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Statement by

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At the

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(UNCAC)

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Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. It is a great privilege and honour to represent India at the Eighth Session of the Implementation Review Group of UNCAC. We thank the UNODC Secretariat for providing this opportunity.

2. Ladies and Gentlemen, as you are aware, India has recognized the need for effectively fighting corruption and has a robust and time tested institutional and legislative framework including, the Prevention of Corruption Act an independent Central Vigilance Commission, Central Information Commission, Comptroller and Auditor General, the Judges (Inquiry) Act and a spate of legislations including The Lokpal & Lokayukta Act, 2013, Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2011, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act which cover a number of areas of criminalization, bribery have been enacted. In India Public Authorities are required to declare their assets.

4. India has a very strong, independent and vibrant judiciary. Apart from interpreting law and resolving disputes, they have taken up several issues vital to the society in Public Interest Litigations.

5. India ratified United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in May, 2011 and has been actively participating in the Review process in accordance with the Resolution 3/1. While India has already reviewed South Korea and Vanuatu, its updated country report on first cycle review conducted by Uganda and Kazakhstan on Chapter- IV has been received in early March, 2017. The country report is under examination and we look forward to finalization of the Executive summary in coordination with UNODC shortly. The Second cycle of the review has started w.e.f. 2016 for assessing implementation of Chapter-II on Preventive Measures (Article 5-14 of UNCAC) and Chapter-V on Asset Recovery (Article 51-59 of UNCAC) which is due in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the second cycle.

6. Mr. Chairman, India is fully committed to tackle corruption and adopts a 'zero tolerance' approach as well as minimum government and maximum governance. In the recent past, some prominent steps taken by the Government include the following:

(i) Abolishing the system of attestation or authentication by Government servants for submission of certificates by youth, students, etc., for seeking jobs or for other Government facilities which has had an immense impact across the country.

(ii) Abolishing personal interviews for recruitments to lower level posts in Federal Government and its organisations, thereby eliminating scope for subjectivity and corruption in selection of public servants.

(iii) Exercise to weed out inefficient public servants and of doubtful integrity of the Federal Government above 50 years, 'Prematurely' – Over 125 senior public servants prematurely were retired from service.

(iv) Demonetization of high value currency, a bold step to eliminate black money and corruption. It had an overwhelming support of the citizens of the country and

was successfully implemented. It enhanced digital transactions, i.e., cashless payments, for more effective control.

(v) Another major successful initiative is the transfer of benefits to the Beneficiaries directly (DBT) through Banks based on a unique ID (AADHAAR).

7. The Central Vigilance Commission is the nodal agency entrusted with the task to overseeing preventive and punitive vigilance administration. It is the endeavour of the Central Vigilance Commission to ensure transparency, objectivity and accountability in public administration. CVC has taken various preventive measures which include (i) Leveraging Technology and automation; (ii) Ensuring transparency, accountability and Integrity in public procurement (iii) encouraging e-tendering and e-procurement practices, adoption of Integrity Pact and appointment of Independent External Monitors; (iv) Promote Ethics through education of students and youth; (v) Observance of Vigilance Awareness Week, during which all public servants take pledge of honesty and integrity; (vi) Re-engineer processes to simplify them, reduce discretion and public interface with public servants; (vii) focus on training and skill development and (viii) Advising exemplary punishment in all cases of proven misconduct to create deterrence, etc.

8. The Commission endeavours to promote integrity and eradicate corruption with the active support and participation of the stakeholders. Public participation plays a vital role in the fight against corruption and a few prominent outreach activities undertaken to promote integrity and eradicate corruption with the active support of citizens last year is an **e-Pledge** to be voluntarily undertaken by citizens and organizations. Awareness campaigns to inculcate values among youth in schools and colleges across the country were also undertaken covering over 500 cities / towns of the country. Similarly, Awareness Gram Sabhas (events at village level) in rural and semi-urban areas numbering over 70000 were also held.

9. In line with the broader strategy and emphasis on preventive measures, the Central Vigilance Commission, has recently decided to develop an Integrity Index based on benchmarking of internal processes and controls within an organisation as well as management of relationship and expectation of stakeholders. Accordingly, a research based approach for creating an index with focus on preventive measures for enabling higher levels of transparency, efficiency and citizen centric governance

as also to reduce corruption has been visualized. It is proposed to bring out annual scores by evaluating internal process from the point of compliance, integrity, transparency and effectiveness, etc., so that the organisations can use it to measure, evolve and improve.

10. Mr. Chairman, on Asset recovery, India has a robust legal framework and institutional mechanism to deal with issues of money laundering and unaccounted money. Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the proceeds of crime generated out of scheduled offences committed by the accused persons are liable for attachment and confiscation. The offence of money laundering is cognizable and non-bailable and even the discretionary powers of Courts to grant bail are restricted to some extent. It provides for attachment and confiscation of equal amount of assets if proceeds of crime have been stashed outside India. India is committed to strengthening asset recovery legislations.

11. India appreciates the consistent efforts of the UNODC in providing a platform for all States parties to engage on practical anti-corruption issues in a positive and constructive spirit. One of the most important achievements in this regard has been the evolution of a transparent, efficient, inclusive and impartial Review Mechanism, which has emerged as a tool of great value. It not only enables us to identify gaps, and exchange and develop expertise, but also collates valuable information on a single platform encompassing laws, regulations, policies and good practices.

12. India has issued a number of Letters Rogatory for execution and has requested for information under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. India would encourage the member states to expedite their response to the requests. We are hopeful that a positive and constructive approach will help us resolve some of the high ticket and high profile corruption cases and will help strengthen the multilateral redressal mechanism.

13. We would support automatic exchange of beneficial ownership and tax related information and call upon more countries to join and maximize transparency and explore ways of sharing information across borders. We are also committed on the issue of return of unaccounted wealth from safe havens and for persistent and consistent efforts on asset recovery.

15. India will ensure that public contracts are awarded and managed transparently and fairly and commit to ensure integrity in public contracting and procurement.

16. India is also committed to safeguard whistle blowers and others provide critical information of corruption.

17. India would work with other countries, civil society, international organizations to support accelerate implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

18. India is confident that the deliberations at this conference will help in working out effective strategies to deal firmly with corruption, in all its forms and manifestations. I would also like to reassure the World community about India's steadfast and strong commitment to combating this menace.

Thank you very much.