

It is a real pleasure to be here today with all of you distinguished guests on the occasion of the International day against corruption

First of all, I would like to address special thanks on behalf of all organizers that along with UNODC have arranged this event today, to the President of Republic of Bulgaria who has provided his patronage to the conference and in a few seconds I will give the floor to Mr. Goran Yonov, Foreign Policy and Security Secretary of the President.

Opening remarks will be addressed to the floor by Mr. Henry Jackelen - UN Resident Representative, H.E. Etienne de Poncins, Ambassador of France also as representative of EU Presidency, the head of the Regional Anti corruption Secretariat – Mr. Edmond Dunga and the representative from the Regional Cooperation Council - Mr. Predrag Vujicic, that have supported the event also with financial contributions.

I would like to welcome the Deputy Prime Minister Ms. Plugchieva, Minister of Interior Mr. Mikov, Minister of Justice – Ms. Tacheva, Prof. Stoyan Kushlev, Chairman of the Bulgarian Criminal Assets Forfeiture Commission, Mr. Florian Fichtl, Country Manager for Bulgaria, World Bank, Mr ... and Ambassador of Italy

Representative from US, UK, Spanish embassies...

We would like also to welcome the distinguished delegations of respective parliaments (Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Serbia), national focal points of Anti - Corruption bodies of South Eastern Region and of course the Bulgarian Centre for the Study of Democracy, that has helped us to fill the list of invitees.

We are glad to see here so many representatives of the civil society which is always a trustworthy and reliable partner in sending out our message to society of intolerance of corruption.

Thank you so much to the Italian Camera di Commercio for having contributed to produce the promotion materials that we are distributing today.

"Your no counts" is a motto created in order to raise awareness among people and to support an anti corruption communication campaign as a positive and pro - active stance against corruption.

"Everyone has a role to play, not only governments, but also parliamentarians, business, civil society, the media, and the average citizens. Corruption hurts us all; therefore fighting it is a shared responsibility"

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is promoted as the key tool to fight corruption worldwide and as impetus for a global and forceful movement; it creates the opportunity to develop a global language about corruption and a coherent implementation strategy. The UNCAC gives to the global community the opportunity to address an effective set of benchmarks for effective anti-corruption strategies.

We have arranged this today event with the intention to share the results achieved so far in the area of anti corruption measures taken by the relevant institutions of South Eastern Europe in order to prevent, investigate and prosecute corruption acts, to promote inter-regional cooperation, to ensure technical assistance and information exchange among these countries, where, as we all know, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which entered into force on 14 of Dec 2005, has been signed and ratified by all countries of this region.

The today agenda provides an itinerary able to make a mapping exercise through the experiences that all relevant institutions have made in the area of anti-corruption measures. In particular, during the morning session we will discuss about policies and infrastructure established during these years as matter of implementation of principles stipulated by the convention.

During the afternoon, we will discuss regional cooperation as an important tool in the fight against corruption.

As you can see from the agenda each session includes several speakers that will address the floor with a support of a moderator. After each session the floor will be open to additional interventions, to questions and answers. We do hope that due to the content tackled by our distinguished speakers, an ~~active~~ discussion will be activated also by intervention from representatives of civil societies that are quite numerous today in the room.

All documentation, speeches and presentation shared today, will be collected and a publication will be produced and delivered to all of you.

Many thanks for your attention and wish to all a good and enjoyable day of discussion.