



Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)
Local Chapter of Transparency International

GII Alert

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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GII ORGANIZES COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND CAPACITY TRAINING FOR SELECTED WOMEN GROUPS ON LAND LAWS AND POLICY

Michael Okai- Coordinator of Climate Change Finance Integrity Project

The Ghana Integrity Initiative has organized a one-day community dialogue and capacity building workshop for selected women's groups in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis as part of its training series for women farmers, traders and agro-businesswomen and representatives from the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The training forms part of activities planned to be carried out as part of the Women, Land and Corruption (WLCA) in Africa project.

The Women, Land and Corruption in Africa project seeks to collaborate with civil society organizations (CSOs) and institutions concerned with women, land governance, and together, generate and share relevant data and information on corruption in the land sector. The project also seeks to understand the issue of corruption as it impacts land rights of women in Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically in Ghana, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The main objective of the community dialogue and capacity building workshop was to strengthen women's grassroots organization, improve service delivery at the community level, promote equity and increase access to justice, develop women's capacity to go beyond reporting corruption and to build dialogue with local and national authorities. In all, 53 participants made up of women farmers, agro – traders and representatives from some MDAs and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), particularly the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Department for Community Development, Ghana Education Service, etc. attended the meeting. Some of the communities that benefited were Whindo, Ahenkofi, Kojokrom, Bakado, Anaji, Eshiem, Sekondi, Dixcove, Agona and Abura all within the Sekondi- Takoradi area. The women were sensitized on the basic concept of corruption as it relates to women and land as well as given an understanding of the voluntary guidelines on both large scale and small scale

acquisition and a gender perspective on access, use and control over land resources in Ghana.

Mr. Michael Okai, the Coordinator for the Climate Change Finance Integrity project also acting as the Interim Coordinator of the WLCA project explained that the Transparency International Secretariat (TI-S) in Berlin was the main coordinator of the WLCA project concurrently being implemented in Uganda, Ghana and Zimbabwe.

Mr. Okai stated that the overall goal of the WLCA project is to contribute to improved livelihoods of women and men adversely affected by corrupt practices in the land sector as well as to promote equitable and fair access to land and water, thereby leading to enhanced security of tenure. He stated TI's definition of corruption as the "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" and cited many examples of the various activities in the land sector that could constitute corruption. He stressed GII's readiness and willingness to collaborate with other partners in achieving a corruption free society in Ghana.

Ms. Lois Aduamah-Addo, a Project Officer from Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) gave a gender perspective to access, use and control over land in Ghana. Another presentation was done by Mr. Hans Jorie, the Central Regional Lands Officer who gave an overview of "The Voluntary Guidelines" on both large scale and small scale acquisition of land in Ghana". He stated that most lands in Ghana are held by traditional leaders (family heads, clan heads, chiefs, priests, etc). These traditional institutions do not have the experience and indeed the tradition

¹Voluntary Guidelines is a framework that States can use when developing their own strategies, policies, legislation, programmes and activities related to the governance of tenure.

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REPORT CORRUPTION ON
THE ALAC TOLL-FREE NUMBER:
0800 100 25 / 0302 782 364

REPORT YOUR EXPERIENCE
OF CORRUPTION ONLINE:
www.ipaidabribe.org.gh

VISIT GII'S WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE ON:
www.tighana.org
www.facebook.com/tighana.org

THE RULE OF LAW STILL WORKS IN GHANA

Within the past two months or so, the government has indicated it has the capacity to act swiftly on corruption issues. Soon as evidence of alleged corruption among members of the judiciary emerged, the government immediately referred the matter to the Chief Justice who in collaboration with the Judicial Council set up a Committee to look closely into the matter and determine whether any crimes have been committed as alleged by Anas and his Tiger Eye PI Investigation Team.

This came very shortly after the President had fired the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ms. Vivien Lauretta Lamptey, following the recommendations of a Committee set up by the Chief Justice to investigate allegations of abuse of office by the then Commissioner. The Committee had apparently not vindicated her in its findings and had recommended that she be relieved of her post.

These decisive actions, which unfortunately have been far few and between, are the kind that Ghanaians have all along expected from the government in order to stem the tide of corruption slowly inundating this country.

While the government deserves credit for these actions, GII nevertheless would wish to point out that the focus of investigations have so far been trained on only the Judiciary while passing off the other two arms of government – the Legislature and the Executive – as if somehow they are unblemished.

However, the Executive arm, too, has some explanations on allegations of corruption, and what it has done about such allegations, to give to the Ghanaian people. So does the Legislature.

The Executive arm, up till now has not been able to provide a convincing explanation as to why people and organisations indicted for various acts of corruption over the last few years have still not refunded monies they had embezzled and/or been wrongfully paid. Just mention cases like GYEEDA, SADA, Woyome, Subah and nearly every Ghanaian would immediately know what is being referred to. These were corruption scandals of massive proportions. The government was pressed to investigate and yet appears to have lost the appetite to pursue recovery of the monies after the investigations. The people need to know what is going on.

The legislature is not squeaky clean of corruption either. For instance, a Member of Parliament was recently accused of taking monies from the Agricultural Development Bank, a state owned enterprise, to drop a court case brought against the bank by a client. The Member of Parliament has actually dropped the case and yet Parliament has not found it necessary to question him or even the Management of the state-owned bank over the corruption allegation. What is the Select Committee on Agriculture waiting for?

Several of such allegations have been made about corruption around Parliament and Parliamentarians. Instead, the reaction of Parliament to these allegations is to double down in a defensive position while threatening to drag people, including even MPs, before the Privileges Committee of Parliament, a clear intent to cow down voices of anti-corruption.

A failure to investigate corruption in the other arms of government would conceal the full extent of the situation in the country from the people. Until quite recently, the Judiciary had vociferously denied that there was corruption among their ranks; so when finally an undercover journalist managed to look into its affairs, the scale and scope of corruption in there made Ghanaians completely nonplussed.

Investigating the Judiciary while not touching the legislature and the executive has already produced speculations about the intentions of the government. Some claim that by exposing only corrupt judges, the government could use that as a weapon to pack the courts with judges who the government can lean on for support; it is a way of muzzling the judiciary, if it is true.

Moreover, investigating the legislature, too, others also claim, would place the government in a dilemma. The net might ensnare not only opposition MPs but could include MPs on the government's side as well – a potentially damaging embarrassment – just before primaries of the ruling NDC.

