

ASIAN-AFRICAN LEGAL CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION



ASSET RECOVERY EXPERT FORUM

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ASSET RECOVERY EXPERT FORUM

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. AALCO and Asset Recovery Expert Forum

1. The topic of "Asset Recovery Expert Forum" was formally introduced to AALCO by the Republic of Indonesia. This initiative was presented through an Explanatory Memorandum dated 15 September 2023 (No.AHU.UM.01.01-733), for consideration at the Sixty-First Annual Session of AALCO, which convened in Bali, the Republic of Indonesia, from 16 to 20 October 2023. The fundamental rationale underpinning this proposal was the establishment of a specialized expert forum. This forum was envisioned to comprise of senior officials, academics, and other relevant parties who possessed practical experience and specialized expertise in the intricate process of recovering stolen assets from foreign jurisdictions.

2. The Explanatory Memorandum articulated several key areas for discussion and functions for the proposed Forum. These included: facilitating the sharing of best practices in asset recovery; engaging in discussions on the challenges encountered during the recovery of stolen assets; addressing ongoing cases that necessitate international cooperation among member countries; bridging and addressing knowledge gaps among practitioners; and ultimately, ensuring the effective conduct of multi-jurisdictional asset recovery processes.

3. During the Sixty-First Annual Session of AALCO, held in Bali from 16-20 October 2023, Member States deliberated on the importance of the establishment of an Asset Recovery Expert Forum. The severe impacts of asset theft on development and society were emphasized and calls were made for the creation of a technical forum for further discussion among Member States. Statements on the agenda were delivered by several delegations. The importance of international cooperation, existing legal frameworks such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), and notable national experiences in asset recovery were discussed. The proposal for an Asset Recovery Expert Forum was widely supported as a complementary initiative rather than a replacement for existing mechanisms, with emphasis placed on sharing expertise, promoting best practices, and ensuring that the forum would function efficiently without redundancy. Challenges such as reluctance to cooperate, legal differences, and technical barriers were acknowledged and the need for strengthened international collaboration, technical assistance, and transparent processes among Member States was stressed throughout the deliberations.

4. Following deliberations at the session, Member States requested the AALCO Secretariat to elaborate on the modalities of the proposed Asset Recovery Expert Forum and to recommend a way forward. In pursuance of the mandate, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, in collaboration with the AALCO Secretariat, convened an Inter-Sessional Meeting titled “Best Practices of Recovering Stolen Assets from Asian and African Countries” on 21 June 2024 at the AALCO Permanent Headquarters in New Delhi. The meeting was held to conduct consultations with Member States on the establishment of the Forum and to prepare for further discussions at the Sixty-Second Annual Session. During the meeting, the significance of asset recovery for developing nations was emphasized, and challenges faced in recovering stolen assets were highlighted. Experiences and legal frameworks relating to asset recovery were shared by expert panellists from the Republic of Indonesia and Republic of India and the necessity of international cooperation and a robust legal structure were underlined. The proposed functions and future roles of the AALCO Secretariat in supporting expert engagement and acting as a communication platform were discussed. The importance of clear guidelines and expert selection criteria was stressed and Member States were encouraged to collaborate on establishing the Expert Forum and to provide feedback in upcoming sessions. Further discussions regarding the establishment of the proposed Asset Recovery Expert Forum were extensively held during the Sixty-Second Annual Session in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand, in 2024.

5. Pursuant to a request received from the Republic of Indonesia on 17 March 2025, a Secretariat *Note Verbale* enclosing a template dated 8 April 2025 was circulated to all Member States. The request pertained to the submission of details regarding the respective national authorities or agencies responsible for asset recovery. The information gathered through this exercise would assist in the preparation of a comprehensive contact list and would contribute to strengthening collaborative efforts among Member States in addressing matters related to asset recovery. Till 1 August 2025, the Secretariat had received response from five Member States; Brunei Darussalam, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of the Gambia, and the State of Kuwait and the State of Qatar.

B. Deliberations at the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO

6. **Dr. Ali Hasankhani, Deputy Secretary-General of AALCO**, introduced the topic of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum during the Sixty-Second Annual Session of AALCO and

highlighted its significance for Asian and African countries. He referred to the Secretariat's brief on the topic (Document AALCO/62/BANGKOK/2024/SD/S19), which provided a detailed exploration of the concept of asset recovery, along with the relevant international and regional legal frameworks and the Report of the Inter-sessional Meeting on Asset Recovery. He also briefed about AALCO's earlier engagement with the topic of combating corruption since the Forty-First Annual Session held in 2001. He encouraged the Member States to actively engage in further discussions on the topic, highlighting the need for collective efforts to strengthen the asset recovery process within the AALCO framework.

7. The **Delegate of the Republic of Indonesia** emphasized the urgent need for establishing the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within AALCO, highlighting asset recovery as essential not just for legal justice, but also for sustainable development, economic growth, and public trust. He reaffirmed that the proposed forum would complement existing mechanisms, focusing on the specific challenges faced by Asian and African countries, without duplicating global efforts. He also mentioned that the AALCO Secretariat would play a central role in facilitating communication, maintaining best practice resources, and supporting coordination among Member States. The delegate called for Member States to share contact details of their respective asset recovery authorities and encouraged active engagement in developing effective, cooperative mechanisms.

8. The **Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran** emphasized that asset return and recovery are vital to combating corruption, referencing Chapter V of the UNCAC. He highlighted the need for strong international cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and State obligations, warning that corruption without these measures undermines development. The Delegate noted persistent barriers such as complex legal systems, lack of political will, and procedural hurdles and called for addressing root causes through collective action. He concluded by urging AALCO to enhance capacity-building, cooperation, and experience sharing among Member States.

9. The **Delegate of the Republic of India** reaffirmed India's commitment to the global fight against corruption, stressing that asset recovery is a foundational principle of the international anti-corruption framework. He highlighted the potential of recovered assets to strengthen public services and support anti-corruption initiatives, especially in Asian and African countries. He underscored the importance of robust legal frameworks, mutual legal assistance, and international

cooperation. The Delegate endorsed the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum, viewing it as a platform for capacity-building, knowledge sharing, and case-specific discussions. He suggested that the forum serve as a repository of best practices and legal standards, involve legal and investigative experts, and establish clear timelines for responses.

10. The **Delegate of the United Republic of Tanzania** expressed appreciation for AALCO's efforts and reaffirmed its commitment to international and regional conventions against crime. Highlighting Tanzania's strong domestic laws on asset confiscation, he emphasized the need for cross-border cooperation in tracing and recovering stolen assets. He strongly supported the establishment of the AALCO Asset Recovery Expert Forum, viewing it as a valuable platform to enhance collaboration, share best practices, address operational challenges, and bridge knowledge gaps.

