

24th Steering Group Meeting of the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific
17th December 2020
13:00 p.m. Manila time – 09:00 a.m Baku time

Mr Sabuhi Aliyev
Head of Preventive measures and inquiry department
Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General
The Republic of Azerbaijan

Ladies and gentleman,
Dear colleagues,

It is my great pleasure and honour to attend this event and deliver a statement on behalf of my country – the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Dear colleagues,

As already noted, Azerbaijan has recently joined Asia-Pacific Anti-Corruption Initiative and using this opportunity I would like to thank Secretariat and members of the Initiative for their support and efforts they put into this process.

I also would like to avail myself to briefly inform you about efforts of my country in combatting corruption and implemented measures in this field.

Corruption is a global issue that destroys the pillars of a stable society and hinders prosperity. It undermines democratic values and weakens the rule of law. It threatens national security. This threat has a vast geographical spread: it infects every country in every continent around the globe.

As a member of the extensive international community that is combatting corruption, the Republic of Azerbaijan, too, is implementing reforms to address this challenge.

Fight against corruption is a priority for the Government of Azerbaijan and our policy in this respect is based on the strong political will of President Mr Ilham Aliyev. The policy focuses on the establishment of a favourable business environment and enhancement of social prosperity and stability. Present-day Azerbaijan has one of the fastest-growing economies and is among the world's top reformers according to the World Bank's report, Doing Business 2020.

This stems from our belief that an effective fight against corruption requires a systematic approach. We believe that corruption is an issue not only for national security, but also one for our economy and development.

Thus, Azerbaijan's anti-corruption strategy is not isolated on a separate agenda, but it is an integral part of the country's overall strategy for development.

Anti-corruption framework of Azerbaijan envisages combination of efforts in legislative, institutional and administrative spheres. Thus the anti-corruption activity of our country is based on the following four pillars:

1. Modernization of legislation;
2. Provision of transparency in public administration;
3. Establishment of a fair and effective judicial system;
4. Establishment of effective specialized anti-corruption agencies.

Since signing up to UNCAC in 2004, Azerbaijan has undertaken major reforms to align its national legislation and institutional set-up in full conformity with the convention's requirements. In addition to that, Azerbaijan has joined almost all international and regional conventions and initiatives in this field.

Within short period, Azerbaijan has established a modern legal framework in compliance with the international standards.

This process has been guided by several National Action Plans to combat corruption, adopted and implemented since 2004.

The recent anti-corruption policy document was adopted on February 27, 2020. This Plan determinates the methodology for assessing and managing corruption risks, promoting integrity in both the public and private sectors, aims at strengthening participation of the NGOs and civil society in the activity of the state bodies.

Guarantying transparency in public governance is another aspect of combatting corruption. To this end transparent recruitment system to civil service and to the law enforcement agencies has been ensured. Internal Control Units in all state bodies have been established, ethical conduct standards have been implemented. Introduction of E-Government is another step in combatting corruption.

Here, I should particularly stress the role of the "ASAN Service" model in the elimination of factors conducive to corruption. "ASAN" renders public services according to principles of efficiency, transparency, courtesy, responsibility and flexibility within a "one-stop shop" system, and is an effective weapon in our anti-corruption armoury. Today this service - which in 2015 won a UN Public Service Award – covers almost the entire country and returns customer satisfaction ratings close to 100%.

Azerbaijan made huge efforts in reforming judicial system which has utmost importance for the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, and success of those reforms was lauded by the CoE Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ).

In April 2019, a new phase of reforms set to achieve the highest standards of independence and integrity was launched by Presidential Decree. At this stage, we have focused on extending e-court proceedings and introduction of elements of artificial intelligence in the management of judicial system. Reforms also established mediation services and specialized commercial courts.

In accordance with the requirement of the UNCAC, the National Anti-Corruption Act established specialized anti-corruption agencies in 2004. The Commission on Combating Corruption is a national anti-corruption policy maker, which develops national anti-corruption strategy documents and monitors their implementation. The Anti-Corruption Directorate with the Prosecutor General - which I represent – is a specialized anti-corruption law enforcement body that has mandate to investigate bribery, fraud, embezzlement and other corruption offences.

Dear colleagues,

All the reforms conducted in Azerbaijan have been framed to ensure the adoption and implementation of international standards and best practice.

Fully aware that combatting corruption is impossible without efficient international cooperation, we are open to dialogue and the sharing of best practice with all appropriate stakeholders, at all levels.

And so Azerbaijan is an active participant in all initiatives to fight corruption, with a close focus on specialist international institutions, including GRECO, OECD, IACA, as well as peer review mechanism under UNCAC operated by the Implementation Review Group.

I would like to note that in 2012, Azerbaijan participated in the 1st Review Cycle of the implementation of the UNCAC. And currently, the second review cycle which envisages assessment of efforts done under Chapters II and V of the Convention, namely in prevention and asset recovery is ongoing.

We have successfully completed four rounds of evaluation within the Council of Europe's specialist institution – the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), as well as the regional anti-corruption network of the OECD.

We believe that joining Asia Pacific Anti-Corruption Initiative will positively contribute to our anti-corruption efforts, to achieve our common goal of society free from corruption. We expect to benefit from expertise accumulated in this

platform, which will also provide new prospects of cooperation with or colleagues from region countries, and avail us to enhance synergies in tackling corruption.

Once again thank you for your support on Azerbaijan joining the Initiative.

Thank you for your attention.