JoMUN XVI

**Forum:** Economic and Social Council

**Issue:** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all African countries.

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INTRODUCTION

 The African continent is home to countless resource-rich countries, with oil wells across North and West Africa, and gold deposits scattered throughout (“Mapping Africa’s natural resources”). However, little of this continent’s riches are redistributed to the people that work to extract them. Most raw materials are not processed in the African countries they are found in, but are instead transported to undergo beneficiation in other countries in the West and Asia. The profits from this fall into the pockets of a very small, select group in positions of power. Although this is certainly in part the work of international tycoons, much of the reason behind this wealth inequality in African states is the corruption found in high-level political institutions. Whether through backdoor deals or bribery, powerful individuals and groups are robbing huge sums of money from what should be thriving African economies.

In 2015 alone, Transparency International estimated nearly 75 million Africans had paid a bribe (Transparency International). In their People and Corruption survey, after interviewing over 43,000 people across the continent, in partnership with various contracted research institutions, they discovered that although the bribes were taken and paid by people of all levels of socioeconomic status, it was most damaging to the poor. It is hard to tell whether or not this form of conducting business has trickled down to the masses from billionaire oil moguls, or if it was the other way around. Regardless, there is now very much a culture of bribery and corruption in most African countries, across all classes. This makes it a very difficult battle to fight, with very severe consequences if not changed.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Mineral Beneficiation**

Often referred to simply as “beneficiation”, this is the process which a crude material undergoes in order to achieve a more pure and highly-valued state. Minerals and metals may be cut, melted, etc. to produce two resulting materials: the “concentrate” and the “tailings”, the higher-grade end product and the valueless waste, respectively.

**Corruption**

Dishonest or unfair practices conducted by officials or individuals in positions of authority over others. This often involves bribery.

**Bribery**

The practice of trading money, goods, or services in exchange order to influence the actions of a person in power, illegally. Examples of this might include a teacher soliciting money or favours from a student in order to pass them, or give them a higher grade in the class. Anyone with authority, like a doctor, city council clerk, or judge, might be bribed in order to abuse their position to the advantage of other people.

**Distribution**

Providing a good or service to a certain number of people, groups, or countries.

**Backdoor deal**

This is an agreement between a person in power, with another individual, often also in a position of power. This deal typically involves a form of bribery, and is an element of most corrupt incidents.

**Commodities**

Any raw material that can be traded. These are typically valuable, and include things like various metals, petroleum, or tea, to name a few.

**Per-capita**

An average statistic per individual. “Per-capita income”, for example, would mean the average income of each individual in any given region.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

 Corruption and bribery are highly prevalent virtually all over the African continent, as shown by previously mentioned surveys and research. This can be owed primarily to Africa’s status as a country of resources. Historically, many Africans were forced, by European and Asian traders, to collect commodities and bring them to the coast, to be shipped off and beneficated in the traders’ own nations. It was in such a fashion that the ivory trade began, and eventually boomed. Such an oppressive and imbalanced relationship created the perfect environment for certain individuals to rise up and begin making deals with the traders. This trade model still exists today, although not quite so obvious.

There are a select few powerful individuals or groups in many, often poorer, African nations that work with the leaders of other, more affluent nations or large corporations. In Nigeria, for example, since their 1960 liberation, there has been a minimum of $400 billion USD of revenue from petroleum “stolen or misspent” according to Oby Ezekwesili, erstwhile World Bank vice president for Africa. This illustrates the huge gap between the corrupt in power and the typical Nigerian; the daily spending for 90% of people is 2 USD (Nnochiri).

On a larger scale, the Transparency International survey mentioned earlier, discovered that out of 43,000 interviewed Africans, one in five had bribed officials in order to receive official documents such as title deeds (a document stating ownership over property). However, not all countries in Africa struggle with this issue. States like Botswana and Mauritius have only 1% of respondents reporting paying a bribe. This has a direct correlation to Botswana being one of Africa’s wealthiest countries, with a per-capita income of $17,000 USD. It is clear that the corruption and bribery so widespread in the rest of the continent is a significant factor in holding back growth of any kind, and thus maintaining quite a low standard of living for the majority of the population.

It is important to note that it may be difficult to create blanket solutions, without considering the differences between African nations. There are different industries and trades for corrupt officials to make money off of. This should be taken into account.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

**AU-ABC**

The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption. The AU-ABC was created in 2009, and is the only existing corruption-focused continental organization. It is responsible for the implementation of various initiatives and programs to battle corruption and other related issues. There are 39 out of 55 African Union (AU) member states that have ratified the AU-ABC convention. Those that have not, generally include politically unstable countries such as Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This can pose an issue when considering that states with so much conflict and instability are rife with bribery and corruption.

**Nigeria**

Nigeria is infamous for the corruption which permeates it. Since its 1960 independence, the oil-rich state has been constantly exploited for profit by other nations, companies, and indeed, its own leaders. As a conservative estimate, Nigeria has lost $400 billion USD to corruption since its beginning as a republic. As the largest country in Africa, population-wise, many issues affecting it reflect much of the African climate as a whole, particularly that in West Africa.

**Somalia**

As a failed state, Somalia is unable to foster an environment conducive to good business practices and economic growth. As a result of the crippling instability, corruption is rampant: particularly within Somalia’s most important security organization, the Somali National Army. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has been reported for malpractice in many aspects of governance, including, “ministers selling visas and signing dubious deals, misusing revenues, covering for organised crime and piracy, selling weapons and diverting food aid” (Somalia’s Corruption Epidemic).