The government may be facing a conundrum, but selective justice is not the choice. The people of Ghana have the right to know what goes on in all the three arms of government and the government in turn, has the mandate from the people to provide them with that information.

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Prof. Andrey Gadzekpo,
Vitus A. Azeem
Mary A. Addah
Augusta Sena Gabianu
Christopher Tetteh

The Editorial Board of GII Alert encourages readers to write "Letters to the Editor" on matters they wish to comment on as well as short stories or expert pieces on corruption / good governance. The stories must, however, be relevant to the anti-corruption crusade. Articles should remain brief and straight to the point to increase their chances of being published. The Editor reserves the right to edit such articles to suit the editorial policy of the newsletter and the general mandate of the GII.

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Ghana Integrity Initiative(GII) is the local chapter of Transparency International (TI), the leading non-governmental organisation in the fight against corruption worldwide.

GII ORGANIZES COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND CAPACITY TRAINING FOR SELECTED WOMEN GROUPS ON LAND LAWS AND POLICY

of managing grants of lands of that magnitude. According to Mr. Hans Jorie, majority of farmers are vulnerable in several respects when a higher interest holder is negotiating for the release of such lands because most of these farmers do not have registered interests in the lands they are using. Most of them only have user rights either as natives or settlers. He explained that the pragmatic approach in dealing with large-scale land acquisition is by incorporating the principle of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent” (FPIC). The investor has to respect and recognize the land rights of all community members and seek agreement of all community members before any land contract is signed.

The community dialogue and capacity

building workshop created the opportunity for discussions amongst, and improved partnerships between, women groups and officers from the Food and Agric Offices at the MMDAs. The knowledge and capacity of the 53 participants on corruption in the land sector and how it affects women in Ghana were improved. The workshop also enhanced grassroots women's participation in accountability and transparency initiatives and the capacity to report corruption through the use of the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) of GII.



THE FUTURE LEADERS MUST KNOW THE COST OF CORRUPTION TO SOCIETY



Visit by Student from Lincoln School

Corruption continues to engulf the nation Ghana and it is no surprise to many especially those of us in the anti-corruption crusade. It is obvious the canker is growing and may get even worse if we keep paying the same old lip service without any concrete action to stop it. Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) believes that corruption is a complex issue which requires a multifaceted and holistic approach to tackling it. It is, therefore, important to galvanise and sustain the momentum from all sectors of our society if we are to make any gains in fighting corruption.

One of the important strategies of tackling the canker is to target children and young adults. There is a need to confront

corruption from its roots to be able to uproot it because “you can't teach an old dog new tricks”. Charity, they say, begins at home and we should not forget the words of the good book in Proverbs 22:6 that says, “Train up a child in a way he should go and when he grows he will never depart from it”.

It was, therefore, heart-warming when the teacher, Mr. Stephan Anagnost of the Global Politics in Risk Society (GPS) class of the Lincoln Community School in Abelenkpe expressed interest in the work of GII which led to his students visiting GII. A team of 21 students led by the class teacher visited GII on September 28, 2015

and were welcomed by the Executive Director, Mr. Vitus Azeem, the Programmes Manager, Mrs Mary Awelana Addah and the Programmes Officer, Mr. Jacob Tetteh Ahuno.

In his welcome address Mr. Azeem expressed his joy at seeing young adults interested in knowing what GII, the local Chapter of Transparency International, does as an Anti-Corruption CSO. He took the students through what GII is, when it was established, its vision and core values. He also touched on the mission, role, function and work of Ghana Integrity Initiative and Transparency International regarding corruption as well as the challenges faced by GII in their fight against corruption.

Additional information on GII's work was provided in a presentation by the Programmes Officer, Jacob T. Ahuno, who took the students through an interactive session on the topic “Overview of the corruption situation in Ghana”. He began by discussing why it was important to discuss corruption as it provided an avenue to understand the modus operandi of corruption and corrupters and the hydra-headed nature of this canker. Other topics discussed included the categories of corruption, types and causes of corruption, negative effects of corruption and the state of corruption in Ghana. The students were also briefed on the projects

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THE FUTURE LEADERS MUST KNOW THE COST OF CORRUPTION TO SOCIETY

and programmes being implemented by GII, all aimed at eradicating corruption in the various sectors which included:

- The Wellspring's sponsored "Women Land and Corruption in Africa" project;
- The USAID's sponsored "Accountable Democratic Institutions and Systems Strengthening" (ADISS)
- The EU's sponsored "REDD+ Governance and Finance Integrity for Africa" Project
- Hewlett Foundation funded "Open Governance" Project (OG-P)
- The STAR Ghana funded "Democratic Governance" Project

- The European Union funded "Action for Local Employment, Accountability and Resource Mobilisation" (LEARN)
- STAR Ghana funded Health Project;
- Transparency International's Africa Education Watch project and
- Tax Justice & Gender in Ghana project.

Mr. Ahuno also took the students through GII's corruption reporting platforms – the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) – 0800 100 25 and the IPAIDABRIBE internet platform – www.ipaidaribe.org.gh.

The meeting was very interactive with the students asking thought provoking

questions including how GII will rate itself on a scale of 1 to 10 in the fight against corruption and whether or not government interferes in our quest to uncover corrupt acts, what GII was most proud of and its vision for the future. The Executive Director together with the other staff took time to respond to all these questions.

The Executive Director thanked the students for showing interest in fighting corruption and assured them of GII's support if they needed to pursue any case studies in this area. He concluded by encouraging them to become anti-corruption crusaders but above all resist, reject and report corruption in all its shades and forms.

PRESS STATEMENT

ISSUED BY GHANA INTEGRITY INITIATIVE (GII)

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL AND ITS CHAPTER IN GHANA CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO INVESTIGATE THOROUGHLY ALLEGATIONS OF JUDICIAL CORRUPTION

Berlin/Accra 13 September – Following detailed allegations of corruption among a high number of judges in Ghana, Transparency International and the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), its chapter in Ghana, welcome the prompt start to investigations and call on the Ghanaian authorities to ensure that they investigate the evidence thoroughly and without interference.

"The accusations are serious and we expect a thorough investigation that is both transparent and speedy so the people of Ghana know that they can trust their legal system. Judges should abide by the law and not be above the law," said Chantal Uwimana, Regional Director for Africa at Transparency International.

"Only a transparent handling of these investigations and subsequent sanctions for those found guilty will help Ghana avoid any possible negative impact that these allegations could have on the justice delivery system in Ghana," said Vitus Azeem, Executive Director of GII.

The investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, and the team who produced the evidence against the

judges, and any other witnesses must be protected during the inquiry.

Monitoring Judiciary Corruption in Ghana, a 2006 report published by GII identified similar findings. At the time the Chief Justice promised to take steps to clean up the system.

"We appreciate the efforts of the Chief Justice in this direction but it does not seem to have yielded the desired results as revealed by the Anas exposé," said Vitus Azeem, Executive Director of GII.

The high number of judicial officials implicated points to a systemic problem that needs to be addressed urgently. The Judicial Council's findings and recommendations should be made public.

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MY BRIEF ESCAPADE IN THE LAND OF MANY OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Awelana Addah, Programmes Manager, GII

As I pen down these few words, I am still wondering if all the *furore* and anticipation surrounding the Second Leadership Institute's training in New York City is really over. It has come and gone within a twinkle of an eye.

I was fortunate to be one of the few Ghanaian women selected to participate in the Ghanaian Women Social Leadership programme facilitated by the New York University and funded by Banco Santander and Mujeres Por Africa.

The opportunity to travel and experience how CSOs deal with issues in other dispersions offered us a great incentive. Thus, when it was time to apply for a visa, a lot of excitement ensued with many challenges of booking and getting available dates as well as challenges with the internet connectivity since the process is electronic and internet-based. However, I must admit that I was spared the hustle because I had another class of visa on which I had travelled not too long ago. It was a great relief that I didn't have to go through the whole process again and I believe the decision of the organisers to allow me travel with my visa without having to go through the whole process again was apt and needs commendation.

Finally, here I am, at the famous JFK airport in New York with 13 other young Ghanaian women anxious but equally eager for what awaited us in this city everyone wants to visit. With great excitement, particularly with the great effort and meticulous preparations done by the NYU team, we expected to fully enjoy our sojourn. For the first timers, forest impressions of New York were not anything out of the ordinary. As we were driven to our hotel, one of us actually asked 'Is this America'?

This question, I assume was asked because we had some preconceived notions of America where everything was perfect and not New York where we could see imperfections like roads not too tidy and smooth.

The evening passed smoothly with our first orientation briefing as to what to expect and what the facilitators expected of us. By 7:00 o'clock the next morning, we were already fully prepared and waiting for our Chaperon to guide us on a 15 to 20-minute walk which was to become a daily routine if you wished to have breakfast. After breakfast, came church service and later a boat ride on the river to see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. On this visit, I began to wonder why, as a country, we are making so little use of the many untapped tourism resources and not improving on the existing ones such as the Kwame Nkrumah mausoleum, the many forts and castles as well as the waterfalls. To see a country like the US, which is already economically viable but yet bent on making more money from tourism, it occurred to me that Ghana needs, as a matter of urgency, to strategize on the best way forward for harnessing this great potential to mobilise revenues to facilitate the development of the country.

The training sessions were insightful and very thought provoking. Some of the sessions kept me thinking all night and even now I still think about them. One of the key takeaways from the sessions was the high level of integrity exhibited by both facilitators and NGOs and the trust that existed in their system. At Brotherhood/Sister Sol, a non-profit organization that focuses on youth development through leadership development and educational achievement, they had

rejected funding from the Government because they wanted them to do things which were against the values of the organization. I wondered how many civil society organizations will stand firm and stay true to their values. Another revealing thing is the sense of professionalism they attached to their work, a visit to Opportunity Network another NGO, brought this to bear on us, as students in the "Senior High Schools" had business cards recognising their internship status. There is, therefore, the need for us, as leaders to imbibe in our youth the attitude of professionalism and prepare them for the transformation of our society as they are the 'future leaders' and as President Barack Obama puts it 'Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek'.

I must confess that after the first day, I began to wonder if I could survive the long walks which were painful at first but I quickly overcame and really enjoyed them, particularly with the other women. These walks mostly were discretionary as one had several other alternatives including the bus and the subway. Again, I question if the Ghanaian was differently made? Why don't we have such fluid systems of transportation in my country? Why didn't I have a choice in deciding whether I needed a personal vehicle or not with the increasing traffic and its unintended consequences of wasting the productive hours of the day with vehicles tailgating in unending jams? I conclude that Ghana, and for that matter Africa, needs strong leaderships who will in turn direct our institutions to also function as those of America and many other developed countries. Again, I have the conviction that, with the two ingredients postulated in place, we, as a people will be able to fight and overcome the injustices of poverty, corruption and its consequence of continuous underdevelopment.

I conclude with Benjamin Franklin's quote, which says "Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning" It is my belief, therefore, that despite our challenges, all is not lost, the little right we all do for mother Ghana will collectively yield some sustained results in the future. We shall overcome!!!!

CORRUPTION REPORTING AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN EIGHT NEW SOCIAL AUDIT CLUBS

By Seyram Agbemenya



In 2014, Ghana Integrity Initiative received funding support from the Open Society for West Africa (OSIWA) to implement a new project aimed at building on the existing initiatives of social auditing and corruption reporting through its Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) to get citizens actively engaged and participating in local governance as a means of strengthening transparency and accountability in governance and service delivery. The project also seeks to sensitize the general public on the importance of corruption reporting as well as advocate for increased action towards corruption reports as a means to ensure low tolerance for corruption nationally to boost national efforts towards sustainable national development.

As part of this OSIWA supported project, aimed at empowering citizens to demand accountability and report corruption, GII undertook training workshops in eight districts to build the capacity of eight newly established Social Auditing Clubs (SACs) in the three northern regions of Ghana. These SACs, which are located in the Jirapa District, Wa Municipal and Sisala East District Assemblies in the Upper West Region, the Kassena Nankana East District, Builsa South District and Bawku West District Assemblies in the Upper East Region as well as the Kpandai District and Gonja Central District Assemblies in the Northern Region, were trained on the principles of effective social auditing.

These workshops were organised to, among others, further enhance the

capacity of the SACs in implementing and delivering effectiveness of their social auditing activities. The workshops also sought to build and enhance their capacity to effectively participate in local governance and engage key stakeholders necessary to improving service delivery and good governance at the local level. Through the workshops, the GII Programmes Team engaged with key local stakeholders in the various districts to garner their support for the SACs and ascertain their commitment to ensuring good governance locally. Some of the stakeholders engaged included the District Health administrations in Wa Municipal and Sisala East Districts, the Water and Sanitation Development Board of the Jirapa District as well as the various district assembly representatives in all the 8 districts. In all the districts, the stakeholders indicated their unwavering support for the SACs and their involvement in social auditing as they saw social auditing as a key tool for development.

