

## MEXICO'S FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

### 2021 PARLIAMENTARY HEARING AT THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION

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It is an honor to take part in this parliamentary hearing devoted to the fight against corruption, to restore trust in government and improve development. Mexico was an active participant in the negotiation of the UN Convention Against Corruption since the early 2000s, the only legally binding multilateral instrument against corruption. As a member of the IPU Board of Young Parliamentarians, I know this is a vital concern for young people, and many times keeps valuable members of society from participating more actively in politics.

Politics as a profession faces a crisis of reputation and trust all around the world. In many countries, being a politician carries an immediate suspicion of corruption. Regrettably, this is not fortuitous or unfounded. This suspicion is backed by numerous and notorious high-level cases of political corruption, embezzlement, money laundering, etcetera.

At the same time, I have witnessed that most public servants and parliamentarians are not in it for the money, but rather due to a true vocational calling and a willingness to serve their fellow countrymen. The problem here, as with many reputational issues is that the many pay for the wrongdoings of a notorious few.

We need to transform this conception of public leadership. Politicians must be honest, trustworthy, and accountable. In the last couple of years, the government of my country has emphasized a new style of government based on the concept of “austerity”. Even if I am a member of the opposition, I fully agree with this principle and the notion that true politicians must aspire to serve, and not to profit.

In the current legislature of the Mexican Congress, we have taken the fight against corruption very seriously. In the last three years we have approved several reforms related to transparency, accountability and the proper punishment of wrongdoing. Also, we have approved:

- New typification of corruption crimes, such as “illicit remuneration of public servants” in the federal code, and the classification of corruption as a serious crime in the Constitution.

However, these measures have not been enough to change the perception of Mexican society. Corruption is still identified as a main concern by most citizens.

In order to fully restore trust in politics, each and every one of us, active politicians, must adopt a personal commitment with honesty and transparency. The truth is that opportunities for corruption will always exist. I am constantly approached by firms and acquaintances who ask for favors. However, I have made it a case for myself not to intercede for anybody, even to facilitate the slightest of public services.

Countries, and individuals, should renew their vows every so often to remind themselves of the commitments they have adopted. To improve its implementation, I believe we need even more effective mechanisms to be able to signal when a government is failing to meet these

commitments. It would also be useful to increase the participation of Parliaments in the review mechanisms.

The efforts to combat corruption remain central in relation to the current pandemic. Unfortunately, we have witnessed opportunistic officials who have tried to benefit from the emergency: selling and buying Personal Protection Equipment at overprices, extending contracts without the proper transparency and competition, even establishing illegal side-businesses with the help of family members and proxies. Other painful expressions of corruption have been the instances of cronyism and bribery in the application of vaccines.

As a member of the Board of Young Parliamentarians, I express my full commitment to the fight against corruption, and I urge this body to include a strong condemnation of such practices in the forthcoming Political Declaration.

Thank you,