11. The **Delegate of Malaysia** reiterated Malaysia's strong support for the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum within AALCO, recognizing the need for a dedicated platform to tackle the complex challenges of asset recovery, particularly in Asia and Africa. Citing Malaysia's national legal framework, he highlighted Malaysia's significant experience in asset recovery. He emphasized that cross-border collaboration is essential to combating financial crimes. He also emphasized the pivotal role of the AALCO Secretariat as a knowledge hub and coordinator, suggesting strong linkages with global bodies such as UNODC, StAR, and FATF to leverage international expertise. He encouraged further deliberation among Member States to ensure the forum's success in advancing asset recovery and the rule of law.

12. The **Delegate of the People's Republic of China** emphasized the critical importance of asset recovery in combating corruption, especially in a world of increasing cross-border capital flows and illicit fund transfers. Highlighting China's domestic efforts, he outlined measures such as criminalizing self-laundering, targeting underground banking operations, and enhancing cross-agency coordination to improve anti-money laundering enforcement. He expressed support for the AALCO Asset Recovery Expert Forum, viewing it as an effective platform for Asian and African collaboration and urged all countries to cooperate closely in asset recovery.

13. The **Delegate of Japan** emphasized the country's commitment to advancing discussions on asset recovery as part of broader anti-corruption efforts. He acknowledged Indonesia's initiative on this issue and highlighted Japan's contributions particularly in supporting developing nations

in Asia and Africa. He also mentioned about international training courses and regional seminars conducted by Japan which focused on good governance and criminal justice responses to corruption.

14. The **Delegate of the People's Republic of Bangladesh** emphasized the country's strong commitment to asset recovery. He expressed support for the establishment of an Asset Recovery Expert Forum under AALCO, envisioning it as a platform for expert collaboration, exchange of best practices, and coordination of positions at international forums. The delegate stressed avoiding overlap with existing global mechanisms and highlighted Bangladesh's progress in anti-money laundering and asset recovery.

15. The **Delegate of the State of Kuwait** emphasized that corruption is a global issue requiring strong international cooperation, as illicit financial flows often transcend borders. Highlighting the risk of stolen assets being sheltered in developed countries, he called for flexible and effective mechanisms to enhance existing frameworks under the UN and World Bank. He also underscored Kuwait's efforts to strengthen bilateral legal assistance agreements that include provisions for seizure, confiscation, and repatriation of assets. He reaffirmed Kuwait's commitment to multilateral and bilateral cooperation in fighting corruption and advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

16. The **Delegate of the Republic of Uganda** stressed the vital role of international cooperation in asset recovery, especially in Africa and Asia, where corruption hampers development and essential services. He highlighted major barriers to effective asset recovery such as the lack of political will, legal hurdles like banking secrecy, and poor coordination, as outlined by the World Bank, which obstruct the implementation of Chapter V of the UNCAC. Emphasizing asset recovery as a tool to restore public trust and promote sustainable development, he expressed support for global initiatives such as the StAR Initiative and the G20 Principles. The Delegate reaffirmed Uganda's commitment to building the necessary legal and institutional framework for effective asset repatriation and good governance.

17. The **Delegate of the Republic of South Africa** expressed appreciation for the discussions on asset recovery and commended Indonesia and the AALCO Secretariat. Emphasizing the severe impact of corruption on governance and development, especially in the Global South, he highlighted the importance of returning illicit assets to their countries of origin. He called for the

swift establishment of the AALCO Asset Recovery Expert Forum and proposed Inter-Sessional Meetings to define the Secretariat's role and expert selection criteria. He further encouraged Member States to begin nominating experts and reaffirmed its commitment to sharing experiences and fostering regional cooperation in the fight against corruption.

C. Topics for Focused Deliberation

18. This Secretariat Report, prepared for AALCO's Sixty-Third Annual Session seeks to provide Member States with a comprehensive update on significant developments in the field of Asset Recovery since the Sixty-Second Annual Session. It is designed to facilitate focused deliberations on two critical topics:

1. The Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and Asset Recovery;
2. Discussions on the way forward for the establishment of an Asset Recovery Expert Forum.

II. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A. The Concept of Asset Recovery

19. Asset recovery, as addressed in Chapter V of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), refers to the process of identifying, tracing, confiscating, and returning the proceeds of corruption to the country of origin or their rightful owners. While it is difficult to quantify the exact volume of corrupt funds circulating globally, the World Bank estimates that developing countries lose between US\$20–40 billion annually due to corruption.¹ These diverted resources could otherwise be used to alleviate poverty, enhance public services, and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the often blatant nature of such misappropriation, the complexity of legal frameworks, institutional barriers, and insufficient international cooperation allow corrupt actors to retain access to their illicit wealth.

20. According to the Basel Institute on Governance,² asset recovery entails the confiscation and restitution of illicitly acquired assets, most often the proceeds of crime. These assets can take

¹ Brun, Jean Pierre; Dunker, Gabriele; Gray, Larissa Alanna; Panjer, Melissa; Power, Richard John; Stephenson, Kevin Mark, Barriers to asset recovery: an analysis of the key barriers and recommendations for action (English), Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) initiative Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group

<<https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documentsreports/documentdetail/204221468338390474/barriers-to-asset-recovery-an-analysis-of-the-key-barriers-and-recommendations-for-action>> accessed 31 July 2025.

² The Basel Institute is an independent not-for-profit organization which was established in 2003 in Basel, Switzerland.

various forms, including cash, real estate, precious metals, financial investments (e.g., shares), virtual assets like cryptocurrencies, luxury goods, racehorses, and even aircraft.

21. Asset recovery may occur within a single jurisdiction, when illicit funds remain or are reinvested domestically or across borders when the proceeds are transferred abroad. While the process is complex, it generally comprises four main phases:

1. **Pre-investigation**, involving the verification of initial intelligence;
2. **Investigation**, which may include freezing or seizing assets and engaging in international cooperation to gather evidence;
3. **Judicial proceedings**, culminating in a court order for asset confiscation; and
4. **Disposal or return**, where assets are repatriated to the rightful owner or the state of origin.

B. The United Nations Convention against Corruption and Asset Recovery

22. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in October 2003 and entering into force in December 2005, represents the first and to date only comprehensive, legally binding international instrument dedicated to preventing and combating corruption in all its forms.³ Comprising eight substantive chapters, UNCAC addresses preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange, and the role of civil society and private sector in anti-corruption efforts.

