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# UCCI Conference Issues Closing Declaration

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**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **UCCI Conference Calls for Anti-Corruption State Agency**

At the close of the UCCI Caribbean Anti-corruption and ethics conference on Friday (21 March), a declaration was issued that, amongst other proclamations, called upon Caribbean governments to consider, as a matter of priority, establishing an anti-corruption state agency. This body should be endowed with powers of arrest, investigation, and prosecution of all corruption offences, the communique declared.

The declarations were presented by Dr. Trevor Munroe, Executive Director of the National Integrity Action, Jamaica, a branch of Transparency International. Transparency International, with branches in over 100 countries, rates governments, business, and other institutions on anti-corruption scales.

In addition to local participants, the conference brought together 121 overseas and local presenters, from 15 other countries in the Caribbean as well as from North America, Europe and Africa. Among those presenters were leaders of government, members of legislatures, and representatives of civil society, tertiary institutions, churches and media houses.

In formulating the declaration, the conference arrived at a consensus regarding a number of areas of growing concern. These included the multi-faceted and interconnected nature of corruption, cutting across all sectors of society; its effect on economies and social harmony; and the need for strong and committed leadership, setting examples for the populace.

The communique called for cultivating a “culture of transparency,” and recognition that “education is key in building strong ethical individuals in our society.”

The declaration, however, noted that “values and morality, trust and ethics in government require more than legislation.” There must be a concerted effort throughout the various sector of the social order. “The attainment of these values requires the integrated effort of the entire society and its constituent elements and institutions – legislative, executive, political, judicial, religious or civil – all engaging with each other to ensure transparency and accountability and good governance,” the declaration announced.

The aim of the conference conducted at UCCI from 19 to 21 March, was to raise awareness of the potential for corruption and the decline in ethical standards across all the various sectors of society, and the consequent damaging effects on economies and social harmony. The conference focused on strategies that could be employed by various regional and extra-regional governments and organisations, public and private, to raise sensitivity to these threats and how to curb and work to eliminate them.

See the full communique attached.

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