The activity afforded the opportunity for the capacity of members of all the SACs to be built to effectively carry out social auditing. It also provided the platform to expose the various SAC executives to

the corruption reporting tools, including GII's ALAC and "Ipaidabrike" online corruption reporting platform to encourage the SACs to facilitate the reporting of all acts of corruption. The SACs were also entreated to encourage community members to report corruption by publicizing the corruption reporting tools in their community.

In the Jirapa and Bawku West districts, the one day training workshop was followed by a community sensitization program which aimed to enhance knowledge of participants on anti-corruption institutions and legislations including the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) and the Whistleblowers Act. The sensitization programmes were implemented in partnership with the respective district National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) offices, and provided the platform to engage with different community level stakeholders on corruption issues and the individual roles and commitment required if Ghana is to win the fight against corruption. The second part of the sensitization programs also provided the opportunity for all citizens in the respective districts to report any corruption related cases to the GII ALAC through a corruption complaints desk referred to as the 'Mobile ALAC' which was set up in the two districts. A few participants made some reports on corruption to the GII Team, which they referred to the ALAC lawyer for study and referral to the appropriate state institutions for action.



GII AND PARTNERS OFFER FREE COURSE ON CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE

Jacob Tetteh Ahuno-Programmes Officer



The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), local chapter of Transparency International (TI), is right now implementing a Governance and Finance Integrity for Africa Project under the REDD+ initiative.

REDD+ is a global effort by countries to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks – all in an attempt to bring down the amount of carbon dioxide emission into the atmosphere, the main cause for climate change.

The GII project being implemented in Ghana and in seven other TI African national chapters has as its overall objective, improving anti-corruption policy and practice in REDD+ finance and governance in Africa. The project seeks to strengthen citizens' engagement in and demand for transparent, accountable and non-corrupt REDD+ governance, finance, policy development and monitoring.

In connection with the project, GII has opened up collaborations with prominent Ghanaian educational institutions to introduce fee-free courses on climate change governance for some specific students. The institutions targeted by GII include the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR).

Since 2010, over US\$30 billion in public funding was spent in developing countries trying to reduce and slow down global warming and equip communities with the technology, infrastructure and knowledge to survive its impact. Combined with allocations from recipient countries' national budgets, multilateral funding of climate change is substantial. Furthermore, efforts to expedite investment in climate change management have led to a burgeoning of new bodies tasked with channelling, allocating and spending climate funds, which now overlap with older institutions performing similar functions. This complex and

fragmentary funding landscape complicates efforts to track financial flows and to ascertain who should be held accountable for decisions and results.

Nevertheless, recipient countries continue to need and demand climate change finance and eliminating it would be against the interest of the global community. Therefore, capacities must be developed at all levels to protect climate change investments. Those affected by climate change must have a strong voice in decisions that affect them; institutions at the national level should have access to relevant tools and support to assist their anti-corruption efforts. Civil society actors who are active in the field of corruption and climate change must be supported to be able to actively engage in issues of integrity around climate finance.

It is in the light of these that a greater understanding of the complex relationship between climate change and its finance is crucial.

The modules under the course are available online for free at www.courses.transparency.org. There is also a plan to include an offline version to be taught at the university campuses of the selected institutions. It is anticipated that this potential relationship will bring mutual benefits including training at zero cost for students, faculty and staff of collaborating institutions as well as enhance their image in anti-corruption work.

Lessons

Each module answers some specific questions:

- 1. Introduction to climate finance governance:** this introductory lesson focuses on climate finance and its multifarious dimensions. What is climate finance? Why do we need it and what are its sources? How is it disbursed and utilised?
- 2. Climate finance – corruption and solutions:** this lesson covers the perennial

issue of corruption and how to design tools to fight it. What is corruption? What forms does it manifest in climate change finance? What can be done to tackle it?

3. Building integrity in REDD+: this lesson focuses on specific corruption challenges and solutions for REDD+. What aspects of REDD+ make it vulnerable to corruption? What are the specific risks? What is already happening to address such risks and what more can be done? What role can you play to ensure REDD+ corruption risks are tackled?

Target groups

The three lessons have been designed with a broad audience in mind. As such, civil society, public sector actors, private sector actors and donors could gain from this course.

Learning objectives

Upon course completion, participants will be able to:

1. Explain why there is need for a greater focus on ensuring that climate finance is spent effectively.
2. Understand key climate finance terms, institutions, funds and distribution channels.
3. Explain the main elements of good governance.
4. Explain the main elements of corruption and how these may play a role in reducing the effectiveness of climate finance.
5. Select from a range of possible solutions to tackle corruption.
6. Identify main national challenges for ensuring good governance in climate finance.
7. Explain the main corruption challenges for REDD+ and how these may play a role

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Funeral Announcement

GII announces with deep regret the passing on of its Board member



Madam Augusta Sena Gbiano

on November 13 2015

THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Friday, January 22, 2016

7:00am Fillingpass-Christ the King Catholic Church (Opposite Flagstaff House)

9:00am Requiem Mass-Christ the King Catholic Church (Opposite Flagstaff House)

11:00am Brief Sitting-Christ the King Catholic Church (Opposite Flagstaff House)

12:00noon Conveyance of corpse to Kpando for burial

Saturday, January 23, 2016

9:00am Mass and Burial at Kpando

Sunday, January 31, 2016

9:00am Thanksgiving Mass-Christ the King Catholic Church

PARTICIPANTS DEMAND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE ANTI-CORRUPTION LEGISLATIONS

Elsie Addo, Assistant Programmes Officer



A group picture of participants at the sensitization workshop in the Akatsi South District

Corruption has been a major obstacle to Ghana's development effort since independence. As a result, the various governments the country has had have adopted several measures and interventions aimed at curbing the canker and ensuring a culture of transparency and accountability. With reports of increasing corruption cases over the years, the government has made strenuous efforts in anti-corruption initiatives to try to stem the growing menace to social and economic development. Apart from signing onto international conventions against corruption such as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the African Union Convention for Preventing and Combating Corruption and many more, Ghana is known to have passed several anti-corruption legislations, key among these being the Whistleblowers Act, 2006 (Act, 720) and the Financial Administration Act, 2003 (Act 653). Additionally, in July 2014, the Parliament of Ghana endorsed the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), a detailed framework setting out how to implement the country's anti-corruption campaign over the next ten (10) years. Also, the country has established a number of state accountability institutions with the mandate of implementing the anti-corruption agenda. In spite of the above measures, corruption continues to frustrate Ghana's developmental agenda.