23. Asset recovery, codified in Chapter V of UNCAC (articles 51–59), is one of the Convention’s cornerstones. Article 51 declares the return of assets confiscated as a “fundamental principle” of the treaty, recognizing that recovering illicit proceeds of corruption restores public resources, deters malfeasance and fosters public trust in government. Articles 52 and 53 oblige States Parties to consider measures such as freezing and seizure to preserve the availability of property subject to confiscation. Article 54 outlines provisional measures; article 55 addresses confiscation, whether following criminal conviction or, where permitted by domestic law, through non-conviction-based mechanisms; and article 56 establishes the substantive and procedural

It partners worldwide to advance knowledge, practice and policy on anti-corruption, asset recovery and business integrity. It provides guidelines and research on asset recovery, including practical tools for practitioners. <https://baselgovernance.org/> accessed 1 August 2025.

³ United Nations Convention against Corruption (adopted 31 October 2003, entered into force 14 December 2005) 2349 UNTS 41 (UNCAC).

requirements for confiscation. Article 57 then mandates that confiscated assets, “in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law,” be disposed of by return to requesting States, while article 58 addresses costs incurred, and article 59 obliges States to provide other forms of international cooperation, such as sharing assets recovered.⁴

24. UNCAC’s asset-recovery framework introduced three key innovations. First, it codified non-conviction-based confiscation, allowing for the forfeiture of assets even where prosecutions fail, thereby closing an enforcement gap exploited by corrupt actors. Second, it established direct-recovery procedures enabling mutual legal assistance across jurisdictions to freeze, seize and return ill-gotten gains swiftly. Third, it created a global peer-review mechanism, the Implementation Review Group, which monitors State implementation of UNCAC’s asset-recovery provisions, issues recommendations and catalyses legislative and institutional reforms.⁵

25. By linking asset recovery to the 2030 Agenda’s Sustainable Development Goal 16.4 (to significantly reduce illicit financial flows and recover stolen assets by 2030)⁶, UNCAC has galvanized recoveries exceeding USD 20 billion since its entry into force.⁷ Initiatives such as the Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Initiative and the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) have operationalized UNCAC’s Chapter V. StAR provides technical assistance for tracing, freezing and returning proceeds, while the GlobE Network facilitates encrypted, direct law-enforcement cooperation.

i. The Tenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP10)

26. The Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (CoSP), is the main decision-making body of the Convention. It supports parties and signatories in their implementation of the Convention and provides policy guidance to The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to develop and implement anti-corruption activities.

27. The Conference was established per article 63 of the Convention:

- To improve the capacity of States to implement the Convention;

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ UNGA Res S-32/1, ‘Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation’ (7 June 2021) UN Doc A/RES/S-32/1<<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/S-32/1>> accessed 31 July 2025.

⁶ UN Sustainable Development Goals, Target 16.4 <<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>> accessed 31 July 2025.

⁷ Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative, ‘Annual Report 2023’ (World Bank and UNODC, 2024).

- To enhance cooperation among States in achieving the objectives of the Convention; and
- To promote and review the implementation of the Convention.

28. The Conference convenes every two years, bringing together representatives of States that have acceded to the Convention and other relevant stakeholders to review its implementation, discuss emerging challenges and trends and adopt resolutions on pertinent issues. All parties and signatories to the Convention can take part in the Conference. Non-signatories, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations can apply for observer status at its sessions.

29. The Conference has created several subsidiary bodies to assist the Conference in performing its functions related to the effective implementation of the Convention. These subsidiary bodies advise the Conference and make recommendations to help deliver its mandate, in accordance with article 63, paragraph 7 of the Convention. The Conference stands as a pivotal platform to promote collaboration, identify emerging challenges, harness experiences, recognize successful initiatives and shape collective global efforts in the years ahead. UNODC acts as the secretariat of the Conference.

30. The Tenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP10) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption was convened in Atlanta from 11 to 15 December 2023.⁸ This session marked the twentieth anniversary of the Convention's adoption in 2003 underscoring the global reach and near-universal ratification of this landmark treaty.⁹ More than two thousand participants, including ministers and high-level representatives from 160 States Parties, officials of United Nations and regional bodies, as well as experts from civil society, academia and the private sector engaged in five days of plenary debates, ministerial panels and thematic roundtables addressing the full spectrum of anti-corruption challenges.¹⁰ The 11th Session of the Conference of the States Parties (CoSP11) to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) will take place from 14 to 19 December 2025 in Doha, Qatar.

31. CoSP10's agenda encompassed criminalization, prevention, international cooperation and asset recovery, alongside cross-cutting topics such as corruption in emergencies, whistle-blower protection, business integrity and the gender dimensions of corruption. This broad thematic

⁸ <<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2023/December/closing-of-the-tenth-session-of-the-conference-of-the-states-parties.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*

coverage reflected the Convention's comprehensive approach to eradicating corruption in both public and private spheres.

32. A major decision at CoSP10 extended the second cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism, covering preventive measures and asset recovery, until June 2026.¹¹ This extension will ensure completion of outstanding country reviews delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and lay the groundwork for a robust third cycle. Since 2010, over 300 national reviews and 260 executive summaries have been completed under this peer-review process, fostering the exchange of good practices and catalyzing legislative, institutional and procedural reforms across States Parties.¹²

33. CoSP10 adopted twelve resolutions and two decisions, beginning with the “Atlanta 2023” political declaration, which reaffirmed collective commitment to integrity, accountability and civil-society engagement.¹³ In a historic first, the Conference adopted dedicated resolutions on whistle-blower protection, public-procurement integrity and gender-responsive anti-corruption, in addition to Resolution 10/6 on beneficial-ownership transparency.¹⁴ Resolution 10/6 mandates that States Parties establish and maintain adequate, accurate and up-to-date domestic registers of beneficial ownership that are accessible to competent authorities, including financial intelligence units, anti-corruption bodies and tax administrations and retain historical ownership data. It also calls for removal of legal and regulatory obstacles to information sharing and the scaling up of UNODC and The Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) technical assistance to support implementation.

34. Asset recovery featured prominently throughout the CoSP10. The StAR Initiative and the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE) convened dedicated practitioner sessions on tracing, freezing and returning stolen assets. During the Sixth StAR Day, participants explored enhancements to the Asset Recovery Watch database, which now

¹¹ < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/uncac/implementation-review-mechanism-next-phase.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

¹² UNODC, ‘Implementation of chapter V (Asset recovery) of the United Nations Convention against Corruption’ (4 October 2023) UN Doc CAC/COSP/IRG/2022/7, para 4.

¹³ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, ‘Resolution 10/1 — Atlanta 2023: promoting integrity, accountability and transparency in the fight against corruption’ <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session10-resolutions.html#Res.10-1>> accessed 1 August 2025.

