



THE AUABC ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs AT KAMPALA SERENA HOTEL

15TH SEPTEMBER 2017

As part of the evaluation mission to Uganda from 11th – 15th September 2017, the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC) in partnership with TIU (Transparency International Uganda) organized an evaluation session on **Friday 15th September 2017 from 08:30am – 02:00pm at Serena Hotel Kampala.**

The dialogue aimed at sharing with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on the provisions of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), getting the views of CSOs on the implementation of the provisions in Uganda, marketing Project 2018 (The African Anti-Corruption Year) and enhancing collaborative efforts in this regard.

Various CSOs as well as journalists attended this dialogue and these included delegates from the AUABC, Uganda National NGO Forum, Alliance for Campaign Finance Monitoring, Southern and Eastern Trade Information and Negotiation Institute, Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda, Uganda Debt Network, Anti- Corruption free Generation, to mention but a few.

Welcome remarks

The TIU Board Chairperson Mr. John Mary Odoi in his opening remarks thanked all the delegates, participants and media for turning up for the dialogue. He remarked that several old and new cases on corruption have brought untold suffering to not only Uganda but Africa at large. According to him, it's not anybody's interest to see any one suffering except those without consciousness and disagreed with the high levels of corruption in Uganda and Africa.

He mentioned that there is need to put an end to the results of corruption and create new hope for



Mr. John Mary Odoi making remarks

those experiencing difficulties due to corruption as it has caused death, social problems, and socio-economic impacts on development of the countries, among other problems registered.

He stated that in Uganda, there have been initiatives developed for example His Excellency the President of Uganda came up with the quote *"Kisanja Hakuna Mchezo"* literally translated as 'term for no jokes'. However despite the interest put towards the fight against corruption, very intense corruption is still going on. He therefore called for continuous engagement of CSOs to make a follow up on the fight against corruption and cited the Black Monday Newsletter as a very good initiative in the fight against corruption as a way of creating awareness among the citizens. He concluded by stating that the lack of dignity and moral decadence should not put life in its fullness to disadvantage and thus quoted that ***"Corruption is manmade, and can be undone"***.

Opening remarks:

The AUABC Board Chairperson Hon. Begoto Miarom thanked the CSOs for warmly welcoming and receiving the African Union delegation. He reminded participants that the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption was signed in July 2003 and entered into force in 2006. He noted that Uganda was one of the first countries that signed and ratified it. He said follow up of the implementation of the Convention is one of the responsibilities of the independent organ of the African Union as evidenced in Article 22 (7) of the Convention. He concluded by stating that the Convention stipulates that Board engages and discuss with various Governments on the status of implementation. The Convention also provides for engaging with Civil society. He stated that on this particular mission, there are discussions with different State authorities like The Inspectorate of Government, Office of the Auditor General, Criminal Intelligence and Investigation Department, among others. For CSOs' engagement, Hon. Begoto Miarom said the Board would pursue that with help from TIU and NGO Forum.

Remarks from the Executive Director NGO Forum:

Mr. Richard Sewakiryanga the President of the AU-Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) and ED of NGO Forum acknowledged that the AU is a very important organ in Africa in which Heads of State meet to discuss and share issues concerning their states. He noted that the AU is composed of the Assembly of Heads of State, the Executive Council; Permanent Representative Committee (PRC); African Union Commission; Pan African Parliament; Other Organs include the AU Commission on International Law, African Court, African Commission and the AUABC; Specialized Technical Committees; Security Council; Financial Council; and the CSOs as represented on the Economic, Social and Cultural Council in Africa.



Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga addressing participants during the AUABC dialogue

He stated that the Heads of States agreed that 2018 will be a year of Anti- corruption and that the anti- money laundering law had taken long to take off.

He requested AU to assign a Secretariat which will help Uganda work closely with other Heads of State in Africa and that NGO Forum is willing to continue doing so in partnership with TIU. He also thanked the AUABC for its participation and Ugandan CSOs in their mission to fight against corruption.

Brief on the AUABC

The AUABC Chairperson Hon. Begoto Miarom elaborated on Article 22 (1) which states that there shall be an Advisory Board on Corruption within the African Union. The Convention was adopted by the Heads of State on 11 July 2003 and 37 States out of 55 have ratified this Convention todate.

