Fighting Corruption in Cambodia

The Demand for an International Standard Anti Corruption Law in Cambodia

Clean

Working Together to Fight Corruption
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Introduction

The efforts to have an Anti-Corruption Law in Cambodia started in 1994. Each draft produced over the past 10 years has been below the international standards. The government recently stated that passing an international standard anti-corruption law is a very high priority in its Rectangular Strategy for growth. At the Consultative Group meeting in December 2004 between the Cambodian government and donors, the government agreed to reach the benchmark of passing an international standard Anti-corruption Law by the end of 2005.

The draft law on Anti-Corruption is currently being revised by the Ministry of National Assembly-Senate Relations, and Inspection (MoNASRI) in cooperation with international technical advisors. It is expected that the draft will be ready for public consultation in August of 2005, and be submitted to the Council of Ministers thereafter.

The RGC has made a commitment to “work rigorously with all stakeholders” on the draft law. As a citizen of Cambodia from government, private and civil society sectors you have the right to ensure that the government keeps its commitments to produce an international standard law on anti-corruption, and that the efforts to fight corruption are fully implemented and properly resourced.

"To combat corruption, we have to formulate a well and flawless law as well as establish a mechanism to monitor corruption in order to ensure that the enforcement will result in fruitful outcomes through minimizing as much as possible opportunities to engage in corruption, and encouraging public scrutiny especially through media that are professional and highly accountable. Therefore, we should continue to work carefully with all partners concerned in accordance with the existing rule of law. [unofficial translation]

Samdech Hun Sen, Opening Remarks at the National Conference on Strengthening Good Governance for Poverty Reduction and Development, 14 December 2004
Our actions against corruption must be coherent. Passing the law, for instance, is one of many necessary conditions to reducing this scourge. We shall also develop capacity to enforce. The Royal Government is looking forward to articulating a strategy and a program to fight corruption pulling together efforts now underway on a broad front from the Administrative Reform to the reform of public finances and sectoral reforms such as the management of natural resources (land, forestry and fisheries).

Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Sok An, Consultative Group Meeting, December 6 2004

### 2004 Consultative Group Joint Monitoring Indicators

<table>
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<th>Areas</th>
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<tr>
<td>Session I: Promoting Good Governance</td>
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<td>(1) Fighting Corruption and Increasing Accountability: The key thrust of the RGC’s strategy to fight corruption is to take concrete actions that attack the roots of corruption (RC).</td>
<td>1. Within the existing criminal law, reported cases of corruption shall be brought before the courts for investigation and hearing; a consistent and strategic approach shall be employed by law enforcement authorities to the prosecution of cases of corruption. Data shall be collected to enable monitoring of progress.</td>
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<td>2. The existing draft law on anti-corruption shall be brought into compliance with international best practice (such as reflected in the United Nations Convention against Corruption or other instruments).</td>
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<td>3. The Government should commence preparatory work on establishing a legislative framework (such as a Freedom of Information Law) to facilitate access to information held by public authorities. In the meantime, public authorities must change current practice by displaying a preparedness to share information with the general public and with other institutions in Government. The different TWGs will monitor specific indicators of access to information (see Annex for examples).</td>
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<td>(2) Legal and Judicial Reform and Protection of Human Rights: The RGC will promote LRIs and ensure the independence of the court system through the</td>
<td>In all benchmarks listed below, the law shall be consistent with the Constitution and international best practice (such as reflected in international human rights treaties, and by instruments such as the Basic Principles of the Judiciary and the Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors) and prepared through a satisfactory participatory process.</td>
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<td>Fundamental Legal Framework (new - but includes laws from previous unmet benchmarks)</td>
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<td>Adoption of the drafts of the 8 fundamental laws by the government and submission to the National Assembly as a</td>
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How Will the Anti-Corruption Law be Passed?

**June 2003**
Most recent draft of the law submitted to Parliament and returned to the government for further review.

**Council of Ministers**
Law is revised and submitted to the Council of Ministers. If approved, the Prime Minister submits the draft law and a Statement of Cause to the President of the National Assembly.

