



AFRICA'S CORRUPTION PUZZLE

DID WE MISS THE PLOT?

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INTRODUCTION



“Corruption is a punishable offense under the laws of nearly every African state, and it is expressly prohibited in several of their constitutions and in various regional and pan-African anti-corruption instruments. In fact, Africa’s leadership is so concerned about the problem of corruption that hardly a day goes by without some government entity criticizing corruption and its cancerous effects on African society. Yet, for all the bombast about eradicating corruption, Africa has made little progress on this front”.

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CORRUPTION: A DEFINITION

- The abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International)
- The use of public office and funds for private gains (Bardhan, 1997)
- Corruption is " a form of antisocial behaviour by an individual or social group which confers unjust or fraudulent benefits on its perpetrators, is inconsistent with the established legal norms and prevailing moral ethos of the land and is likely to subvert or diminish the capacity of legitimate authorities to provide fully for the material and spiritual well-being of all members of society in a just and equitable manner". (Osoba, 1996)
- Petty corruption vs Grand corruption; bureaucratic vs political: grand corruption may be institutionalized as wholesale, well-organized kleptocracies designed to enrich a small elite at the expense of the public



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

- Corruption occurs when the expected benefits exceed the costs (AKU Youth Poll)
- Poor countries tend to have the highest levels of corruption
- The poor, who rely the most heavily on public services, bear the brunt of corruption through bribery and extortion (The social justice and inclusion agenda is undermined).
- Corruption flourishes in secretive environments in which deals and decisions are made out of view of the public (Sunlight is the best sanitizer!).
- Democratic societies tend to have lower levels of corruption because they create mechanisms for accountability and the enforcement of laws.
- Low literacy rates also contribute to heightened levels of corruption. Uninformed populations cannot be made easily aware of the extent of government malfeasance.
- Corruption is most severe in countries without an effective independent media, which serves as a watchdog and a whistle blower.
- Low salaries of public employees are a factor.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

- Corrupt practices flourish when government policies are overly restrictive, unduly complicated, irrational, rigid or unrealistic.
- Corruption is associated with the “resource curse”. The “paradox of plenty”
- Corruption also reflects cultural norms, which vary widely among societies. Where it is widespread and endemic, it is often accepted simply as another part of doing business.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

- Lowers public morale and creates cynicism and distrust of the state.
- Inhibits the efficiency and effectiveness of government policies, including the appropriate delivery of public monies to their intended ends.
- Corrupt construction contractors have erected buildings that are shoddy and unsafe, or use public funds to build luxury homes for wealthy politicians.
- Nepotistic hiring short-circuits meritocratic hiring systems and fills public offices with unqualified, underqualified or incompetent staff.
- Corruption can also undermine the quality of education and retard progress in eliminating illiteracy
- High levels of corruption are associated with reduced FDI. By raising transactions costs, it increases the cost of doing business, notably production and transportation costs, and reduces profits.
- Corruption raises the barriers to entry for non-privileged groups, notably those lacking in political connections and funds for bribes and kickbacks.
- Corruption also increases inequality typically imposing its greatest costs on the poor.
- Public office is often treated as a route to personal gain by elites and the public



CORRUPTION IN AFRICA: AN INTRODUCTION

- Corruption is an entrenched part of African political culture
- The impact and severity varies greatly from one country to another
- Though not unique to Africa, corruption in Africa remains pervasive and among the world's most severe
- Corruption is one of the several factors that have hindered African economic development, a governance issue with a wide variety of deleterious social and political consequences
- Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit financial flows from Africa indicated that the continent lost \$30-\$60 billion a year (5% of these due to corruption) making Africa a net creditor to the world, rather than a net debtor. [Stop It Track It Get It (p.34)][Mbeki Report]
- As the economies of Africa grow, so the IFFs, negating impact of positive growth (p.34)



CORRUPTION IN AFRICA: THE STATE OF PLAY

- Global average 43/100
- Africa's average 32/100 (Very corrupt)
- Extremely corrupt (below 20)
 - Somalia (9), South Sudan (12), Sudan (16), Equatorial Guinea (16)
- Very corrupt (20-39)
 - The bulk – Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda
- Slightly corrupt
 - Seychelles (66); Botswana (61); Cape Verde (58); Rwanda (53); Mauritius (52)
- Least corrupt (No African country)





Corruption Increasing	55%
Govt no doing enough	59%
Bribery demands regular	> 1 in 4 paid
Citizens can make a difference	67%
Not enough food	47%
No clean water	49%
No cash income	79%
Not enough cooking fuel	38 %
No electricity	42%

FIGHTING CORRUPTION EFFECTIVELY

- Involve everyone in the fight against corruption
- National focus with regional and international cooperation
- Political will at the national level
- The will of the general public to root out corruption is paramount
- Role of civil society, the media and business/private sector
- Leadership
- Strengthen the policy, legal and institutional framework
- Address integrity in management of political parties and elections
- Increasing transparency and access to information
- Asset recovery, asset and liability declarations, lifestyle audits



OPPORTUNITIES FOR WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN AFRICA

- Protect whistleblowers
- Independent law enforcement and anti-corruption institutions and agencies
- Build ethics and values that reject corruption and corrupt individuals
- Nurture principles and merit in the political system
- Fight divisions along ethnic, religious or racial lines (social divisions are used to defeat the fight against corruption)
- Citizen activism and engagement in the fight against corruption



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