He highlighted that;

- Uganda was one of the first counties to ratify the convention in 2004;
- The Board was created in May 2009 and started implementing activities in 2009 itself;

- The Board collects information regarding nature of offences and put in methodologies to fight corruption and publish this information gathered from various states. This is done through consulting governments on how they handle their offences; how jurisdictions interpret this information on matters of corruption; and how government interfaces through sharing good practices with other states.
- There is need to encourage all the states in Africa to ratify this Convention in order to enhance the fight against corruption as this would speed up the implementation through developing joint ideas to come up with measures equivalent to the struggle.
- Under the AUABC as any other AU Organ, provisions regarding equitable representation ensure that there are two representatives from each region of Africa. For now two representatives on the Board are from West Africa, two from East Africa, two from Southern Africa, two from Central Africa and one from North Africa with one more to be elected in January 2018.

He finalized by mentioning that the Headquarters of the AUABC and the Executive Secretariat that represent the Board are based in Arusha in Tanzania. The Secretariat is composed of an Executive Secretary, Senior Policy Officers in charge of Economic and Statistical Matters as well as Legal and Political Matters. Other Officers include the Finance and Administrative Officer, Documentalist, Bilingual Secretary as well as a Drive/Messenger.

Brief on the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC)

This brief was presented by Hon. Pascal Bamouni, a Board Member from Burkina Faso. He began by outlining the objectives of the Convention, status of ratification and principles. He further highlighted that;

- Corruption is a complex and dynamic concept with enormous side effects, thus the AU came up with measures to combat and prevent corruption;
- There is need to engage in dialogues to discuss how the different states will implement the Convention;
- The side effects of corruption include misuse of money by the public agents; abuse of office; illicit enrichment of property; money laundering, illicit flow of funds; and illicit trade with private commercial interests; and
- The expectations from member states include; putting in place central authorities to fight corruption, putting in place measures to manage the banking sectors, encouraging research to identify and involve the recovery of goods used in an irregular manner, putting in place efficient measures to identify the recovery of goods, having international cooperation so as to strengthen states' efforts in fighting corruption.

He concluded by looking at the various provisions of the Convention as they relate to various aspects of corruption including offences such as money laundering.

Brief on the Project 2018 (African Year of Anti-Corruption)

Mrs. Charity Hanene Nchimunya, the Executive Secretary of AUABC, gave a brief synopsis of the African Anti-Corruption Year dubbed as Project 2018. The African Anti-Corruption year - 2018 and

the theme will focus on scaled up efforts in fighting corruption. The focus, which speaks specifically to Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063, is in line with the wider AU vision for the continent.

She highlighted that the thrust of the project is coordinated and amplified efforts from all stakeholders.

The harmonized and coordinated activities intended to be done in the African Anti-corruption year 2018 have the following objectives in mind;

- evaluation of progress made in the fight against corruption and adoption of best practices from other States;
- increasing space, leverage of ICT and new forms of communication for CSOs and the private sector;
- evaluating the level of ratification, domestication and implementation of regional, continental and international instruments;
- ensuring that all the 55 countries ratify the African Union Convention;
- developing a common African position on the recovery of African Assets hosted in Foreign jurisdictions; and
- providing technical support to member states in the fight against corruption as well as contributing to the strengthening of anti- corruption measures.

On the other hand, the presenter outlined the activities that have been implemented so far in preparation for 2018 as well as the anticipated activities yet to be done across the continent by 2018. These include;

- Adoption of decision to declare 2018 as the African Year of Anti-Corruption;
- Conducting retreats with the PRC members;
- Holding joint venture anti-corruption sensitization meetings;
- Conducting interactions with National Anti-Corruption Commissions;
- Organizing media interviews with different personalities;
- Conducting quiz competitions among schools;
- Establishment of youth integrity clubs;
- Organizing essay competitions in the universities;
- Appointment of anti-corruption ambassadors and special envoys (e.g. the President of Nigeria, His Excellency Buhari was appointed 2018 champion on the fight against corruption);
- Production of a documentary on corruption across Africa to create awareness;
- Organization of high level dialogues; and
- , Organisation of regional and continental conferences on women, youth and corruption.

