

Summit for Democracy: First Outcomes Show Promise

Welcoming U.S. government announcement of key policy measures and increased financial support to accountability actors

A statement from Transparency International
December 10, 2021

BERLIN, WASHINGTON – Transparency International welcomes a string of US and multilateral initiatives announced as part of the Summit for Democracy, held on 9-10 December. From the release of the US anti-corruption strategy to increased multilateral support for the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium – an initiative co-led by Transparency International and Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project – the initial outcomes of the Summit show promise in the global fight against corruption and protecting the future of democracy.

As the next step, the Summit hosts and participating governments should design an inclusive and participatory process through the “year of action” to deliver on their stated goals. Earlier this week, an [open letter](#) from Transparency International’s representatives from across the globe called out governments for their failure to turn previous anti-corruption commitments into action. Meaningful engagement with civil society is critical to ensure that any future pledges focus on the most pressing issues, such as the need to support anti-corruption fighters.

To that end, Transparency International applauds the commitment of significant resources towards anti-corruption, the defence of civic space and protection of human rights, as announced by Summit host US President Joe Biden. At a time of increased attacks and threats, financial support to independent media, civil society organisations and government reformers facing hardship is key to increase the resilience of those holding states and the private sector accountable.

In his remarks, the Secretary of State Antony Blinken also called on other countries to join the US in pledging support to the [Global Anti-Corruption Consortium](#) – a first-of-its-kind partnership between investigative journalists and civil society – to

help accelerate the fight against cross-border corruption. This funding will strengthen the collaboration between reporters investigating corruption and civil society advocates, who have historically worked in silos to expose and counter corruption.

Andrea Rocca, Senior Strategic Partnerships Manager of Transparency International, said:

“The world needs stronger partnerships between anti-corruption actors and more voices speaking up together. The model pioneered by the Global Anti-Corruption Consortium is proven to work. Over the last few years, by partnering with investigative journalists, Transparency International has turned cross-border grand corruption scandals from headlines into policy change and legal action. We are thrilled to be able to scale this up to deliver even more systemic change and increase accountability.”

Ahead of the Summit, Transparency International [urged the established democratic economies to tackle cross-border corruption](#) head-on by increasing accountability for this type of corruption and passing priority policy measures. Previous inaction on corruption has contributed to increased authoritarianism and human rights abuses around the world, Transparency International argued.

On the US side, the new anti-corruption strategy and recently announced draft rules for tackling secrecy in real estate and company ownership in that country, signal a serious commitment from the government to address the most pressing cross-border corruption problems.

Gary Kalman, Director of Transparency International's U.S. Office, said:

“US Treasury Secretary Yellen’s remarks reinforced the commitment to no longer offer safe haven for the corrupt and their ill-gotten gains in the US financial system. Her remarks echo the bipartisan support in Congress and the growing consensus around combatting corruption by closing the gaps in our own rules and laws. Follow-through and engagement with experts, civil society and other Summit participating countries will be crucial.”

Yet in their pre-recorded speeches, many other advanced democratic economies missed the opportunity to pledge any new measures to curb cross-border corruption linked to their countries.

Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International, said:

“It’s time for advanced democracies to put their money where their speeches are. Corruption easily spreads across borders and the world’s established democracies too often enable or even fuel it. The result is widespread human rights abuses around the globe. Transparency International will continue to demand these democracies take on their share of the fight against corruption for democracy.”

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Transparency International is the world’s largest coalition against corruption. We give voices to victims and witnesses of corruption, and work with governments, businesses, and citizens to stop the abuse of entrusted power. In collaboration with national chapters in more than 100 countries, we are leading the fight to turn our vision of a world free from corruption into reality.

Related Resources

- As part of the Summit’s formal programme, Transparency International’s Vice Chair Rueben Lifuka spoke of the need for governments to advance measures such as corporate transparency, and in particular to establish public, central registers of beneficial owners, as a key measure to advance the global fight against corruption. [Watch the recording](#) (9 December 2021)
- Transparency International has proposed a range of anti-corruption commitments to the governments participating in the Summit. See: [Addressing corruption as the driver of democratic decline](#) (17 November 2021)
- On International Anti-Corruption Day 2021 (9 December) Transparency International highlighted how the Summit for Democracy can advance the systemic change that we need and support anti-corruption fighters. See: [International Anti-Corruption Day 2021: Tackling interlinked corruption and democracy crises](#) (8 December 2021)
- The US Strategy for Countering Corruption, released by the White House on 6 December, reflects in large part recommendations from Transparency International’s US Office. See: [Combating Global Corruption: A Bipartisan Plan](#) (February 2021)

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