¹⁴ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, ‘Resolution 10/6 — Enhancing the use of beneficial ownership information to strengthen asset recovery’ < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session10-resolutions.html#Res.10-6> > accessed 1 August 2025.

tracks over 400 cases, and the Global Forum on Asset Recovery Action Series, which facilitates bilateral and multilateral case consultations.¹⁵ In 2023 alone, StAR reported assistance to twenty States, the enactment of four new asset-recovery laws, improvements to mutual-legal-assistance processes in twelve jurisdictions and training for over six hundred practitioners worldwide.¹⁶

35. Ministerial panels underscored that effective asset recovery serves sustainable development by returning ill-gotten gains to societies most harmed by corruption. Panellists shared emerging good practices such as multi-agency asset-management offices, specialized prosecutorial units and civil-society oversight mechanisms and highlighted persistent challenges, notably complex nominee structures, legal barriers to information exchange and resource limitations in requesting States.

36. Participants agreed that the Convention's implementation must evolve to address digitalization, virtual assets and cross-border illicit financial flows linked to corruption. They urged States to harness data analytics and public-private partnerships for financial investigations and to strengthen domestic coordination among law enforcement, regulatory authorities and asset-management agencies. A consensus emerged on deepening engagement with non-state actors particularly the private sector, civil society and the media to bolster transparency and investigative capacity.¹⁷

37. CoSP10 concluded by tasking the Implementation Review Group and UNODC to develop guidance and capacity-building tools on beneficial ownership, whistle-blower protection, procurement integrity and gender-responsive anti-corruption ahead of the eleventh session in 2025. The outcomes of CoSP10 thus reflect a maturing international anti-corruption framework, one that integrates asset recovery as a core mechanism, broadens thematic coverage to emerging challenges and reinforces a shared, forward-looking vision for a world free of corruption.

ii. The Sixteenth Session of the Implementation Review Group (Vienna, 17 to 21 February 2025)

38. The Implementation Review Group (IRG) is a subsidiary body of the CoSP to the UNCAC. It was established by the CoSP in its resolution 3/1, entitled "Review mechanism", as an open-

¹⁵ < <https://star.worldbank.org/events/star-day-10th-session-conference-states-parties-cosp-uncac-2023> > accessed 1 August 2025.

¹⁶ n (7).

¹⁷ n (13).

ended intergovernmental group of States Parties to operate under its authority and report to it.¹⁸ In accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the functions of the IRG are to have an overview of the review process in order to identify challenges and good practices and to consider technical assistance requirements to ensure effective implementation of the Convention. Thematic implementation reports, prepared by the secretariat, serve as the basis for the analytical work of the IRG. Since its establishment in 2009, the IRG has held regular and resumed sessions every year. On the basis of its deliberations, the Group submits recommendations and conclusions to the Conference for its consideration and approval.

39. The sixteenth session of the IRG was convened in Vienna from 17 to 21 February 2025. This peer-review session, part of the Convention's second review cycle covering chapters II (Preventive Measures) and V (Asset Recovery), brought together over 128 government delegations, the UNODC Secretariat, and observers from intergovernmental and civil-society organizations.¹⁹

40. Over five days, the IRG examined progress in implementing UNCAC provisions, considered the Secretariat's annotated provisional agenda and background notes and reviewed the first wave of national review reports and executive summaries.

41. A central focus was the IRG's forward-looking mandate under Conference Decision 10/2: to scope the next phase of the IRM for consideration at CoSP11.²⁰ Delegates debated the "Options Paper,"²¹ addressing four key elements:

1. Follow-up on recommendations issued during the first review phase;
2. Assessment of new legislative, institutional and operational developments since the initial reviews;

¹⁸ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 'Review Mechanism' <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session3-resolutions.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

¹⁹ <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²⁰ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 'Decision 10/2 — Further extension of the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption'

<<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session10-resolutions.html#Dec.10-2>> accessed 1 Aug. 2025.

²¹ CoSP, Implementation Review Group Sixteenth session 'Summary of views and an outline of options and modalities in relation to the next phase of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption' (20 December 2024) UN Doc CAC/COSP/IRG/2025/2

<<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

3. Evaluation of technical assistance delivered and remaining capacity-building needs;
4. Identification and documentation of emerging good practices that merit wider dissemination.

42. Through interactive dialogue, States Parties probed the adequacy of anti-corruption legislation, the operational independence of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs), the scope of beneficial-ownership registers, and the timeliness of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) in asset-recovery cases. Many delegations reported progress in enacting whistle-blower protections, enhancing procurement transparency through e-governance tools, and establishing multi-agency asset-management offices, echoing CoSP10's resolutions on these themes.

43. By the end of the session, the IRG had agreed on a draft decision²² and draft terms of reference for its seventeenth session, defining the scope, modalities and timeline for the IRM's next phase. Key elements included a standardized self-assessment questionnaire with built-in reference points for impact evaluation; a structured follow-up reporting mechanism requiring annual progress reports on recommendation implementation; enhanced stakeholder engagement, particularly with non-governmental actors, through formal national consultations and periodic IRG briefings; and a centralized dashboard linking technical-assistance needs, delivered projects and lessons learned.

44. These draft texts, to be transmitted to the Conference of the States Parties at CoSP11, reflect a shared determination among States Parties and the UNODC to evolve the Review Mechanism into a more transparent, inclusive and results-oriented instrument. They will guide the Convention's peer-review process through 2026, ensuring that UNCAC implementation continues to adapt in response to emerging corruption threats, innovations in governance, and the needs of States in safeguarding integrity worldwide.

a. First resumed sixteenth session (Vienna, 16 to 20 June 2025)

45. The first resumed sixteenth session of the IRG was held in Vienna from 16 to 20 June 2025.²³ This plenary, reconvened following its initial February 2025 meeting, brought together

²² CoSP, Implementation Review Group Sixteenth session 'Report of the Implementation Review Group on its sixteenth session, held in Vienna from 17 to 21 February 2025' (13 March 2025) UN Doc CAC/COSP/IRG/2025/3 <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²³ <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16-first-resumed.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

government delegates from all UNCAC States Parties, UNODC Secretariat staff and representatives of observer organizations to finalize draft recommendations on the next phase of the IRM and to review emerging thematic issues under the Convention's second cycle.

46. From the outset, participants focused on the IRM's future design. Building on the Secretariat's "Options Paper" and the February 2025 summaries²⁴, States debated the scope, modality and sequencing of reviews for CoSP11 in 2025–2026. Delegates stressed the need for greater emphasis on the effectiveness of domestic measures, moving beyond compliance checklists to evaluate real-world impact.

