



#Corruptiontoo: Why gender matters for anti-corruption

Corruption is a major barrier to prosperity, erodes trust in governments, affects economic and financial stability, threatens investment affecting economic growth, and curtails the basic rights of citizens. A large body of evidence shows that gender inequalities undermine good governance, sustainable growth, and poverty alleviation. Gender equality is not only a moral obligation, it also makes economic sense.

Corruption stands in the way of gender equality. It exacerbates gender disparities, increasing or at least perpetuating social inequalities in terms of access to health and education services, resource distribution and income, and ultimately is a major obstacle for women to gain full access to their civic, social and economic rights.

While many forms of corruption affect both women and men, corruption disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and hits the poor the hardest, especially [women](#), who represent a higher share of the world's poor¹.

In their traditional role as caregivers, women experience corruption in their daily lives². They are also less likely to report abuse as they are often less aware of their rights and entitlements, which makes them easier targets for corruption³. C20 and W20 also highlight that corruption hinders women's political representation and prevent them from accessing leadership positions in the political sphere⁴.

Furthermore, there are specific forms of corruption that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual extortion (Sextortion), where sexual favours are used as a currency for corrupt practices.

According to the International Association of Women Judges, sextortion is a pervasive yet under-reported phenomenon that affects the safety as well as the physical and emotional wellbeing of thousands of people worldwide, the majority of whom are women and young girls. While the

¹ According to the UN, an estimated 70 percent of the world's poor are women.

² Ferreira Rubio, Delia, Género y Corrupción en América Latina: ¿Hay alguna conexión?

³ Chene M. & Rheinbay J. 2016. Topic guide on Gender and corruption

⁴ Sundstrom A. Wangnerud L. 2015. Corruption as an obstacle to women's political representation: evidence from local councils in 18 European councils.

personal and social costs of sextortion are high, the phenomenon is less likely to be reported or prosecuted than other forms of corruption due to significant cultural and legal obstacles⁵.

[Reducing corruption](#) is a top priority for the G20 and, since 2010, the Group has moved in the right direction, from setting up a specific working group on anti-corruption, to developing more than [60 documents](#) (many of which have only been [partially](#) implemented). These include Action and Implementation Plans that address a wide range of topics: from beneficial ownership transparency to open data and asset disclosure. Yet, the G20 has **never addressed the link between gender inequality and corruption**.

This year the current [Anti-Corruption Action and Implementation Plan](#) comes to an end and the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group has a unique opportunity to assess how it will continue. From the B20, C20 and W20, we strongly believe **it is time for the Working Group to mainstream gender in their work** and ensure men and women are equally benefitting from anti-corruption programs and that programs have no (unintended) consequences that disproportionately affect men or women⁶.

Without a shadow of a doubt, making the link between gender and corruption may help to develop a better understanding of corrupt practices and craft more effective strategies to target them⁷. To achieve this, we call G20 countries to:

- Collect, analyse and publish gender disaggregated data on the differentiated impact that corruption has according to gender.

Systematic collection of data on gender and corruption is a prerequisite to fully understand and monitor the gendered impact of corruption and to design, implement and evaluate more targeted, effective and gender-sensitive programs.

- Recognise, condemn and adopt an effective criminal framework that addresses harassment and sexual extortion ('sextortion') as a gendered form of corruption and violence.

Policy-makers should address forms of corruption that affect women most, including sexual extortion that should be recognised as a form of corruption and become a specific area of anti-corruption efforts.

- Promote women's participation in public, economic and political life. Women's engagement in anti-corruption efforts can contribute to improve accountability, build sustainable integrity systems and establish governance frameworks that are more responsive to women's needs.

⁵ <http://www.iawj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Corruption-and-Sextortion-Resource-2.pdf>

⁶ Ortrun Merkle, Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in Anti-Corruption Programming, U4

⁷ Transparency International, POLICY BRIEF 01/2014: GENDER, EQUALITY AND CORRUPTION: WHAT ARE THE LINKAGES?

https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/policy_position_01_2014_gender_equality_and_corruption_what_are_the_linkage

- Integrate women in economic life through consistent and comprehensive national policies, one of its dimensions being supporting equal access to public procurement.

For this to happen we encourage countries to fully implement the G20 Beneficial Ownership High Level Principle (2014) and mandate public registers of beneficial ownership that utilize globally consistent data classifications and verification of information in order, not only to tackle corruption and money laundering and avoid conflict of interest and collusion, but also to increase transparency and measures related to government procurement that contribute to effectively achieving gender balance in economic life⁸.

B20, C20 and W20 are fully committed to contribute with the G20 in the fight against corruption and support mainstream gender in the upcoming G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan.

⁸ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/Gender-smart%20Procurement%20-%202020.12.2017.pdf>