

GII E-ALERT

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RETHINKING GHANA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES *A Decade's Trend Analysis of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)*

Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) in collaboration with its partners in the governance and anti-corruption space organised a roundtable discussion that brought together over 70 stakeholders across government, civil society and private sector. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) roundtable was intended to collectively rethink the country's anti-corruption strategy and propose pragmatic recommendations for the attention of all stakeholders, particularly the executive.



Speaking about the CPI as she welcomed participants to the meeting, the Executive Director of the GII, Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo, said: **"Some are quick to say it's a perception; however, the CPI is really about the experiences of experts."**

The roundtable discussion came on the back of the 2021 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released on 25th January 2022 which scored Ghana 43 revealing that corruption persists and there seems to be little progress in reducing it. A trend analysis of Ghana's CPI scores over the past decade showed that the country declined by 2 points. The trend portrayed a fluctuating position in Ghana's CPI scores depicting the lack of consistent strategic policy intervention to sustain the gains made within the same period.

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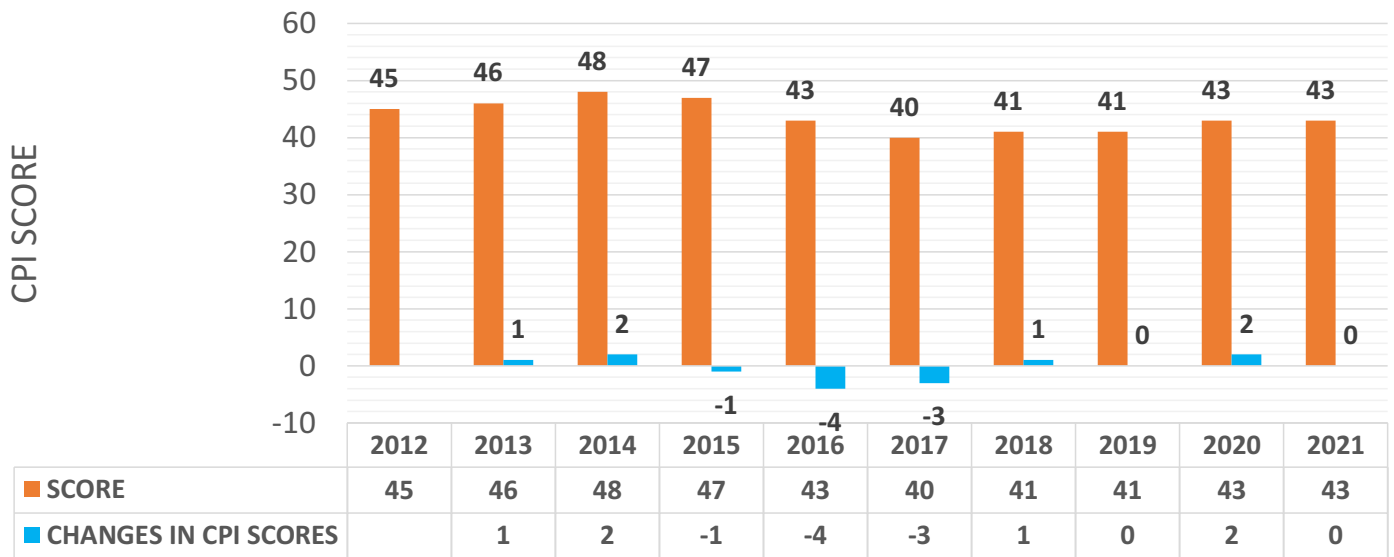
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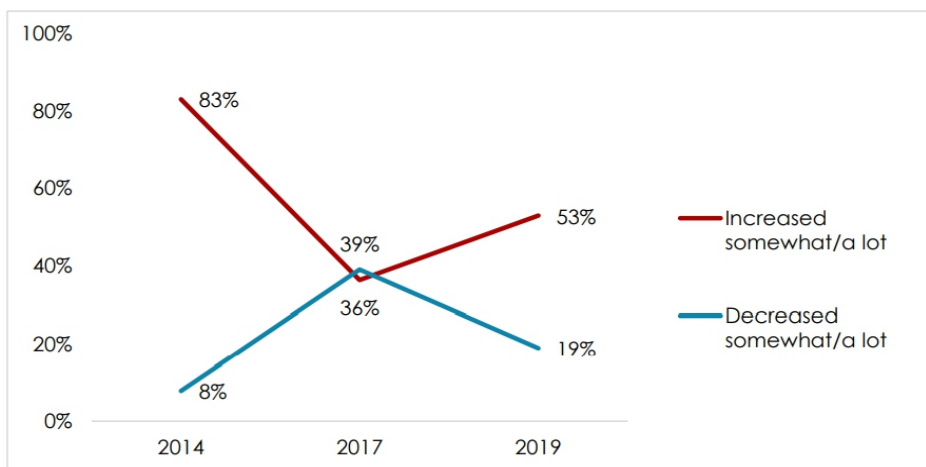
Ghana CPI Trend (2012 - 2021)



Dr. Kojo P. Asante, Director of Advocacy and Policy Engagement at the CDD Ghana, was the guest speaker. In his presentation, he compared the CPI trend with evidence from the Afrobarometer surveys which showed that indeed citizens' perception of the levels of corruption in the country has increased from 39% in 2017 to 53% in 2019.



