

# JoMUN [XVII]

**Forum:** [Economic and Social Council]

**Issue:** [Addressing and ameliorating existing corruption and bribery within African governments]

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## INTRODUCTION

The continent of Africa is home to 54 countries and stretches across an area of 30 million square kilometers. It has long suffered from issues associated with and arising from corruption and bribery. The two have a multitude of impacts on the societies they occurs within, including on the political, economic, social, and environmental life and progress of a country (“What Is Corruption?”). It “obstructs economic growth and development, erodes public confidence, legitimacy and transparency and hinders the making of fair and effective laws, as well as their administration, enforcement and adjudication” (“Corruption – United Nations”). At a September 2018 Security Council meeting on corruption, the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres claimed that the economic costs of corruption amount to 5% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) or 2.6 trillion USD (“Global Cost”).

In Africa, 1 in 3 “believe there is endemic corruption in their country” (“In Whose Interest?”). Moreover, when accessing public services, 1 in 4 Africans reported paying a bribe with the poorest paying twice as often as the richest (“One in Four”). This disproportionality is exasperated as corruption also perpetuates poverty and therefore serves as further challenge to Africans attempting to escape poverty (“Poverty and Corruption”). Corruption also contributes to elongated political power as the incentive to stay in power is continuously increased for the region’s long-serving political leaders (Hanson).

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Corruption

Transparency International defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Depending on the amounts of money and the sector in which it occurs, it may be grand, meaning that it takes place in the high level government and benefits the political leaders at the expense of the public good, petty, the everyday abuse of entrusted power as public officials interact with ordinary citizens, or political, where people in positions of power abuse this to sustain their power (“What is Corruption?”).

### Bribery

The illegal action of “offering, giving, soliciting, or receiving of any item of value as a means of influencing the actions of an individual” (LII Staff).

### Transparency

A way of preventing corruption where there is given public access and understanding of “rules, plans, procedures, and actions” (“What is Corruption?”).

### **Political integrity**

When politicians act in favour of promoting the public good and public interest instead of serving the interest of themselves and those closest to them (“In Whose Interest?”).

### **Whistleblowing**

The act of disclosing information otherwise kept secret by “an organisation, government body or company” in the public interest to reveal actions that may threaten this (“Anti-Corruption Glossary”).

### **Rule of Law**

Democracies are inherently reliant on exercising the principle of the rule of law in order to effectively govern a country and protect its citizens from violations of the law including by restricting the power of the ruler (“Anti-Corruption Glossary”).

### **Poverty**

In absolute terms, this refers to the amount of money deemed necessary to meet basic needs. However, the concept of relative poverty extends the overall meaning of poverty to be defined in “relation to the economic status of other members of society” (“Poverty”).

## **BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE**

As mentioned above, the costs of corruption are political, economic, social, and environmental. The adverse economic effects are wide reaching and affects societies at the local, domestic, regional, international, as well as global level. Economically, ineffective markets plagued by corruption reduces productivity and the adverse effects of corruption and bribery include loss of tax revenue, GDP, and international aid. Since it distorts competition, it also provides a disincentive for investors to become engaged in countries with high level of corruption (“What is Corruption”). Large scale risk is often associated with investments made on the continent and corruption is the most significant legal risk facing these investors (“Minimising corruption risks”). Traditionally, multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid partnerships in Africa have also focused on and supported good governance programmes aimed at tackling corruption and bribery (Hanson). However, China’s recent extensive investment in Africa has been unconcerned and complicit in domestic corruption worrying Western donors that it is “undermining anti-corruption efforts” (Hanson).

Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index names 90% of sub-Saharan Africa to have “entrenched corruption” (“Minimising corruption risks”). Grand corruption, is likely to decrease the quality and availability of public goods and thereby the quality of life of a country’s citizens (“What is Corruption?”). Increased corruption has a positive correlation to income inequality and the poor are hurt significantly more by high levels of corruption (Gyimah-Brempong). As a result, both absolute and relative levels of poverty are likely to increase.

Politically, corruption reinforces and provides incentives for political leaders to seek re-election and extend their time in power given the monetary and other benefits of staying in power (Hanson). Although efforts have been made by most African governments to tackle corruption and bribery, the issue persists as those in power are allowed to remain so. According to Claire Felter, this motivation is further increased by the lack of “pension or security scheme for former presidents or heads of state” in the majority of African countries. A corrupt political system negatively impacts citizen participation and public trust in institutions and these attitudes have proved difficult to adjust (Hanson).

With such significant negative impacts on the African member states of the UN and all those that have regular social, economic, and political interactions with them, corruption and bribery within African governments requires targeted and intensive efforts to improve.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

### **China**

China has recently undertaken major investment projects all over Africa. It is important to note their ““hands-off” approach to African partnerships,” which means it does not engage in Africa’s mode of developing and prescribe requirements regarding improving levels of corruption and bribery.

