



**QUNO**  
Quaker United Nations Office

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

Economic and Social Council

Special Meeting

*Unleashing the transformative power of SDG 16: Improving governance and reducing corruption*

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*Quaker UN Office New York*

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*Check against delivery*

Thank you Chair, Ambassadors, colleagues,

On behalf of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers), thank you for convening today's discussion and to the panel for their presentations. We will focus our brief remarks on the discussion question on the role of civil society and stakeholders in enhancing transparency and accountability and combatting corruption.

Civil society are crucial partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Often providing services at local levels, functioning as early warning systems, first responders and as advocates for transparency and accountability. The 2022 Sustainable Development Goals Report also highlights the important partnership between National Statistical Offices and civil society organizations in data collection, linking collaboration to increased "data inclusivity, timeliness and utilization."

Despite the important role played by civil society we continue to see and experience shrinking civic space globally. As the 2023 State of Civil Society Report by CIVICUS states, even the 'right to protest is under attack' around the world. While new restrictions on civic space continue to be enacted, civil society organizations continue to respond to crises, push for climate action, transparent access to information and accountability of government actors, and grow movements to increase the rights of all.

The 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development will only be realized through partnership with civil society. Enhancing transparency and accountability and combating corruption efforts must acknowledge the role of civil society, recognize them as partners, fund and resource their efforts, and work towards expanding and protecting civic space.

Thank you.