

International Anti-Corruption Day

09th December

International Anti-Corruption Day is observed annually on **December 9th** to raise awareness about the pervasive and damaging effects of corruption and to highlight the role of the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)** in combating and preventing it.

1. Background and Origin

- **Establishment:** The United Nations General Assembly designated December 9th as International Anti-Corruption Day following the adoption of the **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)** on October 31, 2003.
- **Significance of the Date:** December 9th marks the day the Convention was opened for signature in Mérida, Mexico, in 2003.
- **Entry into Force:** The UNCAC entered into force in December 2005.

2. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

The UNCAC is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. It provides a comprehensive framework for countries to strengthen their legal and regulatory systems. The Convention covers five main areas:

- **Preventive Measures:** Calls for the establishment of anti-corruption bodies, enhanced transparency in public finance, and promoting efficiency and merit-based recruitment in public services.
- **Criminalization and Law Enforcement:** Requires countries to establish criminal offenses for a wide range of corrupt acts, including bribery, embezzlement, money laundering, and obstruction of justice.

- **International Cooperation:** Obliges countries to assist one another in investigations and prosecutions of corruption cases.
- **Asset Recovery:** Establishes **asset recovery** as a "fundamental principle," laying a framework for tracing, freezing, forfeiting, and returning funds obtained through corruption to the country from which they were stolen.
- **Technical Assistance and Information Exchange:** Promotes providing support to countries to help them implement the convention effectively.

3. The Impact of Corruption

Corruption is a complex, social, political, and economic phenomenon that affects all countries. The day's observance serves to highlight its profound negative consequences:

- **Undermines Democracy and Rule of Law:** It distorts electoral processes, perverts justice, and creates instability.
- **Jeopardizes Sustainable Development:** It diverts funds intended for public services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable the hardest.
- **Erodes Trust:** It fosters public distrust in government institutions and weakens ethical values.
- **Facilitates Crime:** It enables organized crime, terrorism, and other threats to human security.

4. A Call for Unity and Action

International Anti-Corruption Day emphasizes that the fight against corruption is a **shared responsibility**. Success requires the active involvement and cooperation of all sectors of society:

- **Governments and Institutions:** To implement UNCAC, strengthen oversight bodies, and ensure transparent governance.

- **The Private Sector:** To adopt robust compliance systems, ethical business practices, and transparent codes of conduct.
- **Civil Society and Media:** To monitor government activities, raise public awareness, and advocate for accountability.
- **Citizens and Youth:** To refuse to participate in corrupt practices, demand honesty, and utilize technology to promote transparency.

The UN, through the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, leads global efforts and campaigns (often using the hashtag #UnitedAgainstCorruption) to mobilize action and political will against this global threat.