Despite the numerous interventions by the government and anti-corruption organizations in the country, Ghana still remains below the average score of 50 of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI). This situation, therefore, requires a renewed, innovative and coordinated approach in the fight against corruption, involving all sectors of the Ghanaian society, including civil

society organizations, contributing through various initiatives all aimed at tackling the canker of corruption. One of such targeted initiatives is a project currently being implemented by the GII-led Consortium referred to as the "GII Consortium" made up of Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) and SEND-Ghana with funding support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project, called Accountable Democratic Institutions and Systems Strengthening (ADISS), is focused on strengthening civil society organizations and government institutions in the fight against corruption.

In a bid to boost the interest at grassroots levels, GII organized one-day sensitization workshops from July 31 to August 22, 2015 in ten (10) out of its seventeen (17) project districts. The sensitization workshops also served as a platform for the selection of an anti-corruption champions in each of the ten (10) districts to spearhead the fight against corruption in each of these districts.

The aim of these workshops was to educate citizens about the mandate of anti-corruption institutions, Ghana's anti-corruption legal framework, create awareness among participants on the costs and impacts of corruption on their lives and build the capacity of participants to identify and report corruption related cases to appropriate anti-corruption institutions.

The sensitization workshops brought together a total of 621 participants made up of 444 males and 177 females, including 24 PWDs and were organized by GII in collaboration with the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) at the district level.

Participants at these workshops included the Municipal and District Chief Executives and other officials from the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, the traditional authorities, Ghana Education Service, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, representatives of political parties, representatives of women's groups, youth groups, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ghana Audit Service, Ghana Police Service and the Social Auditing Clubs (SACs) as well as the media.

Facilitators took participants through presentations on the manifestations of corruption in the Ghanaian society, overview of the ADISS project and GII's Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre and the "ipaidabrike" reporting platform. The CHRAJ facilitators delivered the presentations on CHRAJ's mandate and that of the other state accountability institutions, the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) and the Whistleblowers Act, 2006 (Act 720).

Participation and interactions at the sessions showed a general appreciation of citizens' understanding of the enormity of the corruption challenge in Ghana. Where the MMCEs were available, they were kind enough to make welcome/opening remarks. For example, the District Chief Executive (DCE) for Atebubu – Amantin, Honourable Sampson Owusu Boateng, in his opening remarks, stated that, it is important for society to imbibe the right values in the children and work collectively in their socialization to ensure that society churns out responsible adults with integrity. He also noted that until citizens change their mindsets on corruption, it will be difficult to reduce the canker. One worrying observation he made was the lack of support for

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PARTICIPANTS DEMAND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFECTIVE ANTI - CORRUPTION LEGISLATIONS

committed political appointees willing to act against corruption who are usually prevented from doing so by the 'order from above' syndrome. This, he believed, affects their enthusiasm to change the norm for fear of retribution and loss of their positions. Participants identified some obstacles which must be addressed if the fight against corruption could be won; politicization of corruption issues, ineffective institutions and systems and the loss of our moral and social values from the homes to the society as a few of the challenges.

Some recommendations from the participants that cut across the districts included proposals of punitive measures for persons found culpable in corrupt acts devoid of partisan sentiments. Other ideas were incorporating anti - corruption in the basic school curriculum to be taught at all levels, and the use of community service to name and shame corrupt personalities in their communities. Additionally, participants advocated for legal reforms and intensive awareness raising campaigns as well as the introduction of innovative strategies like advanced technologies such as hidden cameras in offices and electronic ticketing, among others.

Major outcomes and highlights of the sensitization workshops were the introduction of the district SACs, GII's citizens' groups in the districts to the community and the selection of the anti -

corruption champions (1 from each district), after participants had been briefed about the criteria for selection. The anti-corruption champion is a volunteer community member who will spearhead the fight against corruption and work closely with the citizens' groups to promote anti-corruption reporting mechanisms through various forums. In all, ten anti-corruption champions were selected for the ten districts where the sensitization workshops were held.

At the end of the workshops, participants lauded GII's initiative and commitment to help reduce corruption from the local to the national level and the

project initiative to cost the impact of corruption on the citizenry. Participants across the project districts unanimously called for the effective implementation of the anti - corruption legislations to curb corruption in the country. Additionally, participants believed frequent capacity building programmes for staff of the state accountability institutions to empower them to tackle corruption in the country is the right approach. Finally, participants called for the extension of the ADISS project to other parts of the country to empower other citizens to demand transparency and accountability from their duty bearers.



Mrs. Addah, GII's Programmes Manager with the elected Akatsi North and South anti - corruption champions and the NCCE Directors of the Akatsi North and South districts

GII AND PARTNERS OFFER FREE COURSE ON CLIMATE CHANGE GOVERNANCE

in reducing the effectiveness of REDD+ efforts.

8. Understand the scope of actions already underway to protect REDD+ from corruption.

9. Identify possible measures to tackle corruption in REDD+ and the role they can play in these.

Registration

To register for one or more of the lessons in this course, please visit www.courses.transparency.org

At this website, you will be able to create an account and will be given further instructions about how to take the modules.

Key facts

Time requirements: The total length of the three lessons is approximately 12 hours. The course is open all the time. The learner can set their own pace.

Costs: Participation in the three courses is free.

Languages: Currently the courses are

available in English and French.

Recognition: For each course completed, participants will receive a certificate of completion.

Further contacts

For more information on the free course, contact:

Jacob Tetteh Ahuno
Programmes Officer GII
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UNSOLICITED FEEDBACK OR TOO DISTANT FROM THE PUBLIC?

Linus Atarah, Project Coordinator, Open Governance Project

When John Kwame walked with me into the premises of Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) on a late Friday afternoon in August, he had come only to protect his interests and not get entangled with a political debate. Our cars had been involved in a passionate kiss on the Spintex Road earlier on that day. He was still suspicious I might not stand by the pledges made at the police station so he wanted to know where my office was in case I came up with other ideas.

“What kind of work does your organisation do?”, he asked, soon as he saw our signboard. The three words: Ghana Integrity Initiative, apparently did not convey sufficient meaning. I explained that we are the local chapter of Transparency International in Ghana dedicated to fighting public sector corruption worldwide. He stared at me with poker face, clearly not impressed.