**July 2004**
The RGC announces in the "Rectangular Strategy for Growth" that its top priority is good governance, and that it will focus first on combating corruption.

**President of the National Assembly**
The President of the National Assembly hands the draft Law on Anti-corruption and the Statement of Cause to the Permanent Committee of the National Assembly.

**President of the Senate**
If approved by the National Assembly, the President of the National Assembly delivers the proposed law to the President of the Senate and it follows a similar process to the National Assembly.

**President of the National Assembly**
The Senate and the National Assembly send the proposed law between both institutions to make final changes to the proposed law. If approved by the Senate and the National Assembly, the President of the National Assembly delivers the draft/proposed law to the Constitutional Council.
December 2004
The RGC commits at the Consultative Group meeting with donors to pass an international standard Law on Anti-corruption by the end of 2005.

Permanent Committee
The Permanent Committee reviews the draft law and forwards it to a National Assembly Committed.

National Assembly Commission
The National Assembly Commission reviews the proposed law and either:
1. Recommends that the full Assembly not consider the legislation.
2. Requests that the full Assembly decide whether to consider the legislation.
3. Requests that the full Assembly consider the legislation on an "emergency" basis

Constitutional Council
The Constitutional Council has the power to interpret whether a law passed by the National Assembly and the Senate is constitutional.

The King
The King signs a Royal Decree turning the proposed law into enacted law.

August 2005
The draft law is presented for public consultation.
What are the International Standards?

At the Consultative Group meeting with international donors in December 2004, the RGC made a commitment to bring the existing draft law on anti-corruption “into compliance with international best practice”. Important standards that the law needs to meet are the ADB/OECD Action Plan and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific

On March 4-6, 2003, the Royal Government of Cambodia endorsed the Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific. The Action Plan is not legally binding, but countries that endorse it agree to take action to “deter, prevent and combat corruption at all levels” and “endeavor to take concrete steps” under three pillars of anti-corruption action:

**Pillar 1**

**Developing Effective and Transparent Systems For Public Service**

1. "Systems for transparent hiring and promotion to help avoid abuses of patronage, nepotism, and favoritism."
2. Codes of conduct containing "prohibitions or restrictions governing conflicts of interest."
3. Systems for "disclosure and/ or monitoring of ... personal assets and liabilities."
4. "Measures which ensure that officials report acts of corruption and which protect the safety and professional status of those who do."
5. "Effective legal frameworks" that promote fiscal transparency, transparent procedures for public procurement, and “simplification of the regulatory environment by abolishing overlapping, ambiguous or excessive regulations that burden business."
Pillar 2

Strengthening Anti-Bribery Actions and Promoting Integrity in Business Operations

1. "Legislation with sanctions which actively combat the offence of bribery of public officials."
2. "Effective enforcement of anti-money laundering legislation that provides … criminal penalties for the laundering of the proceeds of corruption and crime."
3. "Rules to ensure that bribery offences are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted by competent authorities."
4. Investigation and prosecutions that "are free from improper influence and have effective means for gathering evidence, by protecting those persons helping the authorities in combating corruption, and by providing appropriate training and financial resources."
5. International cooperation mechanisms for investigations and legal proceedings regarding (i) information exchange, (ii) extradition, and (iii) asset forfeiture, seizure and repatriation.
6. "Legislation to eliminate any indirect support of bribery such as tax deductibility of bribes."
7. "Legislation requiring transparent company accounts … and penalties for omissions and falsifications for the purpose of bribing a public official, or hiding such bribers, in respect of the books, records, accounts, and financial statements of companies."
8. "Denying access to public sector contracts as a sanction for bribery of public officials."

Pillar 3

Support Active Public Involvement

1. Public awareness campaigns, NGO activities that promote integrity, and commercial and professional organizations.
2. Protect whistle-blowers.
United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

The United Nations Convention against Corruption was adopted by the General Assembly by resolution 58/4 of 31 October 2003. To date, UNCAC has been signed by 124 countries, and ratified by 27 of these countries. Cambodia has not yet signed or ratified the Convention.

