BASEL INSTITUTE ON GOVERNANCE

Annual Report 2020

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Foreword

We must revive the global social contract to fight the pandemic of corruption

Gretta Fenner
Managing Director

Mark Pieth
President

While medical research has been quick to develop protection against Covid-19, another pandemic continues to rampage humankind and our attempts at stopping it continue to fall short.

We are talking about the widespread disease of corruption, which has become deeply rooted in our societies, and which plagues our communities, their social cohesion and economic wellbeing. It leaps effortlessly between public officials and businesses regardless of political colour, nationality or sector, helped by professional middlemen and rule-free blind spots where dirty money can go on holiday.

This has never been more apparent than when the two pandemics met. Initial research seems to indicate that corruption levels rose to even higher levels during the pandemic. It might also be that seeing its deadly consequences from closer quarters made it more visible. What is certain is that more people are seeing through the corruption fog. Political protests and toppled governments around the world show that more people are upset about it, and that is a good development.

Those of us who work in the light can only fight a threat that is seen. The ophthalmologists in this case are the many individuals, the journalists, civil society activists, researchers and law enforcement officials who, courageously and often at great risk, are standing up to corruption and dragging it into the daylight. This is a tremendous help for our work, and we hope that our effort helps them.

But many of these anti-corruption heroes still fight a lonely battle. What's more, they are faced with the overwhelming resources and power of the grand transnational corrupt networks that, collectively, stifle sustainable development and undermine the economic and social wellbeing of our societies. To amplify the work of the many courageous people and organisations, nation states, global enterprises and governance bodies should be coming together. But instead, what we see and what is of major concern is an increasing breakdown of global solidarity and a return of increasingly divisive and at best nationalistic domestic and global politics.

So we urge politicians and business leaders to revitalise the global social contract – which is competently guided by the Sustainable Development Goals – by showing true and courageous leadership that disregards geographical, social, economic or other borders.

But before we are misinterpreted: We are not waiting for another global leaders' declaration; there are plenty of those. We are waiting for these key stakeholders to really do what they preach. And in doing so, to ask more of themselves and of each other than ever before. This means not just meeting but going beyond the requirements of international treaties and standards.

Those who risk their lives to fight corruption, and those who lose their lives because of corruption, every day, in every corner of the world, deserve at least that.

So, as we rightly celebrate the healthcare workers and other providers of essential services that are helping their fellow citizens get through the Covid-19 pandemic, let us also celebrate – and actively support – those individuals who resist, stand up and fight against corruption.

We have done our best to do just that throughout last year, and we will continue on this mission, hopefully with more backing from true leadership, for the good of everyone in this world.

Facts and figures

88

TOTAL STAFF

6

MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

25

NATIONALITIES IN OUR TEAM

5

FREE ELEARNING COURSES

13

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

13,000 +

BASEL AML INDEX REPORT DOWNLOADS

10,700 +

FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

16

PARTNER COUNTRIES WITH LONG-TERM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

280

COLLECTIVE ACTION INITIATIVES ON OUR B20 HUB

44

WORKING PAPERS, QUICK GUIDES AND ARTICLES

Where we work