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Speech before OECD Global Anti-Corruption & Integrity Forum

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For the Dominican Republic, integrity is not a slogan. It is a governing principle. It means that public power is exercised under the rule of law, with real transparency, and with accountability that is not selective—but universal.

Integrity is the operating system of democracy. When it works, institutions are predictable and citizens trust the State. When it fails, power is distorted, institutions are captured, and legitimacy erodes.

This Forum's theme — The Integrity Advantage — captures a fundamental reality: integrity is not only ethical policy. It is economic policy.

Corruption is not abstract. It acts as an invisible tax—raising costs, distorting competition, discouraging investment, and reducing productivity. And when corruption becomes systemic, the damage is deeper. Public decisions are no longer public. Rules become negotiable. Institutions risk becoming instruments of private interest.

That is incompatible with both democracy and growth.

For that reason, we made a clear decision: to embed integrity into the daily functioning of the State. Our approach is simple and operational: prevention, transparency, coordination, and enforcement.

First: prevention. Integrity must be built into the system—not improvised after failure. We established Integrity and Compliance Commissions across government. They identify risks, strengthen controls, and make integrity part of everyday management—not an abstract aspiration.

Second: transparency. Transparency is not the publication of data—it is the ability of citizens to verify power. Information must be accessible, structured, and usable. Because scrutiny is not a threat to government—it is a discipline that improves it.

Third: coordination. Fragmentation is the enemy of integrity. We created a central mechanism to align prevention, transparency, and anti-corruption policy across the State—ensuring that integrity functions as a system, not as isolated initiatives.

But ultimately, none of this is credible without a fourth element. And that element is enforcement. No system of integrity survives if the law is applied selectively.



* This material was compiled and distributed by Vision Americas LLC on behalf of the Dominican government. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

Early in my administration, I appointed an Attorney General defined by independence, not proximity to power. But we did not stop there. We reformed our Constitution to end the unilateral appointment of the Attorney General by the President.

Today, that authority lies with an institutional body, under clear rules and protections. This is not procedural—it is structural. It sends a simple message: justice is not an instrument of government. Under this framework, a career prosecutor now leads the Public Ministry. And the result is visible.

There are ongoing cases involving allegations of major corruption. I will not comment on them. But what matters is not the accusation—it is the process.

Because citizens do not believe speeches. They believe what they see. They believe when investigations proceed. When prosecutions advance. When power does not function as a shield. Our principle is therefore unequivocal: no one is above the law.

And within the State, we are equally clear: there will be no truce, no indulgence, and no reversal in this effort. Integrity cannot depend on political cycles. It must become institutional culture.

We recognize that international indicators measure our progress. Some reflect improvement. Others remind us of what remains to be done. We approach them with realism—not defensiveness. Because integrity is not built in declarations. It is built over time—through institutions, processes, and a political culture that understands a basic truth: the State is not a prize to be captured.

In the Dominican Republic, citizens are beginning to see the results. Integrity generates prosperity. But it also generates something more fundamental: trust. And trust is not symbolic—it is productive. It is what allows societies to invest, to innovate, and to grow together.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Mrs. Milagros Ortiz Bosch, who leads our anti-corruption and integrity efforts and has been central to advancing the Dominican Republic's alignment with OECD standards. A former Vice President and Minister of Education, she represents a lifetime of public service devoted to transparency, democracy, and ethical governance. Her leadership has helped anchor integrity not only in our institutions, but in our practice.

For countries like mine, seeking regulatory alignment with OECD standards and procedures, integrity reform is not a diplomatic exercise. It is a structural transformation of the State.

Our commitment is therefore clear and long-term: to build institutions that are predictable, transparent, and accountable. Because in the end, integrity is not only an ethical imperative. It is a strategic asset for development.

Thank you very much.