The purpose of UNCAC is:
- To promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption more efficiently and effectively;
- To promote, facilitate and support international cooperation and technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including in asset recovery; and
- To promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.

The Convention contains a comprehensive set of standards, measures and rules that all countries can apply, in order to strengthen their legal and regulatory systems to fight corruption. It calls for preventive measures and the criminalization of the most prevalent forms of corruption in both public and private sectors.

It is hoped that Cambodia will ratify UNCAC upon compliance with the ratification requirements. Once Cambodia has ratified the UNCAC, it is bound to comply with its provisions.

The UNCAC contains specific requirements and recommendations in six areas:
Prevention

- An independent anti-corruption body (Article 6.2)
- Coordinated anti-corruption policies. (Article 5)
- Active participation of civil society and NGOs in the fight against corruption (Article 13)
- Transparent procurement systems, including legal recourse for violations (Article 9.1)
- Measures to promote transparency and accountability in public finances (Article 9.2)
- Procedures or regulations to give access to public information (Article 10)
- Strengthen the integrity of and prevent opportunities for corruption among members of the prosecution and judiciary (Article 11)
- Prevent corruption in the private sector and introduce civil, administrative, and criminal penalties (eg. conflict of interest rules) (Article 12.1)
- Take necessary measures to prohibit:
  1. Establishment of off the books accounts
  2. Making of off the books or inadequately identified transactions
  3. Recording of non-existent expenditures
  4. Entry of liabilities with incorrect identification of their objects
  5. Use of false documents
  6. Intentional destruction of bookkeeping documents.
Which are done for the purpose of committing defined corrupt acts (Article 12.3)

Criminalization

- Ensure proportional and appropriate penalties, immunities, defenses (Article 30)
- Ensure the right of victims of corruption to seek compensation (Article 35)
- Criminalize soliciting or accepting a bribe by a public official (Article 15-16)
- Criminalize embezzlement or misappropriation of funds by public officials (Article 17)
- Criminalize bribing national, foreign, or international officials (Article 15-16)
- Criminalize laundering the proceeds of crimes (Article 23)
- Criminalize the obstruction of justice relating to anti-corruption (Article 25)
- Establish criminal and civil liability for legal persons (companies, etc.) (Article 26)
- Criminalize participation, assisting, or instigating corruption related crimes (Article 27.1)
- Enable the knowledge, intent, or purpose requirements of corruption related crimes to be inferred from objective factual circumstances (Article 28)
Law Enforcement
- Specialized **anti-corruption law enforcement body** (Article 36)
- Effective **protection of witnesses and experts** (Article 32)
- Afford the widest measure of **mutual legal assistance** in corruption related investigations and prosecutions and shall **designate a central authority** to receive requests for mutual legal assistance (Article 46.1 and 46.13)
- **Appropriate, special investigative techniques** (Article 50)
- **Long statute of limitation** period for corruption related offenses (Article 29)
- **Bank secrecy laws** that do not impede corruption prosecutions (Article 40)

Asset Recovery
- Enable court actions to cause **restitution** of assets to foreign parties (Article 53)
- **Disallow tax deductibility** of expenses that constitute bribes (Article 12.4)
- Comprehensive **anti-money laundering** regulatory regime for banks and non-bank financial institutions (Article 14)
- **Confiscation of proceeds or property** gained from or involved in corruption related crimes, along with the ability to identify, traces freeze or seize such items and for court seizure of documents (Article 31)
- Enable the **return of confiscated property** (Article 57)
- Require financial institutions to **verify customers' identity** and implement measures for identifying and tracking suspicious transactions of suspected individuals (Article 52)

Information Exchange
- Encourage **cooperation between national authorities and private sector** for purposes of anti-corruption (Article 38-39)
- Enhance **cooperation and communication** and information sharing with other state's relevant law enforcement authorities on anti-corruption activities (Article 48)
Organized crime is a leading threat to international peace and security in the twenty-first century. This United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice should serve as a reminder of how much more we need to do to tackle that threat. Our global strategy must include universal ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, the Convention against Corruption, and the 12 universal counter-terrorism instruments, with a view to ultimately achieving universal adherence and full compliance with these instruments. ... I call on all States to ratify and implement these conventions, while helping one another to strengthen their domestic criminal justice and rule-of-law systems. I appeal to States to take advantage of the Special Treaty Event during the high-level segment of this Congress, and the Treaty Event that will be held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly to deposit instruments of ratification or accession.

**UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan**, Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 18 April 2005

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**International Cooperation**

- Give *copies of laws* that give effect to anti-money laundering provisions to the Secretary General of the UN (Article 23d)
- Establish *jurisdiction* over offenses that are committed: a) in the state or b) on a ship or aircraft under the state's flag (Article 42)
- Cooperate with other state parties on *extradition* (Article 44)
- Permit *recognition of foreign court orders* and to confiscate property, freeze, or seize assets, as appropriate and give *copies of laws and regulations* giving effect to this Article to the Secretary General (Article 54)
- Make concrete efforts to coordinate with *international and regional organizations*, with developed countries giving assistance to developing countries (Article 62)
Independent Anti-Corruption Body (ACB)

**UNCAC Article 6 and 36**
The RGC has made a commitment to establish an independent Anti-Corruption Body (ACB) as soon as possible. An independent ACB is central to the implementation and enforcement of any anti-corruption law.

Article 36 of UNCAC states that anti-corruption bodies and persons “shall be granted the necessary independence, in accordance with the fundamental principles of the legal system of the State to be able to carry out their functions effectively and without any undue influence”.

The below explanation of an ACB, builds upon the structure established in previous drafts of the law and incorporates examples of international best practice to ensure the ACB retains the RGC’s commitment to it being an independent body.

### Independent Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General

The Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General are non-partisan posts, and the recruitment and selection of candidates should be transparent and open to public scrutiny. International Anti-Corruption experts have advised that once candidates are short-listed, the Supreme National Council (SNC) is responsible for submitting a list of three candidates for each of the positions to the National Assembly for consideration, who then select the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General by a 2/3 majority and submit their names to the King for approval and appointment by Royal Decree.

Why is Independence Important?

If an Anti Corruption Body is to be truly effective in investigating and penalizing cases of corruption, it should be independent and free from outside interference and coercion. This means that the selection and appointment of ACB staff, ACB investigations and the ACB budget should all remain independent.

International Anti-Corruption experts have advised that the Supreme National Council (SNC) is a 7 member council that meets periodically, and acts as an independent advisory body to the ACB. It also establishes policy guidance for the prevention, education, and investigation of corruption related activity. The SNC 7 members could include dignitaries: 1) representing civil society appointed by the King; 2) elected by the Senate though a 2/3 majority of votes of the whole Senate; 3) elected by the National Assembly though a 2/3 majority of votes of the whole National Assembly; 4) selected by the Constitutional Council; 5) selected by the Royal Government; 6) selected by the Supreme Council of Magistracy; 7) selected by the National Audit Authority. The SNC should have at least one female member.
**Independent ACB Budget**

The ACB will have an autonomous budget approved by the National Assembly that allows it to carry out its mandate and is not influenced by political parties. International Anti-Corruption experts have advised that the budget should be disbursed into a separate account on an annual basis. The ACB should have an external audit that is available to the public. Contributions to the ACB by donor organizations should also be reviewed by the Supreme National Council (SNC) to avoid conflicts of interest, which is a fundamental principal of the UNCAC and ADB-OECD.

The **Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General** shall have a mandate to: independently exercise the executive power of the Secretariat of the ACB; carry out the mandate of the ACB; and direct personnel and policies of the ACB’s three departments.

There are three main ways of fighting corruption: **Education, Prevention and Enforcement**. International Anti-Corruption experts have advised that the ACB have three separate departments dedicated to each of these strategies. The roles and responsibilities of these departments should be clearly defined in the Law on Anti-corruption.