She concluded this brief by stating that the Africa Union looks forward to partnering with member states, CSOs and supporters in ensuring that Project 2018 is a huge success.

Panel Discussions

Panelists included Mr. Peter Wandera the TIU Executive Director and Ms. Sarah Pacutho from the NGO Forum.

The moderator of the panel discussions Hon. Paulus Noa, a member of the AUABC made remarks from the perspective of the AUABC.

He noted that corruption is one of the greatest challenges for socio-economic developments in the world and is found in every country regardless of whether it is developed or developing. He quoted the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan *“it is the developing world that its effects are most destructive”* and that these destructive effects call for authorities to adopt a holistic approach to the fight against corruption by co-opting all the principal actors and engage them fully in the prevention of and the fight against corruption.

Mr. Peter Wandera; “The role of Civil Society in Anti-Corruption”

There are many CSOs in the accountability sector which include; TIU, NGO Forum, UDN and ACCU among others and these work with grass root communities like Voluntary Accountability Committees (VACs) and Regional Anti-Corruption Coalitions (RACCs), Community Based Monitors (CBMs) among others. He highlighted the significance of the CSOs to include; being independent of government; engage in service delivery, make demands, hold public officials accountable, act as intermediaries, have a legitimacy following the Article 17(1) of the 1995 Constitution on preservation & participation as well as public participation and empowerment.



Mr. Peter Wandera the TIU ED making a presentation

He stated the roles of Civil Society Organizations as; engage more in advocacy, lobbying and influencing legal and policy measures, monitoring government programmes and expenditure tracking, budget performance monitoring, monitoring service delivery with the help of community monitors and monitoring contracts (infrastructure) under the Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition (UCMC), ensuring and conducting public education, awareness and sensitization, engaging in networking meetings with other stakeholders from both Government and Civil Society.

Ms. Sarah Pacutho from NGO Forum: “Strides and challenges in the fight against corruption

According to her, Civil Society has taken a huge step in the fight against corruption and has managed to do this continuously through the legal and institutional frameworks and initiatives that are strides to help us in the fight against corruption.

She however stated that there are challenges that come along with strides. These include; lack of political will, inadequate funding of institutions and agencies following the 2007 Millennium Development goals; poor implementation of the law, less synergy between different actors in the fight against corruption, delays in judicial processes, prosecution of “*small fish*”, enactment of too many laws and creation of institutions, moral decadence as well as increased citizen apathy.



She however stated that there is always hope when it comes to fighting corruption because civil society can continuously do campaigns, perform actions under Black Monday Movement, engage Multi- sectoral working group on combating corruption.

Plenary discussions

Several comments were made and questions asked by the participants and panelists responded accordingly. Such included;

CSOs are a catalyst for sensitization, and there’s need to notice the changes made in government through the support of Civil Society. All actors both state and non-state actors are responsible for the fight against corruption.

A participant quantified that the results from Afro-Barometer as per the perception study made on corruption in 36 countries, the public views on corruption weigh more and define the level of corruption in Africa. For example, a survey was done in Uganda and it was found that 60% of the people agreed to the fact that state institutions are the most corrupt.

There’s need to focus on the categories (youth, politicians, religious leaders and other stakeholders) of people that can bring hope to the people. There’s need to consider what is being missed under this action of laws to protect the state and its people, thus civil society needs to make certain considerations.

There is need to decentralize the fight against corruption. An example of the Black Monday magazine which is centralized and therefore only encompasses the urban areas ignoring communities in rural areas. She highlighted the need to empower women and youth to help them fight corruption since corruption affects both sexes differently.

Way forward:

Mr. Charity Hanene Nchimunya, the Executive Secretary of AUABC, mentioned that there’s hope and that there’s need to find solutions and stated the way forward to include: civil society needs to improve on their efforts and not give up on the fight against corruption; all actors need to act as game

changers; CSOs need to find their niche areas and focus on them; Civil Society needs to incorporate anti-corruption in their programming. AU to create platforms for more engagements and engage civil society in anti-corruption programmes.

In conclusion, the Chairperson TIU thanked all participants from the African Union delegation and Civil Society for the participation. He added that the dialogue led to increased knowledge and understanding of issues of corruption in Africa through the shared ideas.