“So, you people claim to be fighting corruption and yet the situation in the country is still the way it is, and even getting worse all the time?”, he asked with indignation.

“Didn't you hear what the policemen were complaining about? That is what is going on in this country” – he was referring to two police officers who were pouring out volumes of frustrations they face in the Ghana Police Service as we drove from the scene of the accident towards the police station.

The top police hierarchy, they complain, is not there to do what the law says, but something entirely on the contrary. They recounted how, whenever a junior ranking officer takes a principled stand with regards to the law, they are made to succumb to illegalities by more senior ranking officers, who are usually ultimately traced to political influence from superiors above.

“You see that motorcyclist riding out there without a helmet?”, one of them asked while pointing a finger. “If I decide to arrest him right now, within an hour, there will be a voice bellowing from the top demanding his immediate release”, said the junior police officer. Very often such voices usually come from politicians or people connected with power interfering with police work, said

the junior police officers as we cruised past a group of police officers camped at a crossroad. They did nothing to ease the traffic that was slowly building up.

“We are powerless and it is all because politicians have taken full control over the police”, interjected another junior officer who, for obvious reasons, wanted to remain anonymous.

The police officers openly complained that the President has arbitrarily extended the Inspector General of Police's (IGP) retirement for another three-year stretch even though the constitution only allows for two years if it is found necessary.

“Such a person,[the IGP], does not owe allegiance to the police but does what the politicians want; in fact, he does not care what kind of police service we have in this country because he doesn't have to consult with police officers”, the worms kept tumbling out of the can.

Given this situation, John Kwame wanted to see more action from anti-corruption organisations. He in particular was incensed at CHRAJ, questioning the lack of concrete evidence from their work in the midst of all of this rot of corruption sloshing around in the country.

I informed him that as part of the anti-corruption fight GII does have a toll-free telephone number to which citizens can call to report on corruption cases to be taken for investigation. His response came in a rapid succession of questions like firing a machine gun. “Where is that number?” “If there is such a number, why is it that I don't know about it?” “Why is it not on billboards all over the city?” “Why is it not announced over the radio stations, on television or placed on signboards by the roadside?”

At that point I must admit he caught me with my pants down and I did concede to him that he had a point about the toll-free number – 0800 100 25 – which should have been made more visible. I couldn't give a self-defeatist explanation that it costs money to have it announced over the radio and on television very frequently. However, he had a preconceived view that as an NGO we have so much money some of the dollar notes were even sticking out of the bank

accounts where they are stored, so he wouldn't have any of that as an explanation.

Not only that. He went on, “You people are driving big fancy cars and receiving fat salaries, yet we don't see what you are doing”.

I tried to explain that doing research was part of GII's work and that without research, we may not understand the full dynamics of corruption and effectively reduce it. By that time Mr. John Kwame was already marching to his car. After the exchange I stood for a while on the stairs with a gaping mouth. What a feedback, I thought.

The strictures of Mr. Kwame of the inability of anti-corruption organisations to stem the tide of widespread corruption may be valid to some extent. Public anger over corruption is gradually rising to the stratosphere, accentuated by the most recent revelations of alleged corruption in the Judiciary. In this light, it is not entirely unreasonable that some members of the public are venting their anger on the institutions who have been declared to be in the forefront of this fight.

In order to deflect this flak, it is important that the public be adequately informed about the constraints faced by anti-corruption organisations and institutions. For instance, most of the public are unaware that government anti-corruption institutions such as CHRAJ, which Mr. Kwame singled out, is starved of funding and cannot, therefore, implement most of its programmes.

On the part of the civil society organisations, it is essential for the public to be informed of the whole gamut of challenges they face, including inadequate funding from donors due to a general scale back of foreign development assistance. Perhaps, CSOs should do a little bit of “PR” to draw the public closer to the work they do.

Can I suggest something? An annual event solely organised by CSOs to “sell their wares” to the public, so to say, along similar lines like “Panafest” or “Gifex” which were done in the 1980s. Believe me, I have seen it work perfectly elsewhere and it could also work, even in Ghana.

GII VENTURES INTO WOMEN, LAND AND CORRUPTION

Elsie Addo, Assistant Programmes Officer



A group picture of participants at the Risk Assessment training Programme

“No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you. We are victims of evil customs. It is a crime against humanity that our women are shut up within the four walls of the houses as prisoners. There is no sanction anywhere for the deplorable condition in which our women have to live.” —

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Women who form majority of Africa's population lack access to land for the purposes of agriculture production and other socio-economic activities. All these are partly due to cultural and historical inferences and abuse of women's rights to land accessibility. According to Transparency International's (TI) 2009 Global Corruption Barometer survey, nearly four out of five people in low-income countries considered corruption among land authorities to be a very serious problem, and land officials were cited as the third highest affected by bribery after police and judiciary worldwide.

In this regard, the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) with funding support from the Friends of Transparency International is implementing the Women, Land and Corruption in Africa (WLCA) Project. The main goal of the project is to make a contribution to improved livelihoods and enhanced security of tenure for women and their families adversely affected by corrupt practices in land administration and land deals through equitable and fair access to, use of, and control over land.

As part of the process, and because the land sector is a difficult area to deal with GII organised a risk assessment

and mitigation training for its staff and the Civil Society Coalition on Land (CICOL) to increase understanding on the issue of women, land and corruption in Ghana whilst enhancing capacity to design and implement projects which respond to women's concerns about corruption in land administration and land deals. The risk assessment and mitigation training was held in Accra in September 2015. A total number of 28 participants made up 10 GII staff and 18 CICOL members from the Western, Central, Ashanti, Eastern and Greater Accra regions attended the risk assessment training program.

Participants were taken through strategic planning exercises, including context, stakeholder and gender analysis as well as frameworks for identifying short-term and medium-term measures that could strengthen capacity to mitigate risks. Mrs Mary Awelana Addah, Programmes Manager of GII, in her opening remarks, indicated that GII has over the years worked in different sectors of society aimed at promoting transparency and reducing corruption. She further mentioned that GII is currently implementing the WLCA project with a focus on the land sector particularly to help identify the relationship between women and land ownership and acquisition as well as identify gaps related to transparency and corruption and correct impediments in the way women acquire land. She indicated that the training would provide participants an opportunity to work with the tool developed by the TI intended to aid practitioners gain the requisite skills to develop risk assessment tools for their respective organisations for their own

field experience.

