

Day 2, Plenary Videotape Remarks

**Vice President Al Gore**

I am delighted to have this chance to speak to you today at this Ninth International Anticorruption Conference. I want to thank the hosts, the conference organisers, and especially Transparency International for its leading role in the global fight against corruption.

The growing popularity of this conference is an encouraging sign of momentum in our fight against corruption. I saw another certain sign of it this February, when I was honoured to host a Global Forum on Fighting Corruption here in Washington.

Initially, we planned to invite delegates from 40 nations. But the interest was so great, dozens more demanded invitations. Some embassies even warned us that our relations would suffer if they were not invited. In the end, delegates from eighty-nine nations attended.

We examined issues and circumstances that affect the integrity of government officials. We discussed experiences about what has worked and what has not. We published guiding principles and a broad range of practices that have proven effective in fighting corruption.

There was a sense among us in Washington, as I am sure there is among you in Durban that those who practice and profit from corruption are not likely to quit because of a change of heart: they will only quit because of a change in consequences.

We need to build the democratic institutions that expose corruption and punish it. That means bold, assertive NGOs; a free and enterprising press; free and fair elections all leading to more open and accountable government. A vibrant democracy is the only enduring antidote to corruption.

More and more nations are demanding that kind of democracy. People understand they no longer need to accept corruption as another cost of living, as a cost of doing business.

They see corruption for what it is: theft from the nation. And theft from the nation is always theft from the weakest in the nation: the poor, the old, the sick, the children and newborns. It is for them that you have travelled to Durban: it is for them that we all take up this flight.

Thank you for your commitment to this cause. With hard work and God's grace, we prevail. Thank you.