

## **‘Nothing is as expensive as corruption’: Foreign Minister Trujillo García**

*The Minister explained the details of the proposal to create an international anti-corruption court.*

<https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/carlos-holmes-trujillo-explica-propuesta-de-corte-internacional-anticorrupcion-379296>

### **A couple of weeks ago, the United Nations welcomed Colombia's idea of exploring the possibility of creating an International Anti-corruption Court.**

For now, it is about exploring “innovative ideas” on the subject, but the issue is already in the interest of the UN, according to Foreign Minister Carlos Holmes Trujillo.

### **Why is Colombia proposing an international anti-corruption court?**

The reason is evident: corruption erodes legality and rule of law, discourages and makes entrepreneurship more expensive, and it is an obstacle to reaching higher levels of equity and social progress.

Corruption is an increasingly complex and sophisticated phenomenon, and it has acquired transnational dimensions. So, while strengthening the fight against corruption at the national level, we want to promote a global discussion on how we should improve the international regime against corruption. The discussion should involve not only governments and intergovernmental organizations, but also businessmen and the financial sector, civic organizations, academia and the media.

*"Corruption is, in many ways, a poverty tax"*

### **Where will that proposal be discussed?**

The global discussion that we are promoting has already begun. We have just presented the idea at the meeting of the United Nations Group of Experts on corruption that involves large volumes of assets, installed in Norway last Wednesday, and we found a great receptivity. We will convene a regional conference in Latin America to study the proposal, and we are agreeing with countries that support it to hold four other regional conferences over the next two years. We hope to bring the issue to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on corruption in 2021, whose call was led by Colombia and Peru, and to which Saudi Arabia, Belize, Nigeria and Norway joined.

### **Who supports the creation of the international anti-corruption court?**

There is a great global consensus regarding the need to strengthen the fight against corruption. In the recent visit of President Duque to Peru, in the joint statement, President Vizcarra expressed his interest in the Colombian proposal. President Bukhari of Nigeria referred to the issue last year, and we hope to add his support to the initiative.

### **How would that international anti-corruption court be created? When would it be created?**

There are several alternatives: an additional protocol in the United Nations Convention against Corruption; an additional protocol to the Rome Statute, to extend the competence of the International Criminal Court, or a new treaty. What it is about is strengthening global governance against corruption. There are several ways to reach that destination, but the first step is to open the global conversation.

### **Many say that an international anti-corruption court would be expensive and ineffective ...**

Nothing is as expensive as corruption. According to the World Economic Forum, corruption accounts for 5 percent of the world's gross domestic product each year. It is an unimaginable figure! Corruption is, in many ways, a poverty tax paid by society as a whole.

### **Surely there are countries that don't like the idea...**

Sure. And for different reasons. Some, very respectable. And in other cases, nothing respectable, as in the countries that live under dictatorships that mediate corruption while impoverishing people and subjecting them to all kinds of deprivation. As regards the former, their reservations about the idea will not prevent them from participating constructively in the global conversation we propose. As for the latter ... no dictatorship lasts forever, and in a transition process, an international anti-corruption court can make an important contribution to the reestablishment of the rule of law and the recovery of public heritage.

### **And isn't it better to solve the problem internally first?**

That is a false dilemma. From our point of view, good internal governance is essential for good global governance; and good global governance stimulates and enhances good internal governance. That is an undeniable virtuous circle that we have already seen operating in different areas of public policy and international relations. Therefore, our proposal is not isolated from President Duque's commitment to legality, to the rule of law and to the full validity of the rule of law in our country - which includes the fight against corruption and all other forms of organized crime that feed and are powered by this scourge—.

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