

## 17. Synthesis

The following is a summary of themes which arose repeatedly or generally in the record of discussion during the Global Forum plenary and specialty sessions, and related events, recorded above.

1. "Unthinkable." Virtually every participant expressed the view that a conference of this magnitude involving senior political and official leaders from 90 countries to address corruption among justice and security officials would have been unthinkable only a very few years ago. International dialogue, and domestic policy in virtually all countries, has changed dramatically. Once, most governments and intergovernmental organizations would have sought to ignore or distance themselves from this subject. Now, there was, with very few exceptions, visible global intensity to address and resolve corruption issues.

2. New Theme. Bribery in commercial transactions and bribery of officials to secure commercial advantage, particularly in emerging or transitional economies, have been studied, especially in the OECD, for some time. The Global Forum addressed instead corruption and integrity issues from the standpoint of the official who was the taker of a bribe. Participants agreed that this approach had not been substantially elaborated in international discussion before this conference, and that it represented an important advance that this was done.

3. Universality. Virtually every participant expressed in one way or another the appreciation that corruption among justice and security officials, and other government officials responsible for upholding the rule of law, was a problem common to every government. While the extent and severity of corruption varied, the variation did not correspond directly to political, socio-economic or other categorizations. Some of the poorest countries in the world had been among those successful against corruption, while some advanced countries are among those with very serious official corruption problems. "Industrialized" and "developing" categories generally fail to relate to discussion of corruption and how to prevent or control it.

4. Realism. There was a general sense of global recognition that corruption is neither an inevitable consequence of the human condition, nor a fact of nature that cannot be escaped. Rather, as the Global Form Declaration stated, it corruption is made by the actions of men and women. Governments and people can act successfully against it, if they have the will and determination to do so.

5. Practicality. There was a general sense among all participants that despite the severity of official corruption in many countries, the current constellation of circumstances in the international community offered legitimate reason to consider that it is practicable for governments to prevent and fight it.

Technological factors like new information technologies, and political or

economic factors like the widespread advance of democratic and free market systems, combine to offer positive opportunities for governments.

6. Values. There was wide recognition that while corruption is a structural and institutional economic issue, promoting public integrity and fighting official corruption is also linked importantly to social and individual values. Several participants emphasized that in their countries, it was very important that programs to promote official integrity recognize and affirmatively employ social and individual ethical and religious values, as well as addressing economic motivations and structural or institutional issues.

7. Religious Values. The plenary session panel on Religious Values and the Struggle Against Corruption demonstrated that official corruption is invariably incompatible with the fundamental ethical values of all major world religions, Protestant and Roman Catholic Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

8. Guiding Principles and Effective Practices. Discussion during the Global Forum addressed all of the 12 Guiding Principles elaborated as a working document (which may be found at the front of this report), and touched at one point or another on virtually every one of the sixty effective practices associated with those principles. The Netherlands suggested that self-assessment by governments of the extent to which they found these practices appropriate to their national anticorruption requirements might be a helpful preparation for the second Global Forum.

9. International Cooperation. In the Declaration agreed to by the heads of participating delegations, governments were called on to cooperate in appropriate regional and global bodies to adopt effective anticorruption principles and practices, and to create ways to assist each other in their implementation through mutual evaluation. All participants expressed the view that it was important to continue such international cooperation to further elaborate a comprehensive global regime of accepted norms for promoting public integrity and fighting officials corruption.

10. Continuation. The Netherlands offered to host a second Global Forum on Fighting Corruption in a year in the Netherlands. The United States offered to assist as a co-sponsor for this event. The Korean delegation suggested that this be followed by annual global ministerial meetings on fighting corruption. Virtually all participants expressed their eagerness to participate in future activities of this nature.