

THE EYE



ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2

April, 2002



ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION
INTEGRITY CLUBS - WESTERN AREA SCHOOLS

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THE MANDATE OF A.C.C.

The object for the establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission is to investigate instances of alleged or suspected corruption and to take necessary steps to eradicate or suppress such corrupt practices.

The functions of the Commission are:-

- (a) To examine the practices and procedures of Government Ministries, Departments and other Public Bodies and to try and revise those practices and procedures which in the opinion of the Commissioner may lead to corrupt practices.
- (b) To instruct, advise and assist any person or authority on ways in which corrupt practices may be reduced or eliminated.
- (c) To educate the public against the evils of corruption.
- (d) To enlist and foster public support in combating corruption.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



Mr. Valentine T. Collier
The Commissioner

Much has been spoken and written about the Commission's activities and wide ranging views expressed - some positive and encouraging, others outrightly negative and discouraging.

The ACC sincerely welcome such free and open expressions, which is evidence that the Commission has been creating an

impact on society.

I must in the above regard give the assurance that all views/opinions expressed are taken seriously by the ACC, and have over the months served to guide the directions and activities of this young institution.

The Commission will continue to encourage and welcome opinions of all shades, since the public which is an integral part of Civil Society, has a significant role to play in the continued existence of the ACC whilst simultaneously serves as the judges of its successes

and/or shortcomings in the future.

The second edition of 'The Eye' is now being published to keep you, the public, our most valued partners in the fight against corruption, informed of development.

I must in closing mention that this exercise should not be taken as a 'one way traffic' venture. It should and must be a 'two-way' process.

Inputs in the form of your comment on contents, presentation etc and if need be contributions, are most welcomed.

EDITORIAL



Frederick Bobor James
(Editor in-Chief)

It is some six months now since the maiden issue of THE EYE, Newsletter of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), was published. I surmise that our readers who enjoyed the first issue are looking forward to the second.

In our last issue focus was placed on the factors that led to the setting up of the Commission, the formation process and the various speeches that were delivered at its Formal Launching Ceremony.

Articles in this issue cover activities undertaken by the Commission in its three Departments—Investigation, Prevention and Community Relations - since its inception in 2000.

The Deputy Commissioner's article discusses the sticky issue of gift, and tries to draw a line between gifts that are of customary nature and those that have the tendency to corrupt public officials.

EDITORIAL TEAM



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Frederick Bobor James



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Desmond R.E. Johnson
Ivan A.S. Thomas



EDITORIAL ADVISERS

Valentine T. Collier
Brendan Gibb-Gray
Mrs. Neneh Dabo
James F. Kanyako



COMPUTER OPERATOR/DESIGNER

Mrs. Eustacia O. Kabia

There are two articles on coalition building. One looks at the prospect of working with civil society and other groups in the fight against corruption, while the other talks about using the school system to maximize the Commission's effort in reducing corruption in the country. The latter talks about two approaches in this drive - use of curriculum material and setting up of Integrity Clubs in schools.

The article on corruption prevention presents the process the Department uses to prevent corruption from happening in Public Institutions, and provides a list of institutions it has covered so far.

There is a part two of our fictitious article titled **OUR INFORMANTS' DIARY**. Written in a racy style, the article depicts the dilemma of an imaginary informant who attempts to report a voucher and squandergate operating in her Department to the Commission. There are poems, a joke and other interesting articles. The newsletter will also update readers on cases investigated and the various stages they have passed through from October 2001 - April 2002.

On behalf of the Commission, I want to wish our readers pleasant reading and to encourage them to send comments and articles to the Editor-in-Chief, Anti-Corruption Commission, Cathedral House, 3 Gloucester Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, email: gbam-bor@yahoo.com.

