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**PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF KENYA
NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS, HON. WILSON SOSSION DURING
THE 35TH, ICPAK ANNUAL SEMINAR AT SAROVA WHITE SANDS
BEACH RESORT ON MAY 24TH, 2019 – MOMBASA:**

TOPIC:

The Role of Professionals in Africa in Combating Poor Governance

Distinguished participants,

Eminent guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

It gives me a lot of pride to address this auspicious seminar which has brought together reputable accountants and other professionals to engage in participatory discussion on burning issues within the profession, and also to discuss **“The Role of Professionals in Africa in Combating Poor Governance”**.

The theme of the conference, **“Africa’s Value Addition for Global Competitiveness”** indeed captures the spirit and aspiration of managing the ever-changing world of professionals. It is gratifying to note that one of the issues that were tackled at the seminar was the role of African professionals in the fight against **Bad Governance** at all level of leadership.

Professionals and Professional Ethics

Professional ethics are principles that govern the behaviour of a person or a group in a business environment. Like values, professional ethics provide rules on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment.

Unlike values, professional ethics are often codified as a set of rules, which a particular group of people use. This means that all those in a particular group will use the same professional ethics, even though their values may be unique to each person. These are exactly the components professionals should use at whatever level to combat **Poor Governance**.

Ethical principles underpin all professional codes of conduct. Ethical principles may differ depending on the profession; for example, professional ethics that relate to Accountants will differ from those that relate to Medical practitioners, Lawyers, Engineers, Teachers or Real Estate agents. However, there are some universal ethical principles that apply across all professions, and these include:-

- Honesty;
- Transparency;
- Responsiveness;
- Trustworthiness;
- Loyalty;
- Respect for others;
- Adherence to the Law;
- Doing good and avoiding harm to others;
- Accountability.

Professional codes of conduct draw on these professional ethical principles as the basis for prescribing required standards of behaviour for members of a

profession. They also seek to set out the expectations that the profession and society have of its members. The intention of the codes of conduct is to provide guidelines for the minimum standards of appropriate behaviour in a professional context. Codes of conduct sit alongside the general Law of the land (Constitution), and the personal values of members of the profession. This is where **Good Governance** starts and it is through **Good Governance** that we can successfully combat **Poor Governance**.

To stage a successful war against **Bad Governance** on the African Continent which in most cases breeds corruption, dictatorship, ethnicity, abuse of human rights, lack of transparency, lack of accountability, lack of responsiveness among other ills, professionals bear the direct responsibility by using their professionalism to anchor the fight.

But, for the professionals to promptly liberate Africa from the shackles of **Poor Governance**, they have no other but to embrace:-

- Ethical behaviour;
- Responsible conduct;
- Intellectual development;
- Committed convictions.

Only when professional organizations like **ICPAK** are free to monitor, investigate and criticise the Public administration's policies and actions can **Good Governance** take hold. The watchdog functions of professionals is essential in a democratic society where people must know what their governments are doing. One of the democratic functions of professional organizations is to check on the excesses of the set and offer solutions. Accountability is important in evaluating the effectiveness of Public officials or

bodies; it ensures that Public officers perform to their full potential, provide value for money, instilling confidence in governments and are responsive to communities. Indeed, this is the surest way of eliminating **Poor Governance**.

One would be tempted to ask: What are the characteristics of **Good Governance**? **Good Governance** has eight distinct characteristics which are well known to professionals. These are:-

- (i) Participatory;
- (ii) Consensus oriented;
- (iii) Accountable;
- (iv) Transparent;
- (v) Responsive;
- (vi) Effective and efficient;
- (vii) Equitable and inclusive, and
- (viii) Follow the rule of Law.

It is only through promoting and emphasising on **Good Governance** that professionals in Africa can effectively combat **Poor Governance**.

In international development, **Good Governance** is a subjective term that describes how public institutions conduct Public affairs and manage Public resources in the preferred way. Governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).

Good Governance, is at the heart of any successful business. It is essential for a company or organization to achieve its objectives and drive improvement, as well as maintain legal and ethical standing in the eyes of shareholders, regulators and the wider community.

In a democracy, the principal of accountability holds that Government officials – whether elected or appointed by those who have been elected, are responsible to the citizenry for their decisions and actions. In this particular situation, professional organizations like ICPAK act like watchdogs to ensure that officials act within the Law and perform duties as prescribed.

Good Governance in a broader sense, is to rule according to the needs and wishes of people, and this is where professionals come to ensure that the citizenry is served devoid of corruption, ethnicity, lack responsiveness and transparency.

Governance has been defined to refer to structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of Law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation.

Corruption affects us all. It threatens sustainable economic development, ethical values and justice; it destabilizes our society and endangers the rule of Law. It is professionals who are charged with the responsibility of effecting sustainable economic development, ethical values and justice, hence this is the group of people who should lead the rest of the citizenry in combating **Poor Governance** at all levels of leadership.

Poor Governance is increasingly being regarded as one of the root causes of all evils, and suffering within societies; but for strange reasons, the matter is avoided as a priority subject for discussion. **Bad Governance** is the complete opposite of **Good Governance** and involves abuse of human rights, corruption, lack of transparency, lack of responsiveness, ethnicity, lack of accountability among other ills.

With the abuse of effective checks and balances, corruption, ethnicity, lack of transparency, lack of responsiveness and lack of accountability continues unabated. These are some of the very difficult challenges and trying moments as a community we obviously face. This is the reason why we fall back on professionals to bail us out from this mess.

Studies have provided empirical evidence which support the argument that **Bad Governance** and corruption are symptoms of leadership and institutional failure in Africa. Therefore, workplace behaviour is necessary for the long-term success of a business, whether it's big corporation or small business, including governments.

Therefore, we have to strengthen professional organizations through legal means and instituting clear rules to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and human rights are respected. More importantly, fight ethnicity through thick-and-thin. With all these in place, political despotism and corruption will be brought under control.

Thank You!

Thank You All!!