**Intersessional Panel Discussion on Challenges and Good Practices in the Prevention of Corruption, and the Impact of Corruption on the Enjoyment of Human Rights in the Context of the COVID-19 pandemic**

**Statement by Austria**

We thank the OHCHR for organising this panel discussion.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its unprecedented impact on most spheres of public and social life make the fight against corruption ever more urgent.

The vast number of resources allocated to respond to the needs presented by this crisis, combined with relaxed oversight and accountability measures, create ample opportunities for corruption to thrive.

Accountability is key and perpetrators of corruption must not go unpunished. However, we also know: prevention is better than cure.

The most effective means of prevention is education. To build a culture of integrity. To teach ethical decision-making and to empower people to oppose corruption.

Following-up on our joint commitment at the Special Session of the General Assembly against corruption, we need to step up preventive measures under the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) should be a key partner in this endeavour.

The IACA provides an excellent contribution through the education and training of professionals in the field of combating corruption. The Austrian government has reaffirmed its financial and other support to the Academy for the next years. It is important that States, which have not yet done so, join IACA and benefit from its experience.

At the national level, the Council of Ministers adopted in November 2020 a new Code of Conduct for the Prevention of Corruption in the Public Service "The RESPONSIBILITY LIES WITH ME - A QUESTION OF ETHICS".

It provides instructions to public service employees and managers on how to deal with bribery attempts, gifts and invitations, whistleblowing, lobbying as well as includes examples of compliant and non-compliant behaviour.

In addition to the Code of Conduct, the Federal Government developed an e-learning tool for the interactive and flexible examination of corruption prevention, compliance and integrity of public servants.

I thank you