

## **TI calls on the OAS Committee of Experts to make the follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption more transparent**

*Monday, 7 March 2005* – Washington, DC. During the informal session with civil society held in the framework of the VII meeting of the Committee of Experts of the follow-up mechanism to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, Transparency International (TI) recommended to the Committee of Experts that they strengthen and the follow-up mechanism to the Convention and make it more transparent.

TI proposed to the Committee that the State replies and reports always be made public; that they recognize the right of civil society organizations to make presentations to the Committee, a process that has been informal until now, and the right of civil society organizations to participate as observers to the work of the Committee. Finally, TI proposed that the State Parties to the Convention turn in annual public reports to the Committee on their progress implementing Committee recommendations.

These recommendations were made on the occasion of the presentations made by civil society organizations from Trinidad and Tobago, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, on the implementation of the Convention in their countries. Highlights of the presentations included:

- The importance of including whistle blower protection in national legislation (Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute, TI National Chapter)
- A call for the government of El Salvador to make its report to the OAS public (Probidad, El Salvador)
- The proposal that declaration of assets be obligatory for all public officials, including the Chief of President's Security and the Chief of the National Police, and that the goods and property included are subject to taxation (Participación Ciudadana, TI Nacional Contact and Finjas)

Nancy Zucker-Boswell, Managing Director TI-USA and member of TI's International Board concluded the presentations by emphasizing the role that TI, the only non-governmental organization dedicated to fighting corruption, has made since 1999 in the creation of a Convention follow-up mechanism, and since then in calling for the strengthening of the mechanism. TI has also been active in cooperating with other international organizations like OCDE and GRECO, in the fight against corruption.

The Inter-American Convention, signed in 1996, and ratified by almost all OAS member states, is the most important anticorruption instrument in the Americas. It calls for the criminalization of corruption, the prevention of corrupt practices, and international cooperation to fight corruption.