 2023.

“Nigeria, as a country deeply affected by corruption, could benefit significantly from the establishment of an IACC. Such a court could address cases involving individuals and assets located abroad, often tied to grand corruption schemes that have a devastating impact on Nigeria’s development efforts,” said Lateef Fagbemi SAN, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Nigeria.

We call on the leaders in Africa to seriously consider the public good the IACC could bring to the prevention and combatting of corruption in Africa and the world.
An International Anti-Corruption Court would not only prosecute corrupt officials when their governments are unable or unwilling to enforce the universally agreed crimes in the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which include bribery of public officials, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, and laundering the proceeds of crime. It would also prosecute their co-conspirators - the bribe payers and money launderers, many of whom are based in the financial centers of developed countries.

In addition to punishing and deterring the universally agreed crimes in the UNCAC, the IACC would also use both criminal and civil procedures to recover and return illicit assets so that they can be used to address sustainable development, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and other major public challenges. The Court’s staff will also be a resource for countries that are working to strengthen their national-level anti-corruption capacity.

“Of course, the IACC will not be perfect, no institution is, but it is nevertheless very important that we create it so that kleptocrats and their co-conspirators face consequences for their actions and so that we can return their loot to benefit the people,” said Moussa Mara, former Prime Minister of Mali and Member of Club de Madrid.

In the spirit of finding solutions to corruption crimes and ensuring people benefit from public goods and services as Agenda 2063 aspires, we call to you for engagement, hearing, and consideration for the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Court.

We urge State Parties to the AUCPCC to join Nigeria and the other governments, as well as hundreds of eminent persons and organizations in Africa, that already support the call for the establishment of the International Anti-Corruption Court.

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To learn more about the IACC and the campaign to create it, visit: https://integrityinitiatives.org/about-the-iacc