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## RESEARCH REPORT

Committee: Economic and Social Council  
(ECOSOC)

Topic: Measures to regulate the rise of corruption  
in governments and corporations

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## Introduction

Corruption remains one of the most prevalent and pressing issues faced by governments around the world today, affecting various demographics around the world. Such behaviors, which are often done in the form of bribery, embezzlement, or forms of patronage, have posed distinct issues with regard to government transparency, weakened financial oversight, and more. The rise of corruption in recent decades has caught the UN's attention, and thus has also seen the creation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) to provide comprehensive administration at a global scale.

With no clear date when corruption started, this phenomenon remains something that society has been grappling with since the dawn of civilization; however, it has recently been declared as stagnant at the global level. Given that only 32 out of 180 countries measured by the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) have improved their global corruption, and 34 countries have significantly worsened, much action needs to be taken. Corruption often flourishes in the event of a lack of checks and balances, unfortunately, persisting in all countries around the world. As the world is seeing advances in technology, corruption has become an increasingly transnational matter since capital is now able to easily move across borders.

Addressing such challenges is therefore critical to ensure deliberate action is taken, given that corruption often harms the poor and most vulnerable in a given society. The Economic and Social Council in the United Nations must take coordinated action collectively to promote long-term government stability and equality for the citizens of each country.

## Definition of Key Terms

1. **Bribery:** The offering, giving, soliciting, or receiving of any item of value as a means of influencing the actions of an individual holding a public or legal duty.
2. **Embezzlement:** The act of stealing money or assets that one is legally entrusted to manage.
3. **Corruption Perceptions Index:** A global index that ranks countries based on their perceived levels of corruption.
4. **Defrauded:** Illegally obtaining money from (someone) by means of deception
5. **Corporate Lobbying:** Organized groups that influence legislation and policymakers, often through financial contributions, while staying within legal boundaries
6. **Corruption:** The abuse of entrusted power for private gain, which can include financial and non-financial benefits
7. **Money Laundering:** The concealment of the origins of illegally obtained money, typically by means of transfers involving foreign banks or legitimate businesses.
8. **Fraud:** Wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.

## Background Information

### Major cases

There have been a plethora of major incidents where important government officials and large companies have been caught in the act of bribery and embezzlement. It is crucial to understand the history and background of corruption and the dire consequences. Below are such examples of famous incidents:

### *Subramaniam Iswaran, Singapore, January 2024*

In May 2023, Singapore's Corrupt Practices Investigations Bureau (CPIB) began an investigation into the Minister for Transport and Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations Subramaniam Iswaran and his interactions with billionaire Ong Beng Seng. He was tried on a total of 27 charges, including 2 charges of corruption under the Prevention of Corruption Act. According to the alleged charges, between 2015 and 2022, he had received over \$384,000 in bribes, including tickets to the Singapore Grand Prix, private jet and business class flights to Qatar, and tickets to football games in the United Kingdom. After pleading guilty to the charges, Iswaran paid a voluntary disgorgement (returning his illegally obtained cash) of \$380,305.95 to the state. Later in 2024 8 new charges against Iswaran were publicly announced. He had allegedly obtained \$19,000 worth of valuables including several bottles of wines and whiskey, a set of golf clubs, and a Brompton bicycle from businessman David Lum Kok Seng. While the prosecution requested for 6 to 7 months of imprisonment, the presiding judge ruled that that was "manifestly inadequate", and on 3 October 2024, S. Iswaran was sentenced to 12 months of imprisonment in Changi Prison, which is known for its harsh conditions, with his bail set at \$800,000.

This is a very relevant and recent case, and is an excellent example of corruption at the governmental level. The prosecution of S. Iswaran just goes to show how inadequate current systems and regulations are, even with a government that prides itself on its transparency and trustworthiness.