Levels of Corruption: Afrobarometer



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, over the past year, has the level of corruption in this country increased, decreased, or stayed the same

Dr. Asante again, emphasised that the story of stagnation and deterioration is not just a perception story as the Auditor General's Reports support citizens' opinions.

For example, in the Auditor General's 2016 Liabilities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies report of 2017, the Auditor General audited a total claim of GH¢11,810,579,603.55

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submitted to the Ministry of Finance but was able to certify a total of GH¢6,331,326,592.29 and rejected claims amounting to GH¢5,479,253,011.26. According to the Auditor General, the basis of the rejection of the over GH¢5.4 billion was due to the absence of relevant documentation (such as warrants, contract documents, invoices, procurement records) use of projected contract cost, goods not supplied and claims which had already been paid.

He made the following statements in his concluding remarks

"The CPI and other assessments paints a clear picture of stagnation and deterioration in the fight against corruption in Ghana. This seems to be the picture across the world with the COVID-19 pandemic making matters worst. While other more prosperous countries can cope with the cost of corruption to the well being of their citizens, we are unable to do so."

"Our strategies are not yielding the results we desire, so we must rethink them. This will mean building resilient institutions void of political manipulations coupled with the justice infrastructure and political will to hold those who transgress accountable."

INTRODUCE LIFESTYLE AUDITS INTO PUBLIC SERVICE - Dr. Eric Oduro-Osae

The Director-General of the Internal Audit Agency (IAA), Dr. Eric Oduro Osae, has advocated lifestyle audits to be introduced into the public service to enable the citizenry to question the suspicious wealth of some public servants.

"We are not taking lifestyle audits seriously in this country; we are a country that values the illicit acquisition of wealth," he posited as one of the panellists at the 2021 CPI roundtable.

Dr. Oduro Osae made this statement during Ghana Integrity Initiative's roundtable meeting on the theme: "Rethinking Ghana's anti-corruption strategies: A decade's trend analysis of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)".

The roundtable was organised by the GII, in the wake of the 2021 CPI that ranked Ghana 73rd out of 180 countries with a score of 43 points.

there that people are given positions in society because of their wealth, without questioning the sources of such wealth.

He also mentioned instances where public officials who take office after a short while are seen to be owning properties in plush areas of towns and cities, regardless of how much they earned and yet not much is done to audit such sources of wealth. He said a lifestyle audit of public servants would embolden the citizenry to question illegal gain going forward.

Dr. Oduro Osae was among other panelists which included, co-chair of the Citizens Movement Against Corruption, Edem Senanu; the Executive



A cross section of the panellists

According to Dr. Oduro Osae, there is a high perception out

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Secretary of the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Mrs. Beauty Emeffa Narteh; the CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Bulk Oil Distributors, Mr. Senyo Hosi and Senior Research Fellow of the Ghana Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Dr. Cynthia Tagoe.



Participants at the roundtable

SOUTH TONGU SOCIAL AUDITING CLUB (SAC) IDENTIFY ABANDONED SCHOOL PROJECT AT SOGAKOPE SHS SINCE 2016

“ *Who holds the right to determine the importance of a project and the decision to prioritise construction projects.* ”

In November, 2021, the South Tongu SAC team visited the Sogakope SHS to monitor the progress of work on an 18 shower points and water closets to assess the status of implementation of the project. The visit revealed that projects were awarded in January 2016 with work commencing in February, 2016 and progressed steadily until work stalled after the contractor abandoned site after the 2016 general election.

Information available indicate, the contract was awarded in April 2019 but the second contractor had also abandoned the work with the excuse

that he is working on another equally important classroom block in Tefle in the South Tongu district and once he finished the classroom block he would move to site to complete the work.

The SAC team's visit also revealed that thieves had broken in and removed all the T&Gs and wires creating an extra cost for the project to be completed as a result of the contractor abandoning the work.



Following these findings, the team proceeded to engage the management of the South Tongu District Assembly to bring the issues to the fore for appropriate action to be taken. After several deliberations management of the Assembly assured the SAC team that they would do everything possible within the shortest possible time to ensure that the contractor returned to site to complete the work as scheduled and committed to the following in the interim:

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1. Report the theft incidence to the police
2. Get a carpenter to go and brace the entrance of the structure with boards to prevent unauthorized entry
3. Stationed some security personnel at the site

The SAC Team will conduct follow-ups periodically to document changes until the project is successfully completed as promised.

Since 2013 GII has been working at the local level with citizen groups referred to as Social

Auditing Clubs (SACs) throughout Ghana. The SACs remain a pivotal tool in GIIs Social Accountability drive. There are currently 30 SACs across selected districts under the MISEREOR funded project. The SACs are democratically elected community members from a variety of stakeholders at the district level who monitor public service delivery and developmental projects in their communities and work closely with local authorities to prevent, detect and collaborate to sanction irregularities and corrupt practices.