### **United States of America**

As the country from where most foreign direct investments (FDI) were made in Africa in 2017, the USA is significant in any effort to tackle corruption and bribery given its investors and businesses’ frequent interaction with African governments and institutions (Adgoke). This also provides them with the ability to exert pressure on African governments.

### **Transparency International**

This organisation provides yearly data and analysis on corruption and bribery, primarily through their corruption perceptions index. Moreover, through their Poverty and Corruption in Africa (PCA) programme, they attempt to provide disadvantaged people with the tools to take part in the development process and engage in dialogue with their governments (“Poverty and Corruption”).

### **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

The Corruption and Economic Crime Branch (CED) of this UN office is responsible for aiding states in the implementation of the UNCAC by acting as a secretariat to COSP, “supporting the implementation review mechanism,” and “delivering technical assistance and developing tools” (“Corruption and Economic”).

### **Conference of the State Parties (COSP)**

Under the UNCAC, this is the main policy making body, which seeks to support its implementation further.

### **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)**

The ECA was established by ECOSOC in 1958 and it functions mainly as a convention to provide regional intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platforms, as a think tank, and operationally through its policy recommendations (“From Ideas to Actions”)

### **African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC)**

Established within the African Union (AU) in 2009 following the AUCPCC, the board is based on the convention and aims to collect information, advise governments, develop methodologies, and promote and encourage anti-corruption measures (“Mission and Vision”).

## TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

**1983**

The first International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC), a bi-annual conference, was held in Washington D.C.

<b>2000</b>	In Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Nigeria, Angola, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, and Uganda were ranked amongst the bottom 10.
<b>2005</b>	In this CPI ranking, Chad, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Angola were ranked amongst the bottom 10.
<b>2010</b>	In this CPI ranking, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Burundi, and Equatorial Guinea were ranked amongst the bottom 10.
<b>2015</b>	In this CPI ranking, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Angola, Libya, and Guinea Bissau were ranked amongst the bottom 10.
<b>2018</b>	In this CPI ranking, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, and Libya were ranked amongst the bottom 10.
<b>January 2018</b>	The year 2018 was named African Anti-Corruption Year by the AU during its 30 <sup>th</sup> Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

## RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

### **(A/RES/58/4) General Assembly (2003)**

UNCAC was approved and adopted through this resolution.

### **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (2005)**

The convention is both legally binding and universal, making it the first anti-corruption instrument to be so. Through policy recommendations to state parties, it aims "to strengthen their legal and regulatory regimes to fight corruption" including by making corruption a crime under domestic law with the support of civil society, agreeing to engage in international cooperation, and asset recovery ("Corruption – United Nations", "Convention highlights").

### **(A/RES/67/1) General Assembly (2012)**

The Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels reaffirmed the commitment of heads of delegation to the rule of law, recognised the negative impact of corruption, and highlighted the importance of the rule of law in tackling corruption (The General Assembly).

### **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015)**

The SDGs and SDG 16 in particular on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions identify an "explicit link between corruption and peaceful, just and inclusive societies" ("Fighting Corruption").

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

### **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on the Fight against Corruption (2001)**

An attempt to decrease corruption and bribery within the ECOWAS nations. This is furthered by the ECOWAS Whistleblower Protection strategy.

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

Ratified by 40 member states, the Convention addresses corruption in both the public and private sectors of member states and is a comprehensive attempt at tackling the issue (Member States).

### **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (2003)**

Given the natural resource extraction is an important component in the economy of many African nations, this voluntary initiative aims to increase transparency by having governments publish revenues from natural resource extraction (Hanson). The initiative has been criticised for failing to establish complete oversight of transactions through relaxed guidelines and rules.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

### **Independent anti-corruption agencies**

Governments may establish independent domestic watchdog groups separate from the executive branch. With the creation of these, it is important to ensure that they receive protection, if necessary, from those that their work may aggravate.

### **Protect whistle-blowers**

Provide incentives for employees to report on the integrity of their sectors and protect their identity and person from potential repercussions from those that they report on. Provide a forum for easy and safe reporting of bribery and corruption in the public sector.

### **Provide disincentives**

Through an independent judiciary, which prosecutes all regardless of power and wealth, the establishment of fines relative to the income of the perpetrator for any form of corruption or bribery could significantly deter bribery and corruption.

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## APPENDIX OR APPENDICES

*[Ensure there are at least two or three items in the appendix where delegates can find more information or further reading on the issue at hand:]*

Report on citizens views and experiences of corruption report based on the global corruption barometer Africa 2019.

[https://www.transparency.org/files/content/pages/2019\\_GCB\\_Africa.pdf](https://www.transparency.org/files/content/pages/2019_GCB_Africa.pdf)

Regional Anti-Corruption Programme for Africa (2011-2016) Document on Combating Corruption, Improving Governance in Africa.

<https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/combating-corruption-improving-governance-in-africa-2011-2016.pdf>

Article on the relationship between trustworthy institutions, development, corruption, trust, and government performance in Africa.

<https://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad112-do-trustworthy-institutions-matter-development-corruption-trust-and-government>