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Global Forum on Fighting Corruption:
Safeguarding Integrity Among Justice and Security Officials

DECLARATION

For the past three days, we participants from 90 governments, gathered here in Washington at the invitation of U.S. Vice President Al Gore, have worked intensely to examine the causes of corruption and practices that are effective to prevent or fight it. Elected officials, ministers responsible for security and justice, experts in public ethics and anti-corruption from every region of the world were joined by distinguished academics and lay and clerical figures from many of the world's great religions.

We are on the eve of a new millenium. As never before, the world's people need officials of their governments to serve them with unquestioned integrity. Corruption of justice and security officials especially betrays their trust. Corruption cannot long co-exist with democracy and the rule of law. Corruption misallocates resources, hurts the poor, and weakens economies and societies. After three days of serious, searching work, we emerge persuaded that corruption is not inevitable. It is made by actions of men and women. Governments and their peoples can act and can succeed in our struggle against it, if only we have will and the determination to do so.

We have considered and shared with one another many practices that help control or punish corruption in public office. We are conscious of the efforts being undertaken in many regional bodies, such as the Organization of American States, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Union, and the Global Coalition for Africa. We call on all of our governments to cooperate in appropriate regional and global bodies to rededicate themselves to adopt effective anti-corruption principles and practices, and to create ways to assist each other through mutual evaluation.

We feel a common urgency to act. We will also continue the dialogue we have begun in this forum. We will gather again in a second Global Forum on Fighting Corruption, to be held next year in the Netherlands, and we propose thereafter an annual Global Ministerial forum on fighting corruption. Protecting our citizens from corruption among their justice and security officials must be one of the most basic responsibilities of our governments and of us as individual officials of our governments.

We are one in our personal commitment to this end.