47. Parallel discussions addressed four substantive topics of high policy relevance:

- **Corruption Involving Organized Criminal Groups.** Delegates exchanged experiences on inter-agency cooperation, including financial intelligence units, prosecutors and anti-money-laundering bodies, to dismantle criminal networks and trace proceeds.
- **Protection of Reporting Persons.** The session advanced draft guidance on legislative and administrative frameworks to safeguard whistle-blowers, reflecting CoSP10 Resolution 10/4.²⁵ States shared national models for secure reporting channels, confidentiality guarantees and reparation mechanisms.
- **Beneficial Ownership Information.** Drawing on lessons from CoSP10's Resolution 10/6²⁶, participants reviewed national practices in establishing publicly accessible ownership registers, verifying data quality and facilitating cross-border information exchange to support financial investigations and asset recovery.
- **Procurement Integrity and E-Governance.** The group considered the effective use of information and communications technologies to enhance transparency in public

²⁴ CoSP, Implementation Review Group First resumed sixteenth session 'Summary of discussions held to date on the second phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism' (8 April 2025) UN Doc CAC/COSP/IRG/2025/5 <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16-first-resumed.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²⁵ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, 'Resolution 10/4 — Methodologies and indicators for measuring corruption and the effectiveness of anti-corruption frameworks' < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session10-resolutions.html#Res.10-4>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²⁶ n (14).

contracting and to prevent collusion, bid-rigging and embezzlement at all government levels.

48. By session's end, the IRG had agreed on a draft decision setting out the terms of reference for its seventeenth session and the detailed parameters of the IRM's next phase, including updated review calendars, standardized reporting templates and enhanced stakeholder engagement. These draft recommendations, to be presented to the Conference of the States Parties at CoSP11, reflect a collective ambition to refine the Review Mechanism into a more transparent, inclusive and impact-oriented process, one capable of tracking not only legal compliance but also tangible progress in preventing and combatting corruption worldwide. The Second resumed sixteenth session of the IRG will be held from 1-5 September 2025 in Vienna.

iii. Eighteenth Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery (Vienna, 12-14 June 2024)

49. The Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery (WGAR), also called the "Asset Recovery Working Group", is a subsidiary body of the CoSP. The Working Group is responsible for assisting and advising the CoSP in the implementation of its mandate on the return of proceeds of corruption pursuant to chapter V of the Convention. The review of this chapter by States parties to the Convention has taken place during the second cycle of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the Convention.

50. Since its establishment in 2006, the WGAR has held one meeting per year, where participants exchange information on good practices and existing and emerging challenges related to the implementation of chapter V of the Convention and develop recommendations to be presented to the Conference. Topics discussed during the Working Group usually include financial disclosure systems, beneficial ownership, procedures for the confiscation of proceeds of corruption, the management of frozen, seized and confiscated assets and financial intelligence units, among others.

51. The Eighteenth Session of the WGAR was convened in Vienna from 12-14 June 2024, marking a significant gathering focused on advancing international cooperation in combating corruption and recovering stolen assets.²⁷ The eighteenth session was conducted under the

²⁷ < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/WGAR/session18.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

framework of resolution 10/6, which mandated the Working Group to focus on beneficial ownership information and its role in detecting, deterring, and preventing corruption while enhancing asset recovery and return processes. The Working Group held six meetings during the three-day period, with most sessions conducted jointly with the IRM and the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Meeting to Enhance International Cooperation under UNCAC.²⁸ The Nineteenth Session of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery will be held from 3-5 September 2025 in Vienna.

52. The session witnessed robust international participation, with representatives from 124 States Parties to the Convention in attendance. The European Union, as a regional economic integration organization party to the Convention, was also represented. Additionally, various United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and intergovernmental organizations participated as observers, including the United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, Basel Institute on Governance, Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the League of Arab States.²⁹

Thematic Focus Areas

a. Beneficial Ownership Transparency

53. The primary thematic focus of the eighteenth session centered on beneficial ownership information and its critical role in asset recovery processes.³⁰ This emphasis aligned with Conference resolution 10/6, which recognized beneficial ownership transparency as essential for strengthening asset recovery mechanisms.

54. The Working Group examined good practices and challenges in implementing beneficial ownership transparency regimes, focusing on how such information can enhance the detection, deterrence, and prevention of corruption while facilitating the recovery and return of assets.

²⁸ CoSP, Implementation Review Group First resumed sixteenth session ‘Summary of discussions held to date on the second phase of the Implementation Review Mechanism’ (8 April 2025) UN Doc CAC/COSP/IRG/2025/5 <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/IRG/session16-first-resumed.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²⁸ CoSP ‘Report on the meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery held in Vienna from 12 to 14 June 2024’ (19 June 2024) UN Doc CAC/COSP/WG.2/2024/4 <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/WGAR/session18.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ CoSP Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery ‘Annotated provisional agenda’ (22 March 2024) UN Doc CAC/COSP/WG.2/2024/1 <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/WGAR/session18.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

Discussions covered legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks necessary to ensure effective beneficial ownership transparency systems.

55. Key areas of discussion included:

- Comprehensive definitions of beneficial ownership covering all relevant factors and criteria;
- Centralized registers ensuring efficient access by competent authorities;
- Verification mechanisms including automated checks and cross-referencing with other databases;
- International cooperation in exchanging beneficial ownership information;
- Challenges posed by complex corporate structures designed to conceal true ownership.

b. Illicit Financial Flows and International Cooperation

56. The second major thematic area addressed illicit financial flows and challenges, obstacles, and barriers to international cooperation. This discussion followed up on commitments made during the UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption, examining measures taken by States Parties to combat illicit financial flows.³¹

57. A note³² prepared by the Secretariat for the 18th meeting served as a discussion guide to support follow-up action by States Parties after the 2021 UN General Assembly Special Session on corruption. It focuses specifically on addressing illicit financial flows (IFFs), overcoming challenges to international cooperation, and enhancing asset recovery mechanisms. The guide is grounded in the commitments outlined in the political declaration adopted at the special session, which calls on Member States to significantly reduce IFFs, strengthen frameworks for asset recovery and return, improve regulatory oversight of financial institutions, and enhance mutual legal assistance and international cooperation, especially in connection with corruption and transnational organized crime.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² CoSP Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Asset Recovery ‘Discussion guide on illicit financial flows and challenges, obstacles and barriers to international cooperation: measures taken by States parties in follow-up to the political declaration adopted at the special session of the General Assembly against corruption’ (9 April 2024) UN Doc CAC/COSP/WG.2/2024/3

<<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/WGAR/session18.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

58. To guide deliberations, the Working Group was invited to explore the progress made since 2021, share national experiences in defining and tackling IFFs, and identify challenges and good practices in data collection, policy development, and international cooperation. Member States were also encouraged to assess their domestic legal and institutional frameworks, consider ways to enhance engagement with non-governmental actors, and articulate specific capacity-building and technical assistance needs. Ultimately, the guide called for more coordinated, transparent, and evidence-based responses to curb illicit financial flows and strengthen global anti-corruption efforts.

c. Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

59. A substantial portion of the session was dedicated to technical assistance discussions, reflecting the ongoing need for capacity building in asset recovery. States Parties shared experiences regarding various issues such as: legislative reform needs; Institutional capacity development; Training requirements for practitioners; International cooperation mechanisms and Technology utilization in asset recovery processes.³³

60. The discussions emphasized the importance of coordinated international support, with organizations like the StAR Initiative providing ongoing assistance to requesting countries. The session highlighted persistent challenges in asset recovery processes. Major impediments identified included:

- Non-responsive mutual legal assistance from countries where assets are located;
- Difficulties in identifying and verifying beneficial ownership of suspected corruption proceeds;
- Complex corporate structures spanning multiple jurisdictions;
- Insufficient legislative frameworks for international cooperation;
- Limited institutional capacity in many requesting states;
- Lack of adequate coordination mechanisms between domestic agencies.