Inside view of the 12 Sitter WC and Shower



Frontview of the project

GHANA STAGNATES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - CPI 2021

The 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) scored Ghana 43 out of a possible clean score of 100 and ranked the country 73 out of 180 countries/territories included in the 2021 index. This CPI score indicates that, Ghana failed to make progress in the fight against corruption in the year

2021 as the score remains the same as that of the previous year.

A trend analysis of Ghana's CPI scores over the past decade, presented in the chart below shows that, the country declined by 2 points.

The 2021 index showed that Sub-Saharan African's (SSA) average score of 33 is the lowest in the world and 44 SSA countries including Ghana ranked below 50. Seychelles (70) tops the region followed by Cabo Verde (58) and Botswana (55) while Equatorial Guinea (17), Somalia (13) and South Sudan (11) score lowest in the region.

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Ghana's score of 43 placed her 9th along with Senegal out of 49 SSA countries on the 2021 CPI index.

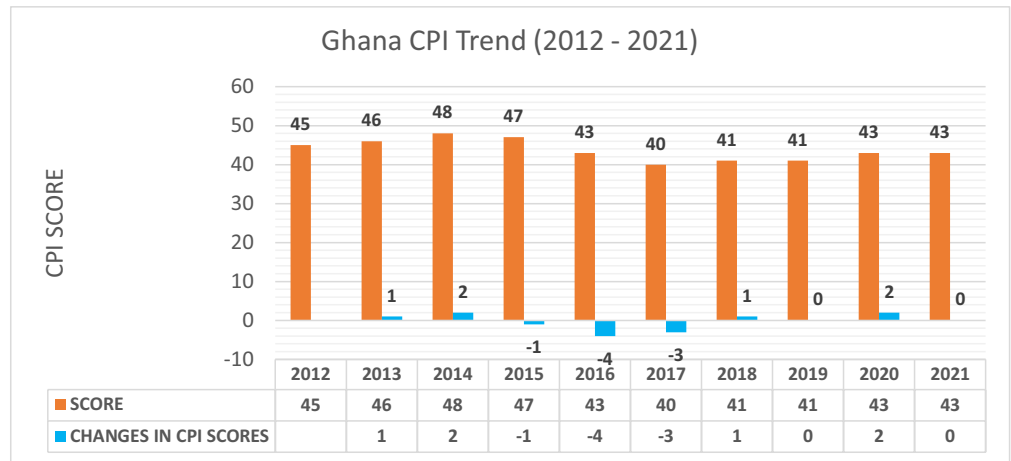
The 2021 index also revealed that, Botswana (55), Lesotho (38), Eswatini (32), Niger (31), Nigeria (24), Comoros (20) and South Sudan (11) are all at historic lows. In the last decade, 43 countries in the region have either declined or made no significant progress.

The CPI global average remains unchanged at 43 for the tenth year in a row, and two-thirds of countries score below 50. The top countries on the Index are Denmark (88), Finland (88) and New Zealand (88), all of which also rank in the top 10 per cent in the world on the Democracy Index Civil Liberties score. Somalia (13), Syria (13) and South Sudan (11) remain at the bottom of the CPI. Syria is also ranked last in civil liberties (Somalia and South Sudan are unrated). In the last decade, 154 countries have either declined or made no significant progress.

GII recommends the following:

1. Public oversight bodies including anti-corruption agencies and the supreme audit institution must operate fully independent from the executive as their mandates stipulate. They should continuously be well-resourced with budgets allocated to them fully disbursed and empowered

Figure 1: Trend analysis of Ghana's CPI Scores since 2012



to effectively investigate and sanction corruption timeously.

2. Agencies of state responsible for guarding the rights of citizens should take active roles in ensuring expeditious investigations into violations of the rights of civil society and media activists as well as human rights defenders and facilitate justice for crimes against all. Parliament and the courts should also be vigilant in preventing executive overreach.

3. Ghana is touted to have considerable anti-corruption frameworks including sanctioning laws. However, not enough commitment on sanctioning corruption, particularly, political corruption has been demonstrated in recent years. Government and state anti-corruption institutions must effectively work towards making corruption a high risk and a low gain venture in order to control the incidences of abuse of power, impunity and corruption.

4. The Electoral Commission should ensure the enforcement of the Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574), particularly Section 21 which relates to the disclosure of funding sources by political parties. Parliament should also amend Act 574 to include disclosure on funding sources for candidates contesting Presidential and Parliamentary elections. There should also be a ceiling on how much can be raised and spent by candidates contesting these elections.

5. Evidence from the ongoing digitization projects of government suggests that automated processes within relevant public institutions (GRA) have reduced human contacts and also have the potential to help reduce corruption. Government should, therefore, expedite its digitization programme and extend electronic services to all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and digitization of services that are in high demand by citizens must be prioritized.