**Sudan**

Sudan is just behind Somalia in terms of corruption. Elected officials abuse their power, taking money from government funds, and creating a huge stagnancy in the Sudanese economy.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

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| **January-June, 1966** | Nigerian military coup. The coup is staged in opposition to the widespread corruption that permeated the then-government. As investigations are conducted into the businesses of various politicians, it is found that many had founded their own companies, and then used them for government contracts to maximize their profits. Though many are imprisoned, only six months later, they are released and the government returns to its corrupt ways.  |
| **2003** | United Nations Convention against Corruption is created. |
| **2003** | African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption is created. |
| **2003-2009** | African Union Advisory Board on Corruption is formed. |
| **March, 2012** | A UN security council report states that 50% of food aid sent into Somalia was being diverted and used for personal gain by corrupt officials and militants. Over 3.5 million people are affected by the extreme food shortage, a number that will only worsen. |
| **2010-2011** | Tunisian uprising; one of many political armed conflicts that increased the overall instability of Northern Africa. |
| **October 2011** | Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) is exposed for corruption and bribery by author David Bruce. Serious reforms are not made; serious corruption within the JMPD prevails. |
| **2012** | Somali civil war began, creating a climate for corruption and bribery opportunities to flourish. |
| **January 2012** | Corruption Watch, a sub-charter of Transparency International focused on South Africa, is formed. |
| **2014** | South African president Jacob Zuma is found to have used $24 million USD of taxpayer money to upgrade his Nkandla residence in the Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) region. The erstwhile president claimed to use the money for security upgrades, but instead used it to build a visitor’s centre, swimming pool, and amphitheatre, to name a few. |
| **2016** | South African president Jacob Zuma court-ordered to repay cash used for the work done on his Nkandla residence. |

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

**United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC, 2003)**

Created as result of a 2000 ad hoc UN committee, to discuss the creation of an anti-corruption legislation. They came up with three main goals, which are as exactly follows:

(a) To promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption

more efficiently and effectively;

(b) To promote, facilitate and support international cooperation and

technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including

in asset recovery;

(c) To promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public

affairs and public property.

The UNCAC is the world’s leading frameworks on how to battle corruption, and is a model for many following documents of the same nature.

**African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC, 2003)**

This convention was established in Maputo, as a follow-up to the UNCAC. The AUCPCC is very similar to the UNCAC, but there are certain clauses in it that pertain more to the African continent, rather than the world as a whole.

Delegates should note that the mentioned resolutions, although quite extensive, provide only a framework for any further resolutions. Delegate resolutions are expected to be based off of these, certainly, but as they both were planned in 2003, delegates must also add clauses that take into account more contemporary events.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

**Regional Anti-Corruption Programme for Africa (2011-2016)**

An initiative of the Ethiopian chapter of UNECA in tandem with the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption targeting corruption in African countries. The program relied on two documents as its framework: the UNCAC and the AUCPCC. The program lasted for 5 years.

**Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (2003-present)**

An anti-corruption government agency in Nigeria. The EFCC has historically had quite a good track record in terms of prosecuting high-profile individuals, and is trusted by its people. Of course, this agency is only pertinent to Nigeria, and Nigeria remains one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

There have been various committees established and initiatives taken in almost all African countries to minimize the presence of corruption and bribery in their own individual states. There are too many to list here, but delegates are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with aspects of their own country’s efforts that might be applicable to a broader region. The EFCC was listed as a good model, but one that does not seem to have much of an impact. Consider how this can be avoided in the creation of resolutions in committee.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Transparency International, one of the world’s leading corruption researchers, has outlined five main actions to take in order to reduce corruption. They are as follows:

1. **“End Impunity”**
To end impunity (being given immunity for a crime committed), measures must be taken to ensure that perpetrators of it are held accountable and punished for their actions. Allowing them to continue whatever they do in life without severe consequences only escalates their crimes.
2. **“Reform public administration and finance management”**Locals of any region must be involved in budgeting and finance management for their area. Only through full collaboration between the government and the people, will transparency be achieved regarding their money, resources, and what is happening to them.
3. **“Promote transparency and access to information”**
Ensuring freedom of press and transparency between officials and civilians is crucial in facilitating a non corrupt body.
4. **“Empower citizens”**
Implementing things like “community monitoring initiatives” and encouraging citizens to track the budgets of their local government, in order to spot fishy details or leaks, is a great way to hold those in charge accountable for their actions.
5. **“Close international loopholes”**
Although anti-corruption and anti-money laundering incentives exist, most are unable to claim full transparency. Any registrations that individual officials and companies make with whatever board that presides over the anti-corruption legislation, is unavailable to the public. It is thus crucial for regular civilians to be able to see all businesses their leaders are involved in, if they choose to, or suspect something untowards may be occurring.

The stated strategies are difficult to achieve - otherwise, surely corruption would have been solved by now. However, they are starting points - as a word of advice to the delegates, pick a few of these broad ideals, and detail them in the created resolutions. Attempting to include all of them may be excessive for one resolution, but would be ideal in a merged resolution created in committee.

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APPENDIX OR APPENDICES

<https://www.uneca.org/publications/combating-corruption-improving-governance-africa>

Overview of UN involvement in combatting corruption in Africa.

<https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview>

A corruption perceptions index that can be found for all individual countries.