**Independent Investigative Powers**

In order for the Secretariat of the ACB to carry out its mandate to fight corruption, and to fulfill the UNCAC’s enforcement requirements, it is important that the Secretariat of the ACB be given sufficient investigative powers. Officers of the Secretariat of the ACB may investigate all forms of corruption and can make searches, seizures, and arrests upon judicial authorization. The Powers and authority of investigators of ACB should be clearly laid out in the Law on Anti-corruption.
What Else Should the Law Include?

If the RGC is to meet its commitment to bringing the existing draft Law on Anti-corruption “into compliance with international best practice”, the law will have to include several key elements. These elements reflect both the unique needs of Cambodia and internationally accepted standards.

**Prevention**

**UNCAC Chapter III and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar**

The RGC has made a commitment to increased transparency and administrative reforms within government. The law must build on this commitment and take concrete actions to eliminate opportunities for corruption by people who hold public office.

**Public Participation and Education**

**UNCAC Article 13 and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar 3**

All Cambodians must be given the opportunity to understand corruption and realize the role they have in defeating it. The Law on Anti-corruption needs to include provisions that promote public participation and education, and access to information.

**Penalties for Corrupt Activities and Clear Definitions**

**UNCAC Chapter III and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar 2**

Each offense should have a clear definition and a corresponding penalty to deter acts of corruption. The offenses and penalties should be the same as the UNCAC and domestic laws such as the draft Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, and the Money Laundering Law.

**Declaration of Assets**

**UNCAC Article 52 and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar 1**

To promote greater transparency and reduce the opportunity for conflicts of interest, the Law on Anti-corruption should require public officials to declare their assets and establish penalties for illicit enrichment as a fundamental tool for the Anti-Corruption Body to fulfill its prevention mandate.
Whistleblower Protection
UNCAC Article 32 and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar 2 and 3
If a person provides information in good faith to authorities about an act of corruption, they should be entitled to protection from the state, including identity protection or relocation, and other appropriate measures.

Minimum Procedures in Place
The timeframe required for implementing the Law on Anti-corruption is 6 months - which is very short. Therefore the law should contain a minimum level of procedures so that the Anti-Corruption Body can begin work as soon as possible, and not rely on future sub-decrees to start it work of education, prevention and enforcement.

International Cooperation
UNCAC Chapter IV and ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Action Plan Pillar 2
Organized crime is a big threat to international peace and security in the twenty-first century. Cambodia has the opportunity to be a partner in the global fight against corruption and terrorism. The law on anti-corruption must include articles on international cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and extradition.

To combat corruption, we should take rigorous measures such as streamlining bureaucratic procedures, simplifying and modernizing the tax system, eliminating excessive regulations, and motivating public servants in order to reduce the opportunities for corruption. More work is needed to strengthen the National Audit Authority (NAA) and to establish internal audit units in ministries to ensure a greater transparency and accountability."

Samdech Hun Sen, Opening Remarks at the CG Meeting, Phnom Penh, 6 December 2004
What Laws Currently Exist to Fight Corruption?

Whilst waiting for the Law on Anti-corruption to be passed, existing laws in Cambodia allow officials to prosecute corrupt activities. The UNTAC Criminal Law and Procedure (1992) contains articles relating to comprehensive active and passive bribery offences:

Article 37 - Embezzlement by Public Officials
1. Any elected official, civil servant, military personnel or official agent of any of the four Cambodian parties to the Paris Agreement, or any political official who, while performing official duties or tasks related to such duties, with a view to owning or using, misappropriates, sells, rents, embezzles for personal profit or for that of a third party, property, services, money, personnel, any advantage, document, authorization or any function belonging to any public authority, is guilty of the felony of embezzlement of public property and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of three to ten years.
2. The court may remove the convicted person from elective office and may also prohibit him or her, after serving the sentence, from standing for election or from holding any position in the public administration for a period of two years.
3. The penalty for this felony shall also include a fine of double the sum of money or value of the property embezzled.