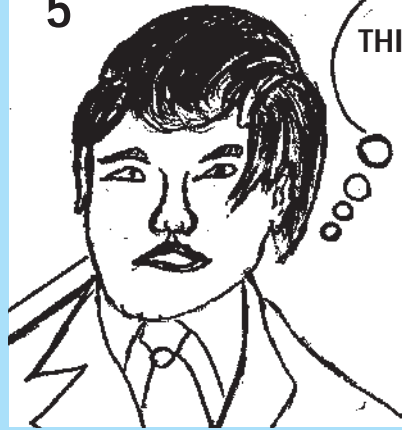
We also want to use this medium to appeal to our readers to report corrupt practices to the Commission. As one of the articles succinctly put it, the Eye, which symbolizes the Commission, is the eye of every Sierra Leonean.

THE EYE

1



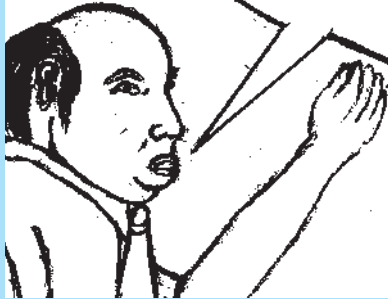
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THIS IS A GOOD DEAL WITH THE ...

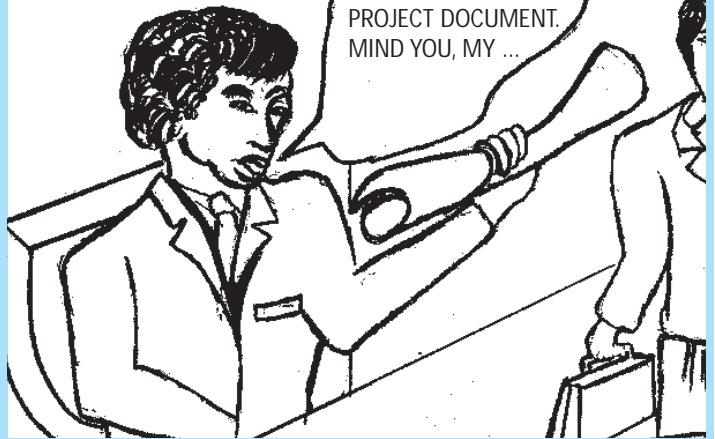
THE YAI DE WATCH

2



I HAVE WORKED AS A PUBLIC OFFICIAL FOR 25 YEARS, I COULD NOT BOAST OF

6



HERE, THE CHEQUE & PROJECT DOCUMENT. MIND YOU, MY ...

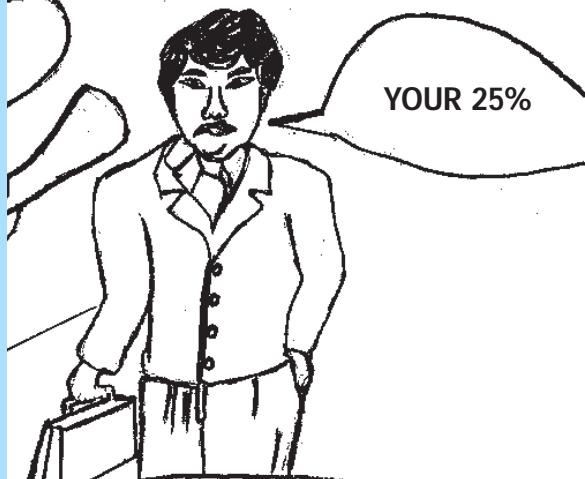
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I WILL MAKE USE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY

HEY, USD 500,000 CONTRACT TO PURCHASE ...?

7



YOUR 25%

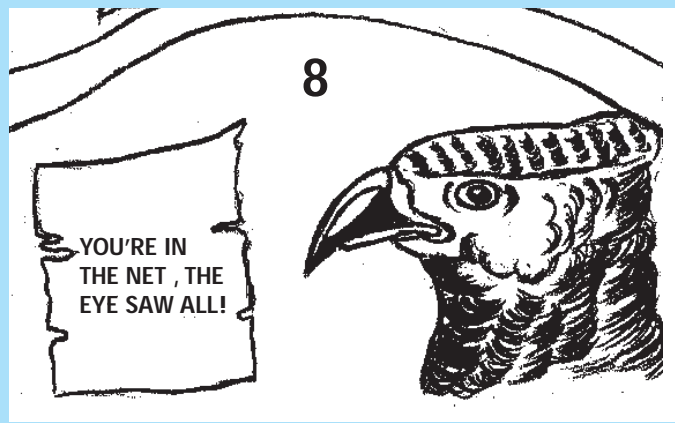
I'M SENT BY THE PA FOR 25% COMMISSION BEFORE ...

