

OPENING REMARKS

H.E. Dr. Fadli Zon (GOPAC Chair)

- His Excellency, Ahmad Bin Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, Speaker of *Shura Council of the State of Qatar*,
- Her Excellency, Ms Gabriela Cuevas, IPU President
- Excellencies, Speakers of Parliaments, Members of Parliaments, GOPAC Members
- Ambassadors,
- Representatives of International Organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

Assalamu'alaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

First of all, on behalf of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), I would like to sincerely thank the *Shura Council of the State of Qatar* and the national authorities for hosting this event and for their gracious hospitality and warm welcome here in Qatar for **7th Global Conference of Parliamentarians Against Corruption**.

It is also my pleasure to address GOPAC and this conference today coincides with the International Anticorruption Day. Since the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003, December 9th is a day to shed lights on the importance of the fight against corruption and its detrimental effects to human development, democracy and rule of law.

This is the special momentum for GOPAC members, parliamentarians, as well as civil society, relevant institutions and stakeholders to gather, evaluate, and encourage our agenda *to combat corruption, strengthen democracy, and uphold the rule of law*.

Excellencies, Honorable Delegates, Colleagues,

Corruption is a serious threat to the rule of law, the stability and security of societies. It undermines democratic institutions, erodes economies and contributes to political instability. It can weaken the legitimacy of a government and democratic institutions and significantly slow down reform processes.

It feeds inequalities in society, disrupt governance, destroy trust towards state institutions, and become a barrier in achieving sustainable development, purges the opportunities to build a better livelihood for the people as it steals away their rights to achieve equality, security, and prosperity.

It becomes our challenges to address these problems. In addition to accountability and transparency, integrity is therefore essential for building strong institutions resistant to corruption. It is a fundamental requirement for trust, credibility and authority of government in a modern and democratic society.

However, we realize that promoting integrity to tackle corruption is hardly done alone. Participation from every stakeholder is essential to ensure the success of anti-corruption measures,

And this requires at least four aspects:

- a committed political leadership that shows its commitment by willingly, for instance, submitting to a comprehensive monitoring of assets, incomes, and liabilities;
- public involvement and participation in the reform process;
- participation by civil service unions and other employees' groups;

- And involvement of professional groups as well as community and religious leaders.

Colleagues,

As parliamentarians we have strategic role to eradicate corruption.

To fulfill this function efficiently, we should promote and foster integrity.

We, parliamentarians have to abide to integrity instruments such as codes of ethics conduct.

Traditional approaches based on the creation of more rules, stricter compliance and tougher enforcement, are no longer enough to establish effective mechanism in curbing corruption. And it has been of limited effectiveness. Based on that background, public integrity come as a strategic and sustainable response to tackling corruption.

Integrity is the antidote to corruption. Integrity is not just a moral issue, it is also about making economies more inclusive, public sectors more efficient, and societies more cohesive. All of these would bring positive impact for our global commitment in eradicating corruption.

And we, parliamentarians, have a role in preventing corruption by acting with personal integrity and making ethical choices.

Borrowing what an American writer Buckminster Fuller once said that “On personal integrity hangs humanity's fate.”

Therefore, from this stage, allow me to make urgent call to our global leadership to take a moral stand and install a culture of integrity from us, parliamentarians.

Colleagues,

Fostering the value of integrity as global awareness, international co-operation is also required among parliamentarians in order to support the exchange of best practices and coordinate parliamentary contribution to the fight against corruption.

Allow me to share with all in this forum the role that GOPAC has played to build global awareness in fighting corruption.

Since its inception in 2002, GOPAC has been actively involved in the global anti-corruption network. Our networks spreads across 62 National Chapters in Arab, Africa, Southeast Asia, Oceania, and Latin America.

GOPAC is the only international network of parliamentarians dedicated to combat corruption, strengthen good government and uphold the rule of law.

Colleagues,

GOPAC has developed several oversight handbooks such as: Financial Oversight, Improving Democratic Accountability Globally, and Guidelines to Strengthen Oversight through Parliamentarian Donor Collaboration. The handbooks intended to be a guide to how parliamentarians can increase the effectiveness of their oversight role and how to work together with partners to achieve the goals.

Particularly on the SDGs, together with the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB), UN Development Programme (UNDP), and Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), GOPAC developed a Parliamentary Handbook as guidance for Parliamentarians to implement the SDGs, especially by monitoring the effectiveness and accountability of any development assistance.

As of now, the handbook has been localized and developed into national version. We are now actively promoting and encouraging all Parliamentarians to make use of this Handbook as a valuable resource in achieving SDGs targets.

Colleagues,

As a final message, yes, we do have great challenges --which can only be solved by working together.

GOPAC is open to collaborate, and look forward to fostering strategic partnership in improving institutional capacity and ensuring the effectiveness of legislative reform.

After two terms, my chairmanship in GOPAC will end at the end of this conference. Looking at today's enthusiasm of members of parliaments, GOPAC Members, and friends, it is with true confidence that together we can break the culture of corruption, and ensure that Parliament and other public institutions in the region are accountable and trustworthy for the benefit of all people.

Thank You,

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh