

PRESS RELEASE

**Hundreds of public interest groups worldwide
tell governments the MDGs will fail
unless nations address corruption now**

25 September 2013 Abuja/ Berlin/Buenos Aires/ Manila/ Rabat - Hundreds of public interest organisations around the world sent a message today to UN General Assembly President John Ashe and to their national leaders calling on them to stop the haemorrhaging of public funds caused by corruption—funds that could be used to reduce maternal deaths and child mortality, ensure education for all, provide clean drinking water and sanitation and reduce the damaging effects of climate change, all major Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The groups say governments must end secrecy practices that shield the corrupt and close the gaps in criminal law enforcement that lead to leniency for corruption offenders. They should also remove barriers that stop government treasuries from recovering stolen assets held abroad. The groups are part of a global network, the UNCAC Coalition, which is pushing for governments to put more muscle into the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year.

The UN General Assembly is currently meeting in New York with more than 130 heads of state and 60 foreign ministers in attendance and will deliberate today on achieving the MDGs and the post-2015 MDG agenda. With an eye on these discussions, the UNCAC Coalition has sent a [letter](#) to President Ashe, on behalf of its 350 member organisations, emphasizing that corruption is a key barrier to progress for the MDGs, now and in the future. The letter, signed by UNCAC Coalition Chair Vincent Lazatin, says that *“Corruption is no ordinary crime. It diminishes and often destroys the lives of millions of people around the world. It undermines economic development and produces inequality and injustice. It runs counter to human rights and human dignity.”*

The Coalition letter includes a Coalition [statement](#) recommending specific steps to be taken at the next UNCAC Conference of States Parties in Panama, 25 to 29 November, in the areas of prevention and punishment of corruption. This statement has also been sent to ministers and influential decision-makers in the 167 countries that have ratified the UNCAC, before their biennial UNCAC summit in Panama. Lazatin reminds leaders that: *“People around the world are calling for change. The time for action is now.”*

Note to Editors: The comprehensive United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is the only global legal framework for combating corruption worldwide. It is a binding agreement among 167 states parties on standards and requirements for preventing, detecting, investigating and sanctioning corruption.

The UNCAC Coalition, formed in 2006, is a network of more than 350 civil society organisations in over 100 countries. Its goal is to promote ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption.

The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals established after the UN Millennium Summit in 2000. They include eradication of poverty and hunger, universal primary education, gender equality, reduction of child mortality and maternal deaths, combating diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

See also [UNCAC Coalition website](http://www.uncaccoalition.org).

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