**Figure #1:**Former Transport Minister S Iswaran arriving at the Supreme Court on May 8, 2024. (Lim Li Ting/TODAY, 2024)

### *2015 FIFA corruption scandal*

In May of 2015, 7 people from the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) were arrested in Hotel Baur au lac in Zurich due to an investigation conducted by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the International Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) into charges including wire fraud, money laundering, and racketeering. These arrests also lead to multiple nations, such as Australia, Germany, and Switzerland to launch investigations This was centered around the alleged use of bribery, fraud, and money laundering to corrupt the issuing of media and marketing rights for FIFA games in the Americas, which was estimated to be around \$150 million USD, including \$110 million dollars in bribes related to the Copa America Centenario which was to be hosted in 2016 in the United States. The bribery extended all the way to 2010, and influenced who was to host the 2010 FIFA world cup, and the 2011 FIFA presidential elections. As a consequence of these investigations, it came to light that in 2008 the FIFA general secretary, Jerome Valcke had transferred \$10 million dollars in funds given to FIFA from the South African Football Association, to an account under the CONCACAF head, Jack Warner, who was from Trinidad and Tobago. This is an important piece of evidence in the investigation of Jack Warner taking

bribes from South Africa to help secure their hosting of the 2010 World Cup. The payment had been meant for football in the Caribbean, however, \$1.6 million was used to pay loans and credit card debts by Warner, and a further \$360,000 was transferred to accounts of persons related to Warner. The Trinidadian supermarket chain JTA supermarkets had also been given a hefty \$4.6 million from the original funds given by the South African Football Association. This case is one that is quite extensive, and even went on until the 2022 Qatar World Cup. The whole scandal would be too much information to put on this report, but this is a summary of the most major events within the scandal.

This is a very good example of how corruption can still happen in more developed countries at the corporate level, and how there need to be more regulations and oversight on large corporations to ensure that there are no illegal doings.



**Figure #2: Sepp Blatter, the FIFA president at the time of the arrests, and had held the position for almost 20 years (Sky Sports, 2015).**

## Current Situation

### Global Overview

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2024 found that corruption around the globe has remained largely static, and is alarmingly high, with the long running average being around the low-40s. A large majority of the nations sitting below the 40-mark are from the Asian, South American, and African continents, and are all LEDC's, indicating where the main source of corruption lies. According to the Index the top ten most corrupted countries were (In ascending order) Sudan, Nicaragua, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Venezuela, Somalia, and South Sudan, with South Sudan being the lowest.

Since 2012 only 32 out of the 180 countries recorded on the CPI have improved on their corruption situations, which means 148 nations have either stayed the same or worsened over the past decade. Over 6.8 billion people live in countries which have a CPI score of less than 50, which is a staggering 85% of the population. Due to corruption in the form of bribery, theft, tax evasion, and other illicit financial flows, developing countries around the world are losing over \$1.2 trillion dollars in crucial funds and tax money needed to move their economies forward. Corruption also worsens public services and welfare, oftentimes affecting the nation's healthcare and education services, which only increases inequality.

While corruption at the government level tends to happen in countries in Asia, South America, and Africa, at the corporate level, corruption is ever present in more economically developed countries. Through methods such as corporate lobbying, tax evasion, and opaque political financing, which is similar to the concept of oligarchy, companies and powerful individuals are able to influence the government in their favour, which can lead to unfair laws and practices.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### Brazil

Launched in 2014, the Brazilian Police launched the critically acclaimed Operation Car Wash (Operação Lava Jato), used to tackle suspected money laundering at a car wash. This anti-corruption task force would soon become unprecedented in scale. Uncovering a complicated web of bribery and embezzlement within the nation, involving numerous politicians and companies (Such as Brazil's state oil company Petrobras). The investigations within Operação Lava Jato expanded throughout Latin America and resulted in Transparency International awarding Brazil the Anti-Corruption award for its actions. This led to sudden political accountability and consequences that were unexpected by many. This operation additionally encouraged the public to fight against corruption and demand transparency from their leaders.

### China

The last 2 years have seen China facing massive, state-led anti-corruption crackdowns under Xi Jinping. Though such crackdowns have been going on for years, there have been recent intensities within this. In 2024 alone, China's CCDI (Central Commission for Discipline Inspection) filed over 4,000 disciplinary cases, with thousands of people penalized for violating laws under the party. These cases were not only limited to ministers but even reached the lower levels. In late 2024, Tang Shuangning, the ex-chairman of a major financial institution in China (known as the China Everbright Group, an integrated and state-owned conglomerate), was sentenced to 12 years for bribery and embezzlement. Shuangning had seized public property worth about 3 million yuan (Approximately 54,876.15 SGD) for himself, and has additionally been caught accepting bribes, which summed up to approximately 11 million yuan (Approximately 2,012,125 SGD). Other cases occurring recently include the campaign "Sky Net 2025", causing

President Xi Jinping to emphasize that corruption remains a “grave and complex” problem within the nation.