4



AS LONG AS THE PA IS INVOLVED I'LL ...

8



YOU'RE IN THE NET, THE EYE SAW ALL!

IS THE ACCEPTANCE OF A GIFT CORRUPTION?

BY: BRENDAN GIBB-GRAY DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION



Mr. Brendan Gibb-Gray
Deputy Commissioner, ACC

DEFINITIONS

Politicians, Public Officials and indeed the general public might be interested in the answer to the above captioned question. Since anti-corruption initiatives have begun in various West African countries there is some confusion with regard to 'gifts, bribery and corruption'. The Anti-Corruption Act of 2000 places emphasis on two main points that must be proved in order that a person(s) charged with corruption can be convicted. The essential elements are (1)'Performing or abstaining from performing any act in connection with his/her public duty', and (2)'the solicitation

or acceptance of any advantage.' Put simply, this means corruption occurs when 'public office is abused for private gain'. Advantage is defined to include, 'loans, fees, rewards, property, commissions, employment, GIFTS or any other benefit'. The scope of this interpretation is wide and covers anything of value. It will therefore immediately be seen that for someone to say, that because something was a gift might not exclude him from the possibility of being prosecuted for corruption.

EXAMPLES FROM GHANA

There have been a couple of interesting cases in Ghana, where President Kufuor is determined to implement his policy of 'zero tolerance of corruption'. In the first case the Minister of Sports was found in possession of a huge sum of money allegedly to pay as a 'bonus' to the national soccer team following their unexpected win against the Sudan national team.

The Minister later claimed that the money had been stolen from a bag in his possession. He was prosecuted and the court did not believe his defence, he was convicted and sacked.

The second case again involved senior soccer officials in Ghana. In this case a state governor allegedly gave \$25,000.00 as a 'gift' to officials. Whilst the prosecution was unable to establish that the payment was connected to corruption, the officials said the money was a 'donation' to the federation. They were unable to show that the money had been received in the normal and everyday business of the federation therefore it was not reflected in the federation's accounts. Because President Kufuor does not tolerate even the suggestion of corrupt activity by Public Officials, all the officials involved were sacked.

He has taken a 'no nonsense' approach to corrupt activity and sleaze, which is leading to the restoration of confidence in the Government and its officials.

GIFT (contd from Page 7)

PUBLIC TRUST

Public Officials have tremendous power and responsibility and must enjoy the full trust of the public. The best way to maintain this trust is for all dealings between them and business contacts to be open to scrutiny and audit.

Doing their public duty should not be dependent on receiving an advantage of any description from any person. Public officials must learn to say No to graft. Additionally, the practice of accepting gifts, places the country's poor at a terrible disadvantage and conceals 'vested interests'.

In Sierra Leone Public Officials are by law prohibited from accepting any form of advantage or gift in connection with their official duties. H.E. The President's special permission is required for a gift to be accepted. His permission is deemed to be granted in relation to the acceptance of a gift of customary nature by Paramount Chiefs and recognized as appropriate by custom. According to (Section 8(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act), Public Officials commit an offence, when they fail to do, or not do something, which is their duty to do. This also includes using 'influence'. Although in a later sub-section of the Act the offence is complete once the gift is solicited or accepted. When undertaking an investigation ACC officials are always instructed to establish what was the intention and purpose of the giving or receiving the bribe. These elements are the nub of corruption.