³³ <<https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/WGAR/session18.html>> accessed 1 August 2025.

61. The Working Group adopted its report³⁴, thereby formally concluding the eighteenth session. Key outcomes included:

1. Enhanced understanding of beneficial ownership transparency challenges and good practices;
2. Identification of barriers to effective international cooperation in asset recovery;
3. Technical assistance priorities for capacity building;
4. Commitment to continued dialogue on illicit financial flows.

62. The eighteenth session's focus on beneficial ownership transparency aligned with global trends toward greater corporate transparency and anti-money laundering measures. The discussions contributed to the broader UNCAC implementation framework, particularly as the second review cycle covering asset recovery provisions nears completion.

63. The session's emphasis on practical cooperation mechanisms and technical assistance reflected recognition that effective asset recovery required not only strong legal frameworks but also adequate institutional capacity and international coordination. As highlighted by practitioners, successful asset recovery depends on swift action, effective information sharing, and trust-building between jurisdictions.

64. The Working Group's continued focus on these issues, scheduled to continue at the nineteenth session in September 2025, demonstrates the ongoing priority given to asset recovery within the global anti-corruption agenda. The session's outcomes will likely influence future policy development, technical assistance programming, and international cooperation mechanisms in the fight against corruption and recovery of stolen assets.

C. The Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network)

65. The Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) was established in 2021 through a consultative process facilitated by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Open to anti-corruption law enforcement authorities from all UN Member States and States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption

³⁴ n (28).

(UNCAC), the Network is governed by its members and supported by the UNODC, which serves as its secretariat.

66. The GlobE Network enables operational law enforcement authorities with anti-corruption mandates—including anti-corruption agencies, police forces, prosecution offices, attorneys general, asset recovery offices, and financial investigation units—to collaborate on advancing transnational corruption cases. It provides critical support to investigators and prosecutors through the GlobE Secure Communications Platform (SCP), facilitating the swift and secure exchange of information, along with access to specialized tools and resources. In partnership with other stakeholders, the Network is committed to enhancing effective and efficient transnational cooperation among anti-corruption practitioners worldwide.

67. The sixth plenary meeting of the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (GlobE Network) was convened in Baku from 20 to 23 May 2025.³⁵ During this period, over 300 anti-corruption practitioners from more than 90 jurisdictions, together with observer organizations and technical partners, were brought together in plenary sessions, workshops, bilateral consultations, and networking events designed to strengthen joint action against transnational corruption.³⁶ Romania has offered to host the seventh plenary meeting of the GlobE Network in 2026.

68. The Network's 2024 annual activity report³⁷ was presented and approved, and the 2025 work plan was tabled and adopted. Two new observer organizations, the Forum of Inspectorates-General of African States and Similar Institutions (FIGE) and the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), were formally validated, thereby expanding the Network's strategic partnerships. A Practical Explanatory Note guiding the selection of future Steering Committee members, chairs, and vice-chairs was endorsed, and comprehensive Guidelines on the establishment of regional offices were adopted.³⁸

³⁵ < <https://globenetwork.unodc.org/globenetwork/en/network/sixth-plenary-meeting-of-the-globe-network-may-2025.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

³⁶ UNODC GlobE Network 'Baku GlobE Network Sixth Plenary Meeting: Outcomes and Decisions' <<https://globenetwork.unodc.org/globenetwork/en/network/sixth-plenary-meeting-of-the-globe-network-may-2025.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

³⁷ UNODC GlobE Network 'GlobE Network Report: From January 2023 to June 2024' < <https://globenetwork.unodc.org/globenetwork/en/documents.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

³⁸ n (36).

69. A total of 140 bilateral and multilateral operational meetings were held, during which intelligence on frozen and confiscated assets and best practices for rapid account restraining were exchanged. The Network’s Guiding Principles and standardized forms for secure information exchange were adopted, and the Model Agreement for negotiating cooperation treaties was reaffirmed. Progress on the customization of the GlobE Secure Communication Platform (SCP) was reviewed, and a conceptual blueprint for the forthcoming GlobE Digital Hub was introduced. A joint pilot project with the StAR Initiative on informal notifications of direct-recovery measures was presented, drawing on feedback from Thematic Working Group 1.³⁹

70. Three thematic workshops and multiple side events were conducted. During the “At the Frontlines of Cooperation: The Role of SCP Contact Points” workshop, guidance for national SCP users was refined. In the “Assessing Impact: The Role of the GlobE Network in Facilitating Successful Anti-Corruption Cases” workshop, recommendations for measuring case outcomes were produced. The “Strengthening International Cooperation: The Role of GlobE Network Contact Points” workshop identified capacity gaps and proposed targeted training modules. Panel discussions on artificial intelligence and digital forensics in financial investigations were showcased, and hands-on exercises in asset tracing methodologies were provided.⁴⁰

71. The sixth Plenary requested the GlobE secretariat for Launching of the joint pilot project with StAR on informal notifications related to direct asset recovery. The Secretariat was also requested to draft a summary paper on contact-point roles. Development of detailed user-profile guidance for the SCP was also requested. Alongside, the preparation of a standardized questionnaire to assess the Network’s impact on case outcomes was requested.