Mr. Michael Okai, Project Coordinator for Climate Change, GII, who also coordinates this project was the moderator for the workshop. For the purposes of partners, he gave a brief background on the WLCA project. He mentioned that the project was a Transparency International (TI) coordinated initiative being implemented by TI chapters in Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Uganda.

He indicated that the project aims at understanding the issue of corruption as it impacts land rights of women in specifically Ghana, Uganda, and Zimbabwe whilst bringing the issue to the top of the agenda of national, regional and international land governance discussions.

The WLCA project also seeks to conduct a research on corruption in land administration and land deals in the target countries where TI would network and advocate recognition and integration of women's land rights and related anti-corruption activities in development and governance projects. The project will also conduct a baseline study to help gather information on court cases involving corruption and women as part of conscious efforts to mainstream women and corruption issues in land transactions and deals whilst leveraging the discussions and recognition of corruption issues affecting women in their access to, use of, and control over land at national, regional and international forums.

In his presentation, Dr. Eric Yeboah, a Lecturer and Research Fellow at the Department of Land Economy, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi and one of the partners for the WLCA project said land remains a critical asset in the socio-economic development of every country. He said access to land is a human right issue and that unless women have equal access to land, it would continue to be very serious to the economy of most African countries, many of whom rely on agriculture production as their national backbone. He, therefore, advised participants to be mindful when negotiating in land issues for the vulnerable, especially women, in the communities as they would face a number

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GII VENTURES INTO WOMEN, LAND AND CORRUPTION

of risks from various stakeholders which could prevent them from seeking justice for the people.

Nonetheless, Dr. Yeboah stressed the need to build partnerships with traditional authorities, family heads, formal institutions and the media, as well as creating a sense of community ownership, as various social advocates work to ensure that the rights of individuals are not abused or oppressed.

After the presentations, participants were grouped into four groups to deliberate on a risk assessment scenario based on historical, cultural, institutional and political risks. This was to enable them have a better understanding of the types of risks that they might face in implementing the project and similar projects for their organizations. At the end of the discussions, one person was selected from each group to deliver a five-minute presentation on the results of their group discussion.

Dr. Yeboah, the consultant for the project then took participants through a simple tool for risk assessment and mitigation. The tool is to serve as a guide for participants to identify possible sources of risks and the required strategies to mitigate such risks. In conclusion, he advised participants to be cautious of their dealings with the relevant stakeholders in land deals and land administration at the local level to avoid causing any conflicts.

INTEGRITY SPOTLIGHT

RALPH WALDO EMERSON | PHILOSOPHY, POETRY, NONFICTION

MAY 25, 1803 - APRIL 27, 1882

“Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.”



MONEY QUOTES

VOLTAIRE | PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE & FICTION, HISTORY

NOVEMBER 21, 1694 - MAY 30, 1778

“Don't think money does everything or you are going to end up doing everything for money.”

CORRUPTION QUOTES

RON PAUL | NONFICTION, POLITICS | AUGUST 20, 1935

“When one gets in bed with government, one must expect the diseases it spreads.”





“If you want to stay corrupt you should be prepared to face the consequences.”

**AKERA MUNA
CHAIR, IACC COUNCIL**

PUTRAJAYA DECLARATION: ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST IMPUNITY

The 16th International Anti-Corruption Conference ended today with a joint declaration by participants to adopt a zero tolerance policy against impunity in the fight against corruption.

“We declare the need for numerous actions to prevent corruption, to stop corruption, to make sure corrupt acts are not repeated and to ensure the corrupt not only feel the full force of the law, but fully repay their debts to society,” the declaration stated.

“In Brasilia (where the IACC was last held, in 2012), we said it was up to us to send a clear message: We are watching those who act with impunity and we will ensure that they don't get

away with it,” it went on.

The three-day conference, which began on Sept 2, was held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre. The conference was declared closed by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar.

The declaration further added that after three days of constructive debates at the conference, the delegates are committing themselves to working together to stop what it called “the rapid spread of corruption”.

“Together we have the power to bring impunity to an end.”

The document further added that it takes courage and collective action to ensure that those with power who commit crimes are brought to justice.

“People in government, civil society, the private sector, young people and social innovators must join to build innovative anti-corruption, transparency and accountability solutions to end impunity and corruption.”

“If the powerful and corrupt are allowed to escape justice, we risk the collapse of the rule of law and the ultimate disintegration of society. We risk losing the fight against corruption. We need a culture of integrity in all sectors of society to achieve sustained, positive change.”

It called for people with integrity to take action together “against impunity that enables the spread of grand corruption” and said there is no either-or relationship between systemic reforms and no impunity.

“A lack of reform will only encourage the corrupt.”

More than 1,200 delegates from over 130 countries took part in the conference.

MALAYSIAN ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION, PUTRAJAYA, SEPTEMBER 4, 2015

http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/the_putrajaya_declaration



PUTRAJAYA DECLARATION: ZERO TOLERANCE FOR IMPUNITY

Nearly 1,200 people from 130 countries gathered in Putrajaya, Malaysia to discuss one of the world's biggest challenges: how impunity enables the spread of corruption.

Delegates came together to find the most effective strategies to stop impunity and hold to account those who benefit from the abuse of power, secret deals and bribery.

Governments plagued by cronyism, leaders who rewrite constitutions to extend term limits, fragile democracies captured by special interests create a climate where

corruption flourishes and impunity prevails. Impunity feeds grand corruption: the abuse of high-level power that benefits the few at the expense of the many, causing serious and widespread harm to individuals and society.

When the International Anti-Corruption Conference last met in Brasilia in 2012, the rallying cry was

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“Don't let them get away with it!” – a statement that still rings true today for those who seek to stop the thieves, criminals and others who steal national wealth, enable organised crime to flourish and provide safe haven for tax evaders and hiding for terrorists.

Today around the world we see that corruption manifests itself at the highest levels of political power and business. It is essential to ensure that investigative and judicial bodies remain independent and autonomous. It is essential that threats against civil society be stopped and the voice of the people encouraged.

Now more than ever we must all come together to promote integrity and take action in a concerted effort against the abuse of entrusted power.

In politics, in education, in business, in the media, in sport, at the national level and in global institutions, corruption denies people a voice. It worsens lives and muzzles justice.

It takes courage and collective action to ensure that those with power who commit crimes are brought to justice. People in government, civil society, the private sector, young people and social innovators must join to build innovative anti-corruption, transparency and accountability solutions to end impunity and corruption.