POLICY OF OPENNESS

The ACC has a policy of openness in regard to any gift or advantage offered to our staff and we encourage them to report any approach that might end up in them being compromised. In fact it is a disciplinary offence (and sometimes a criminal offence!) for our staff not to report instances where a gift or other advantage is offered. It should be remembered that even the asking for, or accepting of 'transport money' comes within the definition of an advantage and makes any Public Official liable to prosecution under the terms of Section 8(2) of the Act.

We strongly recommend that others follow our lead and discourage colleagues from accepting any form of advantage. All Government Ministries are invited to consider the introduction of a 'Gift Register' where members of staff can record instances and the circumstances under which they were offered any 'advantage'. Public Officials should have the confidence to discuss with their senior managers the proper action in cases of doubt or uncertainty.

Individual Ministers, Parliamentarians and Public Officials should open a debate on their responsibilities to disclose business interests and make an honest and accurate declaration of assets. As senior managers in the Civil Service debate the introduction of a Code of Ethics, discussion of these issues is timely.

In the interest of openness and transparency all donations to political parties in Sierra Leone are made public. Whilst some individuals may wish their donation to remain confidential, organizations and groups that financially support one party or the other should put their financial contributions into the public domain. Political parties in turn should produce audited accounts showing all such donations.

Openness and accountability are major weapons in the fight against corruption. Politicians and others in public positions should use this opportunity to introduce systems and procedures that aid transparency and provide an audit trail. In this way, Public Servants will begin to regain the trust and confidence of the people they serve.

ADVANTAGES OF ZERO TOLERANCE

There are other advantages to a policy of zero tolerance on corruption. Foreign investment and aid are vital in the recovery of economic activity. For these processes to begin, overseas investors, donors and traders must have confidence in politicians and Public Officials' determination to fight the evils of corruption on all fronts. Investors will bring their money back to this country if they see progress towards the introduction of open and accountable systems. However

money and investors are 'cowards', they will not invest or stay in unstable and corrupt environments. Therefore, Government and the Public Service must be unequivocal in their determination to fight corruption and uphold the rule of law in all parts of Sierra Leone.

The acceptance of bribes, gifts and other dishonest inducements, are sometimes seen as necessary for survival in a country where salaries are low. Temptation should be resisted. Salaries will increase as economic activity begins and business confidence is restored. The corrupt sometimes kid themselves into believing that because no one gets hurt, corruption is a victimless crime. The exact opposite is true, every corrupt act means one less Leone to spend on health, education and the infrastructure, which is to the detriment of every single Sierra Leonean. All sorts of explanations and justifications are given by the corrupt, but dishonest activity must be ruled out, if all the people are to share in the future of the new Sierra Leone.

CONCLUSION

Nothing that has been said above affects the long-standing tradition of family members and friends exchanging gifts and presents in the normal course of the celebration of birthdays and festivals. However, Public Officials must be on their guard against unsolicited gifts or other advantages offered to them.

They should ask themselves, why has this offer been made? What am I expected to do on behalf of the giver? Do I have the confidence to inform my manager that an offer has been made or a gift accepted? In all circumstances, openness will make the suspicion that something has been offered or received corruptly less likely.

Therefore the answer to the question, 'is the acceptance of a gift corruption?' lies in the circumstances of the giving or accepting. Openness inhibits corruption, secrecy indicates its existence! The issues raised in this article should become the focus of a national debate.

FORMING COALITION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER GROUPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

By Frederick Bobor James

INTRODUCTION

From the time the Anti-Corruption Commission started operating formally in August 2000, the Community Relations Department of the Commission has been engaged in intensive community education programme, using various strategies.

Radio and Television were the channels most frequently used from the outset to disseminate anti-corruption messages to the rest of the country. The Department used the nation's only TV station, and six radio stations--two in Freetown (the capital city), one at Mile 91 (in the North), two in Bo (in the South) and one in Kenema (in the East), in doing so - employing activities such as jingles, discussions, phone-ins and soap operas.