## **India**

India has faced persistent challenges with corruption at various levels within the government. Major scandals occurred in 2010, such as the Commonwealth Games Scam (misusing funds during the 2010 Delhi Games, the largest multi-sport event ever hosted in India), and more. Due to this, India has taken action with different Anti-Corruption efforts, such as the Right to Information Act (RTI) in 2005, to promote government transparency. This act detailed the rights of Citizens to request information and disclosure of certain details within governments. India has done other legal reforms to tackle corruption, and though significant progress has been made, there is still room for improvement due to external obstacles such as interference.

## **Nigeria**

Nigeria is a key actor in the world of corruption due to its natural resources, such as oil and gas, as well as its large economy, the largest on the African continent. However, concerns have recently been raised, especially within the Petroleum Sector. Embezzlement often goes unchecked, with billions of dollars lost through this; as a matter of fact, the Nigerian Parliament revealed that between 2009 and 2012, over \$6bn had been defrauded. After a week of street protests following this announcement, as well as a general strike, the government agreed to restore some of the subsidy and reduce the pump price. Nigeria faces significant international pressure to address corruption due to how deeply rooted it is within government systems.

## **Russia**

Russia has been a main actor in the world of corruption, with it being a severe issue in the country. The nation has scored low on the Corruption Perceptions Index, a 22/100

that has gone down since 2023, ranking 154/180 out of the countries worldwide. Notably, Russian authorities recently detained Timur Ivanov, Deputy Defense Minister, accusing him of accepting substantial bribes. Investigations have declared Ivanov guilty of embezzling 4.1 billion rubles (Approximately 669,981,000 SGD) through fake “construction contracts”. Ivanov was sentenced in July 2025 to 13 years in a Penal Colony for his actions.

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

The UN has implemented a number of anti-corruption measures, with the most major one being the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). This treaty was adopted on October 31st 2003, and was put into place on December 14th 2005. The purpose of this treaty was to provide a framework for countries to work together to prevent corruption. It is the first legally binding anti-corruption international treaty, and mandates all signatories to implement anti-corruption measures such as promoting transparency, and the creation of independent anti-corruption bodies to have a neutral administration.

Some other solutions made by the UN and its sub-committees:

- Special session of the General Assembly against corruption, 9 January 2019 ([73/191](#))
- Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in small island developing States, 11 December 2023, ([10/2](#))
- Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption at regional levels, 13 December 2021, ([9/4](#))

## Possible Solutions:

Multiple solutions could be adopted to address the challenges of corruption and to promote government transparency. Solutions include, but are not limited to, the following.

Provide support or subsidies towards institutions that are attempting to address corruption, with close monitoring to make sure that such funds or support go towards anti-corruption efforts. Delegates could introduce this in multiple ways, such as through task forces or oversight to ensure sufficient checks and balances.

Strengthening existing anti-corruption mechanisms, such as the UNCAC or other bodies. Sometimes it's not about creating entirely new bodies to avoid redundancy but rather to strengthen bodies that had a lot of potential but have either been forgotten about or not enforced perfectly. Delegates could research this and explain how they will make sure the committee will strengthen or develop without fail.

Encourage governments to implement laws that allow a two-way transparency between citizens and government bodies. If this aligns with a country's stance, ensuring that the government is held accountable for its actions and what they are doing with tax money, as well as citizens maintaining dignity and honesty, could create a beneficial symbiotic harmony within the country.

Implementing mandatory assessments for corruption observed biannually by the United Nations. Such assessments would happen upon large companies and large governments. Assessments and oversight are always beneficial; however, the tricky thing is making sure the oversight has some sort of regulation or ensuring that it does not violate a country's values is a challenge that delegates could attempt to address.

## Bibliography

### Useful Resources

There are multiple resources that delegates could use to understand the conference, such as but not limited to;

- [Corruption Perceptions Index 2024](#) - Gives country-specific ranking and a lot of information about relevant steps taken to end corruption.
- [World Bank Group](#) - Gives insightful information on regional summaries detailing economic status and corruption levels
- [International Monetary Fund Working Paper](#) - Slightly dense but filled with relevant facts and figures to boost the quality of speeches and clauses

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