If the powerful and corrupt are allowed to escape justice we risk the collapse of the rule of law and the ultimate disintegration of society. We risk losing the fight against corruption.

We need a culture of integrity in all sectors of society to achieve sustained, positive change.

We need people with integrity taking action together against impunity that enables the spread of grand corruption. There is no either-or relationship between systemic reforms and no impunity, a lack of reform will only encourage the corrupt.

In Putrajaya we declared the need for numerous actions to prevent corruption, to stop corruption, to make sure corrupt acts are not repeated and to ensure the corrupt not only feel the full force of the law but fully repay their debts to society.

Asset recovery is essential because it restores the trust of the people and constitutes a sanction that reduces the incentive for corruption and at the same time compensates for the damage caused.

Stronger legal frameworks and an enhanced rule of law creates more equal access to justice which is an essential component of citizens' trust in the functioning of the state. Returning stolen assets to their original purposes, often serving to compensate victims also restore peoples' trust in the justice system.

Some key themes from the 16th International Anti-Corruption Conference

Participants focused on the many ways we can act together to ensure integrity and stop corruption. Their recommendations included:

- Efforts to recover stolen assets are as important as making sure there is no safe haven for the corrupt or a way for them to enjoy illicit wealth. It should be made impossible for the corrupt to use diplomatic passports and investor's visa programmes to avoid justice.

- The G20 and non-governmental organisations have called on countries to impose travel restrictions on individuals suspected of corruption, believing that, if sufficient guarantees are put in place, these measures can act as a sanction as well as disincentive. These restrictions must be enforced so that the corrupt cannot easily travel to expand their illegal activities, as well as buy luxury goods and real estate.

- Professionals – such as bankers, lawyers, real estate agents, accountants – who fail to exercise adequate due diligence, thus allowing the movement of illicit funds across borders must themselves be sanctioned.

- The corrupt should not be able to use secret companies to hide their wealth. G20 leaders adoption of principles on beneficial ownership in Brisbane was the starting point and now G20 countries must take the lead.

- Banks should make every effort to comply with anti-money laundering laws and prevent money laundering from flourishing, while other sectors such as the accountancy and the legal professions should stop facilitating corruption. The international anti-money laundering legal framework is inadequate and should be strengthened to ensure more robust control and punishment.

- Open Contracting should become a key tool for all governments. It is relevant across all sectors of government, from education, health to infrastructure that ensures governments receive value for money, citizens are able to participate in the decision making process, and allow fair competition for business.

- Grand corruption should become a crime of international law. This will enable international institutions and

alliances to prosecute offenders, as well as develop additional international mechanisms to apprehend, prosecute, judge, and sentence those who have committed crimes of grand corruption.

- In the context of the discussions, the delegates called for the full independence and autonomy of all anti-corruption bodies.

In Brasilia we said it is up to all of us to send a clear message: We are watching those who act with impunity and we will ensure that they don't get away with it.

As we leave Malaysia after three days of constructive debates, we commit ourselves to working together to stop the rapid spread of corruption. Together we have the power to bring impunity to an end.

http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/the_putrajaya_declaration

NEW MILESTONE IN FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL CORRUPTION

By [Frank Vogl](#)

On 25 September 2015, the world's leaders assembled at the UN in New York and made a historic statement in approving 17 key objectives to focus actions across the globe to bring the core strengths of our civilisation to its real potential.

The UN General Assembly adopted new global goals, the "[Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)" as the drivers of policies, programmes and projects for national and multilateral institutions of government to 2030.

The goals embrace ending absolute poverty, securing the rights of women, protecting the environment, and establishing justice for all. For the first time the overwhelming majority of the world's leaders have publicly recognised that the crucial objectives of attaining [sustainable development in all its manifestations is not possible without explicitly acting against](#)

[corruption](#) – this is stressed in the [16th of the SDGs](#).

As I read through the official UN statements, I thought back to a story recounted several years ago in a speech by the former Nigerian finance minister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, where [she spoke](#) about Rose, a 21-year-old university student in her country.

Ngozi said, "Rose, from a poor rural family, could not purchase the series of class notes sold by her lecturer to students as part of the reading material for her class. When she explained that she couldn't pay she was asked to make up with other favours which she refused. The failing grade she was given was instrumental in her withdrawal from the university which put an end to her higher education. An individual and an entire family lost their hope and pathway to escape poverty."

This story embodies so much that is wrong and what the SDGs seek to address – the plight of the very poor, the discrimination against women, the obstacles to education for girls, the absolute lack of justice available to so many people, and the impunity that too many people in power enjoy that enables them to pursue corrupt activities for their personal gain.

The crimes of corruption are not abstract issues. Every time an official steals from the public purse, then someone suffers. Every time an official acts as a villain, then there is a victim. There are tens of millions of young people like Rose. They are the victims of extortion. They have been cheated of their rights. They and their families, through no fault of their own, have had their lives wrecked by officials who care only about enriching themselves.

The SDGs did not just happen. Civil society groups of all kinds and from many nations campaigned tirelessly over the last couple of years to ensure that their issues found their place on this document. When it came to Goal 16 on justice, [Transparency International](#) was among those at the forefront in explaining that without a

far greater international effort to end impunity and curb corruption, none of the other goals on the SDG list can be attained.

Goal 16 reads: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." One of [the key targets](#) incorporated under Goal 16 reads: "Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms."

Over the past 20 years, a series of regional and global conventions have been agreed that pledge governments to act against corruption. The activity culminated in 2004 when the UN Convention Against Corruption was finalised. These have been important actions, yet each has tended to see corruption fighting as an end in itself and not as a crucial key to efforts to end absolute poverty, to counter climate change and environmental destruction, to reduce violence and to strengthen the cause of peace.

Without vigilant anti-corruption actions, for example, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights will remain hollow in many countries, just as democracy will remain an illusion for billions of the world's citizens.

By entwining anti-corruption and the quest for justice within its very fabric, the SDGs can represent the realisation of the hopes of all good people. The SDGs amount to a vision of a far better, more human, world where people everywhere can live in dignity.

The coming into force of the SDGs, scheduled for 1 January 2016, will test whether world leaders mean to ensure that the goals are more than mere words on a declaration. For civil society organisations like Transparency International the SDGs offer an enormous opportunity to hold the feet of the world's leaders to the fire, to consistently and publicly remind them of their pledges and to demand actions on a scale and with an impact that builds a better world.