The Department has also used other strategies in its efforts to take anti-corruption messages to the wider Sierra Leone community. It is in the process of developing curriculum materials for upper primary schools on Ethics and Corrupt practices, and has set up pilot Integrity Clubs in three Secondary Schools: Government Model Secondary School, Sierra Leone Grammar School and St. Helena Secondary School. With time, the clubs will be replicated in secondary schools throughout the country. In addition, the Department holds sensitisation meetings with the grassroots, prints a newsletter, and has printed and distributed/displayed educational materials such as posters, T-shirts and billboards.

Early this year, the Community Relations Department started to coalesce with civil society and other groups in the fight to reduce the level of corruption in the country. This article sets out to discuss the rationale, process and benefits of the coalition.

WHY COALITION?

Like most developing countries, Sierra Leone is 'neck-deep' in corruption. Most Sierra Leoneans do not see anything wrong in being corrupt, because corruption had been legalized by a former head of state by the saying 'where a cow is tethered, there it should graze'.

Corruption is complex and difficult to fight. In Sierra Leone, when the Anti-Corruption Bill was enacted in Parliament in 2000, the reaction of most was that, 'It will not work'. The sceptics have a very strong point. Without supporting them, the fact remains that attempts at trying to curb corruption in the country had failed woefully. These attempts have not had the political will, and the support of civil society groups. In fact, the concept civil society was a novelty in the country at the time.

The vogue in the fight against this cancerous malaise, corruption, which is plaguing countries across the globe, locally and internationally, is coalition building. The Laurentian Seminar Report (2000) said that corruption is not a monolithic force that can be addressed by one-dimensional solution, nor can it be controlled on a national basis alone.

The survey report of **National Perception and Attitude Towards Corruption in Sierra Leone** conducted in 2000, before the Commission commenced its work, showed that 95.6 of the respondents were aware that corruption was rampant in the country, affecting most Government Departments and Quasi-government institutions. The Community Relations Department is aware that to succeed in fighting such widespread corruption, it needs to join forces with other well meaning institutions, particularly civil society. The Department is conscious of the fact that it is only through working with other institutions that a national consensus can be reached and sustained on the fight against corruption.

HOW DID WE START?

We called the first meeting of coalition partners on January 24, 2002 at our Conference Centre, 3 Gloucester Street, Freetown. Invitation letters were sent to fourteen institutions each with a copy of a concept paper we had produced. The concept paper outlined our functions as a department of ACC, the rationale for proposing to join forces with other institutions and what we intend to achieve together as a coalition. The first meeting discussed the concept paper, agreed that membership of the coalition be expanded and suggested that it should meet every fortnight.

The second meeting identified and agreed on methodologies for effective coalition on anti-corruption as follows:

- To operate in committees,
- Coalition members to support each other in their programmes;
- To conduct an orientation workshop for members; and
- Coalition members to engage in constant dialogue with the authorities to support ACC and its coalition members in the drive against corruption.

COALITION (contd. from Page 9)

Currently, the coalition comprises the following twenty institutions: Civil Society Movement of Sierra Leone, United Indigenous Commercial and Petty Traders Association, Sierra Leone Teachers Union, Hope Sierra Leone, FM 98.1D, Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Transparency Watch, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, Campaign for Good Governance, Sierra Leone Association of NGOs, Community Relations Department of the Sierra Leone Police Force, Talking Drum Studio, National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights, Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association, Sierra Leone Labour Congress, Sierra Leone Market Women Association, Sierra Leone Union of Boat Owners Association, Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service and Sierra Leoneans Love One Another Campaign. This broad coalition has been sub-divided into four committees:

- A committee responsible for monitoring, supervision and electronic media programme;
- Curriculum Development, Integrity Clubs and Essay and other competitions(s);
- Promotional Material and Newsletter; and
- Sensitisation Workshops and Community Theatre.