72. Institutional governance was consolidated, secure operational channels were forged, and members were equipped with targeted training and analytical tools, thereby reaffirming the GlobE Network’s role as an agile, practitioner-driven platform for combating corruption through coordinated law-enforcement action.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

D. International Expert Meeting on Asset Return and Sustainable Development (“ADDIS 4”) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11–13 December 2024

73. Addis Ababa hosted the fourth in the series of International Expert Meetings on Asset Return and Sustainable Development, known as “ADDIS 4” from 11 to 13 December 2024.⁴¹ Convened under the auspices of the UNCAC Secretariat with support from the Governments of Ethiopia and Switzerland, the meeting assembled over 70 experts from States Parties, international organizations, civil society and academia. Its purpose was to deepen understanding of how recovered assets can be harnessed to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to share emerging good practices on asset return, and to align multilateral forums, such as the Financing for Development process, with UNCAC’s asset-recovery framework.⁴²

74. The meeting opened with a plenary review of UNCAC’s Chapter V provisions on asset return. Underlining article 51’s⁴³ designation of return as a “fundamental principle,” participants surveyed the legal parameters for disposing of confiscated property⁴⁴ and considered UNCAC resolution 7/1’s call to conclude mutually acceptable arrangements for final disposition.⁴⁵

75. Technical sessions were organized around four core themes.⁴⁶ First, “Domestic Asset Management Efforts” featured case studies from Mozambique and Nigeria on institutional arrangements for administering recovered assets, ranging from dedicated asset-management offices to sovereign wealth-style funds. Second, “Civil Society and Domestic Coordination” explored how non-state actors, including the UNCAC Coalition and Article 19, can amplify transparency and accountability in asset-return processes through public-interest litigation and parliamentary monitoring. Third, “Financing for Development Synergies” examined the Financing for Development follow-up process, mapping linkages between Addis 4 outputs and the upcoming The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD 4) Summit in Spain (July 2025). Finally, a workshop on “Managing Seized and Confiscated Assets” launched StAR’s new

⁴¹ < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/uncac/expert-meetings/addis4-egm-2024.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ United Nations Convention against Corruption (adopted 31 October 2003, entered into force 14 December 2005) 2349 UNTS 41 (UNCAC) art 51.

⁴⁴ United Nations Convention against Corruption (adopted 31 October 2003, entered into force 14 December 2005) 2349 UNTS 41 (UNCAC) art 57.

⁴⁵ Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, ‘Strengthening mutual legal assistance for international cooperation and asset recovery’

< <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/cosp/conference/session7-resolutions.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

⁴⁶ < <https://www.unodc.org/corruption/en/uncac/expert-meetings/addis4-egm-2024.html> > accessed 1 August 2025.

practitioner’s guide offering step-by-step protocols for ensuring recovered proceeds effectively serve development priorities.

76. Interactive breakout groups produced a set of recommendations for elevating asset return in global sustainable-development dialogues. These included: developing standardized model agreements to expedite direct-recovery measures; adopting national frameworks for ring-fencing recovered funds for health, education and infrastructure; enhancing informal notification channels between requesting and requested States; and convening regular multi-stakeholder platforms—combining governmental, civil-society and technical partners, to exchange lessons learned. Participants also urged greater integration of asset-recovery metrics into official SDG monitoring, recommending that the UN Statistical Commission consider technical guidance to link UNCAC asset-recovery data with SDG indicator 16.4.1 reporting.

77. The meeting concluded with agreement to produce an “Addis 4 Good Practice Compendium,” to be finalized by mid-2025, cataloguing policy templates, legal instruments and operational tools shared during the meeting. Delegates endorsed the continued convening of the Addis Process, with the fifth expert meeting tentatively scheduled for 2027. By forging practical connections between asset return and sustainable-development financing, ADDIS 4 reaffirmed recovered assets as a critical.

III. COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE AALCO SECRETARIAT

78. The AALCO Secretariat recognizes that the issue of Asset Recovery holds significant importance for the Asian and African Member States. Despite the multitude of existing fora and mechanisms for recovering assets, the process of effective asset recovery often remains lengthy and complex, particularly when navigating multiple jurisdictions. There is a clear and pressing need for enhanced communication and coordination among Member States to expedite these critical asset recovery processes.

79. The proposal put forth by the Republic of Indonesia for the establishment of an Asset Recovery Expert Forum is viewed by the Secretariat as a strategic initiative aimed at facilitating and streamlining the process of asset recovery. This is to be achieved by fostering the sharing of best practices, legal procedures, and establishing direct contacts within each Member State’s legal system.

80. It is proposed that Member States engage in considered and constructive deliberations to provide guidance and chart the way forward on this matter, with particular attention to:

- a) the establishment of the Asset Recovery Expert Forum;
- b) the development of guidelines for the nomination of experts by Member States, based on clearly defined criteria and qualifications;
- c) the formulation of procedures governing the operation of the Expert Forum; and
- d) the delineation of the role of the AALCO Secretariat in facilitating its effective functioning.

81. The Secretariat also encourages the Member States to submit the requested information regarding the respective national authorities or agencies responsible for asset recovery, as per the provided template, to the AALCO Secretariat at the earliest convenience. The information collected through this exercise will support the development of a comprehensive contact list and serve to strengthen collaborative efforts among Member States in addressing issues related to asset recovery.

IV. ANNEXURE

A. Concept Note of Asset Recovery Expert Forum: (As submitted by the Republic of Indonesia for the Sixty-First Annual Session).

B. Secretariat *Note Verbale* dated 8 April 2025 enclosing a template of the Proposed Contact List of Authorities Responsible for Asset Recovery from AALCO Member States: (As proposed by the Republic of Indonesia).

ANNEX-I Concept note of Asset Recovery Expert Forum



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Ref. : AHU.UM.01.01-**733**

15 September 2023

Subject : Proposal of Asset Recovery Expert Forum for
the 61st Annual Session of AALCO

H.E. Dr. Kamalinne Pinitpuvadol
Secretary-General of Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO),

I'm very thankful for our fruitful meetings and site inspection in Bali, 6-7 September 2023 to ensure all necessary preparations and arrangements for the 61st Annual Session of AALCO.

As you may recall in our meeting, we have discussed the proposal to establish Asset Recovery Expert Forum in the 61st Annual Session of AALCO comprising senior officials, academics, and/or other relevant parties that has experience and expertise in recovering stolen asset from foreign jurisdictions. This expert forum can be utilized to accommodate consultation, discussion, exchange views and information related to the followings:

1. Sharing best practices of asset recovery;
2. Consulting challenges in recovering stolen assets;
3. Discussing ongoing cases required an international cooperation carried out by member countries;
4. Bridging and addressing practitioners' knowledge gaps; and
5. Ensuring that the asset recovery process involving multiple jurisdictions between member countries can be conducted effectively and successfully.

Considering the importance and the objective of this expert forum, therefore we propose to include this agenda to be discussed at the 61st Annual Session of AALCO. The detail proposal of the said forum is attached to this letter for your reference and consideration.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing your advice and consideration.


Cahyo R. Muzhar
Director General of Legal Administrative Affairs
Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia



Ministry of Law and Human Rights
Republic of Indonesia



ASSET RECOVERY EXPERT FORUM CONCEPT NOTE

**The AALCO
Secretariat 29-C,
Rizal Marg,
Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri,**

ASSET RECOVERY EXPERT FORUM CONCEPT NOTE

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I. Background

1. The theft of public assets from low- and middle-income countries is an immense development problem. The amount of money stolen from these economies and in- transition jurisdictions that is hidden in foreign jurisdictions each year is estimated to be a significant proportion of international financial flows (World Bank and UNODC 2007). The societal costs of corruption far exceed the value of assets stolen by public leaders. Corruption and financial crimes weaken confidence in public institutions, damage the private investment climate, and ruin delivery mechanism for poverty alleviation programs or public services such as health and education.