Article 38 - Corruption
1. Without prejudice to possible disciplinary action, any civil servant, military personnel or official agent of any of the four Cambodian parties to the Paris Agreement, or any political official who, while performing official duties or tasks related to such duties, solicits or attempts to solicit or who receives or attempts to receive property, a service, money, staff, a professional position, a document, an authorization or any benefit in exchange for any one of these same elements is guilty of the felony of extortion and shall be subject to a punishment of three to seven years in prison.
2. The court may remove the convicted person from elective office and may also prohibit him or her, after serving the sentence, from standing for election or from holding any position in the public administration for a period of two years.
3. The penalty for this felony shall also include a fine of double the sum of money or value of the property extorted.

Article 58 - Bribery
Any person who corrupts or attempts to corrupt any elected official, civil servant, military personnel, or official agent of any of the four Cambodian parties to the Paris Agreement or of any registered political party who, while performing official duties or tasks related to such duties, by promising property, service, money, staff, professional position, document, authorization or any benefit whatsoever in exchange for any one of these same benefits is guilty of bribery and shall be liable to a punishment of one to three years in prison.
What Can I do to Ensure the Law Meets International Standards?

- Attend workshops and meetings on the draft Law on Anti-corruption to express the need for it to meet international standards
- Hold meetings with all stakeholders to mobilize the public
- Voice your concerns at any public consultation meetings held by the government
- Invite government officials to public debates
- Make sure that the need for an international standard anti-corruption law is prioritized for the next Consultative Group quarterly review meeting in September and the full CG meeting in December.
- Lobby members of the government, National Assembly, and Senate who are responsible for passing the law by:
  - Scheduling face to face meetings
  - Writing letters or emails and making phone calls
  - Signing petitions
- Pressure the government to move as quickly as possible to ratify the UNCAC once the law is passed

Further Information

If you would like further information about the Law on Anti-corruption, or any of the international standards please contact:

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www.pactcambodia.org/ programs/ accap.htm
**Glossary**

**Benefit**
A Benefit is:
- any gift, loan, fee, reward or commission consisting of money or of any valuable security or of other property or interest in property of any description;
- any office, employment or contract;
- any payment, release, discharge or liquidation of any loan, obligation or other liability, whether in whole or in part;
- any other service, or favor (other than entertainment), including protection from any penalty from any action or proceedings of a disciplinary, civil or criminal nature, whether or not already instituted;
- the exercise or forbearance from the exercise of any right or any power or duty; and
- any offer, undertaking or promise, whether conditional or unconditional, of any advantage within the meaning of any of the lines above.

**Confiscate**
The forfeiture where applicable, shall mean the permanent deprivation of property by order of a court or other competent authority.

**Conflict of Interest**
A family, financial, political, or other personal interest, which may influence, or appear to influence the performance of that person’s official duties.

**Corruption**
The unauthorized or illicit use of a person’s function, duty, power or influence to obtain a personal benefit, in the form of money, objects and other materials, for that person, his or her family or any other person or entity.

**Emolument**
Payment derived from office, rank, employment or labor, including salary, fees, and other compensation.

**Foreign Public Official**
Any person holding a legislative, executive, administrative or judicial office of a foreign country, whether appointed or elected; and any person exercising a public function for a foreign country, including for a public agency or public enterprise.

**Freezing or Seizure**
Temporarily prohibiting the transfer, conversion, disposition or movement of property or temporarily assuming custody or control of property on the basis of an order issued by a court or other competent authority.

**Gift**
Any property or service that is given to or for the benefit of a person that is not consideration for an agreement.

**Nepotism or Favoritism**
Undue favor in hiring or appointing a person to a public office.

**Proceeds of Corruption**
Any property derived from or obtained, directly or indirectly, through the commission of a corruption related offence.

**Property**
Assets of every kind, whether corporeal or incorporeal, movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, and legal documents or instruments evidencing title to or interest in such assets.

**Public Official**
Any person holding a legislative, executive branch, military, government administrative, or judicial office that is part of the civil service, or Judge, whether appointed or elected, whether permanent or temporary, whether paid or unpaid or given a public commission.