

## Give a voice to UNCAC

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The [Observer noted yesterday](#):

*International negotiators will meet this week in Qatar in an attempt to finalise the world's first and only international corruption convention, in the face of ongoing acrimony over the roles pressure groups should be allowed to play if the treaty comes into effect.*

*Signed in 2005, the UN's Convention against Corruption, known as Uncac, has yet to be fully implemented. Nearly 1,000 representatives of dozens of governments have flown to Jordan and Bali, staying for five days at top hotels at a conservative cost of £2m. Hundreds of others have taken part in sessions in Vienna.*

*But there is anger at the barring of two civil-society groups from Georgia and Algeria. And a host of countries, thought to include Russia, China and Iran, are threatening to block the convention because of the possible involvement of campaigning organisations in a peer review mechanism designed to ensure the convention has teeth.*

This is absurd. It is civil society that has most to lose from corruption and civil society that takes most risk in highlighting it. No group has done more in this respect than Global Witness, a fellow member of the Task Force on Financial Integrity and Economic Development alongside the Tax Justice Network and Tax Research UK. As the Observer noted:

*Anthea Lawson, a campaigner at anti-corruption group Global Witness, said: "Uncac needs a review mechanism that involves consultation of civil society, country visits, and full publication of the reports. Without this, it'll be a system where countries can peer review each other without external oversight, which effectively means governments will be able to scratch each others' backs and the public will be no wiser about whether they are really fulfilling their commitments to tackle corruption."*

I wholeheartedly agree. Anthea accurately describes what passes as peer review in far too many areas. Real accountability is needed if corruption is to be beaten. Global

Witness has proven its ability in this area, working on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. We need more accountability of the sort that initiative incorporated if we are to succeed in this arena.