2. The international community has responded to the challenge. A key target of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16—Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions—is to “significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime” (emphasis added). The target recognizes an intrinsic connection between the drain of development resources by illicit financial flows and the need to recover stolen assets for the achievement of sustainable development.

3. In responding the critical issues to recover stolen assets, almost of the countries raised their commitment and strategic steps to overcome those issues, both through multilateral, regional, and bilateral cooperation. On 9 November 2010, placed in Bangkok, not less than 100 member countries of Transparency International (TI), declared their commitment at the moment of 2010 Annual Members Meeting of Transparency International to call upon all governments to give high priority on the international agenda (at the Group of 20, in the African Union, ASEAN and similar organizations, at the United Nations and in the World Bank and at other multilateral official institutions), without delay, to the critical issues related to the repatriation of stolen assets.

4. A similar wave of response has also happened in African region since many reports and research shown that African countries have placed asset recovery as one of the serious issues to be prioritized. This seriousness was proven by many occasions of African countries forum that have been utilized in unifying their policies and focus of developmental agenda, such as the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly focusing on the theme “Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”; and etc.

5. The existence of such wave of responds indicate that the countries all over the world, including Asia and Africa, reach a culmination point to sound and declare their commitment and political will. However, in the past decade, it was proven that asset recovery has become a crucial

issue to be carried out by taking into account that it always contains many processes, beginning from identification, tracing, securing (freezing- seizing), and then confiscating: the asset recovery process can be considered as usually complex and lengthy.

6. By looking at the former practices to recover stolen assets, including the effort of the Indonesian Government in returning stolen assets placed in other jurisdictions, it is undeniable that asset recovery requires strong coordination and collaboration with domestic agencies and ministries in multiple jurisdictions with different legal systems and procedures, both related to special investigative techniques and skills to “follow the money” beyond national borders and the ability to act quickly to avoid any dissipation of assets.

7. To optimize the positive impact of the 61st Annual Session of the AALCO, we do propose an agenda to be held in the main session of the AALCO, namely an agenda to discuss and conclude the establishment of expert forum on asset recovery by considering that the gathering of Asian and African countries in this forum can be maximized to address their common concern in recovering stolen assets. The submission of this agenda is also based on the Article 1 of the Statutes of AALCO revised and adopted at the Bali Session on 2004, that one of the purposes and objectives of the AALCO is to exchange views, experiences, and information on matters of common concern having legal implications.

II. Legal and Political Considerations

This proposal is made under legal and political considerations that has been concluded by the countries in Asian and African region, namely:

1. Article 1 of the Statutes of AALCO revised and adopted at the Bali Session on 2004;
2. The (Transparency International) Bangkok Declaration on Stolen Assets Recovery and the Management of Frozen Assets;
3. The 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted the Special Declaration on Illicit Financial Flows;
4. The 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly adopted the theme: “Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”; and
5. Common African Position on Asset Recovery (CAPAR) concluded at the 36th Ordinary Session 06 - 07 February 2020 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

III. Purposes and Objectives

We do realize that Asian and African countries have taken such necessary steps to combat money laundering by recovering stolen assets through their own position and strategies as shown by their regional declaration respectively. However, the problem is there is no technical and expert forum between both regions to discuss the development of the threat, vulnerability, to consult actual challenges in recovering stolen assets and also to share best practices and success stories. Therefore, we do propose that the 61st Annual Session of AALCO can be a forum to discuss and conclude the establishment of asset recovery expert forum comprising of senior officials, academics, and/or other relevant parties that has experience and expertise in recovering stolen asset from foreign jurisdictions.

This expert forum can be utilized to accommodate a discussion, exchange views, and information related to the followings:

1. Sharing best practices of asset recovery;
2. Consulting challenges in recovering stolen assets;
3. Discussing ongoing cases required an international cooperation carried out by member countries;
4. Bridging and addressing practitioners' knowledge gaps; and
5. Ensuring that the asset recovery process involving multiple jurisdictions between member countries can be conducted effectively.

IV. Specific Objectives

This proposed agenda is expected to reach three specific objectives:

1. Discuss and conclude the establishment of asset recovery expert forum; and
2. Discuss and conclude on the session period of the asset recovery expert forum; and
3. Discuss and conclude on the host country for the 1st session of the asset recovery asset forum.

V. Proposed Date

(to be confirmed)

**ASIAN-AFRICAN LEGAL
CONSULTATIVE ORGANIZATION
(AALCO)**



Secretariat

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No.81/2025/AM/AALCO

8 April 2025

The Secretariat of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) presents its compliments to the Embassies/High Commissions of the Member States of AALCO in New Delhi and has the honour to bring to their attention that the Secretariat has received a request from the Republic of Indonesia regarding the topic of Asset Recovery Expert Form.

The topic was introduced during the 61st Annual Session of AALCO, held in Bali, the Republic of Indonesia, in 2023. The topic was subsequently deliberated further during the 62nd Annual Session held in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand. It is anticipated that the topic will be the subject of continued discussions at the forthcoming 63rd Annual Session of AALCO, which is scheduled to take place in Kampala, Republic of Uganda, from 8th to 12th September 2025.

In this regard, the Republic of Indonesia, with the assistance of the AALCO Secretariat, kindly invites the Member States of AALCO to submit details regarding the respective national authorities or agencies that are responsible for asset recovery. The information provided will significantly contribute to the collaborative efforts in addressing this important issue.

Member States are encouraged to fill out the attached template with the requisite information to facilitate the preparation of a comprehensive contact list. This list will serve as a useful reference for Member States in their respective efforts related to asset recovery. The Secretariat appreciates timely cooperation of the Member States in this matter and kindly requests that the completed templates be submitted latest by **15 August 2025** at: mail@aalco.int

Any further queries in this regard may be directed to the Secretariat at: mail@aalco.int

The Secretariat of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassies/High Commissions of the Member States of AALCO in New Delhi the assurances of its highest consideration.

Encl. as above.

To

Embassies/High Commissions of the Member States of AALCO in New Delhi

Cc: Liaison Officers



Template for Authorities Responsible for Asset Recovery

**CONTACT LIST OF AUTHORITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSET RECOVERY
WITHIN AALCO MEMBER STATES' JURISDICTION**

Name of AALCO Member State	
Authority Responsible	

Details of Authority

Highest Ranking Officials	
Address of Authorities	
Contacts of Authorities	