Community Relations Department meets with one committee per week, and with all the committees after every five weeks. At the general meeting the committees report on their activities, and decisions are taken that affect the operation of the four committees and CRD programme of activities. The committees reflect the activities of CRD. For exam-

ple, Monitoring, Supervision and Electronic Media Committee assists CRD in its electronic media programme, and in monitoring and supervising its activities.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

In the three months that we have worked together, we have begun to realize that concerted effort in the fight against corruption can yield a lot of dividends. Coalition building has the potential to maximize the benefits of scarce resources, and tap human resources from outside one's own institution. On the 26th of February this year, when we launched our pilot Integrity Clubs, one of our coalition partners, Talking Drum Studio, gave the occasion coverage on radio stations across the country gratis. I wonder how much it would have cost us if we were not working in partnership with Talking Drum Studio?

From the discussions at meetings the committees are gradually developing their own spirits. If properly channelled, with time, these spirits will present a formidable front in the battle against corruption. When that happens, the Anti-Corruption Commission cannot be seen as a lone voice in the wilderness.

Having said this, I must hasten to say that the coalition building process is yet in its developmental stage. We have some questions to answer. We have started in Freetown, the capital city, how can we involve the rest of the country in the coalition? How far can our partners go in working with us?

I hope that as we grow in the business of coalition building, we would be able to answer these questions, and others that



The Activities and Strategies/Process used by the Prevention Department - By The Senior Prevention Officer Mr. E.T. Komba

When the Anti-Corruption Commission was mid-wifed in February 2000, it emerged with three distinct Departments namely Investigation, Prevention and Community Relations with varied functions. It was the desire of the founding fathers that these three Departments should have a crack down on corruption in three different directions but with one goal, to make corruption zero tolerant in Sierra Leone.

The Prevention Department that is the focus of this article has a Director as its head, a Principal Prevention Officer, two Senior Prevention Officers, eight Prevention Officers with a mandate that emanates from Section 5 (ABC) of the Anti-Corruption Act 2000 which among other things confers on the Department powers to:

‘Examine practices and procedures of Government Ministries, Departments and other Public Bodies in order to secure a revision of those practices and procedures and to advise the heads of such Ministries, Departments and other Public Bodies.

‘...to instruct, advise and assist any person or authority on ways in which corrupt practices should be reduced’.

Clearly this is the mandate of the Prevention Department.

How does the Prevention Department pursue this statutory responsibility?

Firstly, the choice of Ministries and Departments has been based on the Lappia Public Perception Survey. This survey basically had been commissioned by DFID with instructions to get public opinion on corruption in Sierra Leone and to determine which Government Ministries or Departments are highly prone to corruption. The result of that survey is now public knowledge. Suffice it to say that the Ministry of Education, Revenue earning Departments and Service delivery ministries did not come out in good light. Hence the Prevention Department, has its first prevention exercises in these Ministries and

Departments, viz: Education, Customs and Excise, Marine Resources, and the Ministry of Health respectively.



Mr. E.T. Komba
Snr. Prevention Officer

Examination of Ministries or Departments is started first by getting background information on the system of the organization, which includes Legislation, Policy Documents and Management Structures.

The emphasis here is on systems check, because if a corrupt official is removed from an office and the same system remains, there is every likelihood for the next corrupt officer to manipulate that system better to his advantage than the first official. The so-called squandergates and billiongates bear testimony to this.

The next stage is the designing of new procedures and systems in most cases with the input of stake holders which no doubt deal appropriately with problems of corrupt opportunities in the system.

Amongst recommendations, which are often made, are to make changes in the management structure, revise obsolete laws, improve standard of accountability and transparency in the system and to develop a code of ethics for the institution. These recommendations should be cost effective, efficient and simple to understand than the previous ones.

On completion of the corruption prevention exercise, facts relating to procedures, processes observed and documents discovered/developed are discussed by Case Officers.

The final report is then produced and the content of the report discussed with the organisation, which is negotiated for implementation.

It is interesting to note that whilst this exercise in a Ministry or Department is in progress, if any corrupt individual official or officials are identified in the system; the matter is immediately referred to the Investigation Department through the Senior Management team.

Let me also emphasize here that the crucial aspect of the whole exercise is implementation of recommendations, that is why the Department seeks to have partners in this endeavour in every Ministry or Department visited. Finally, monitoring is a key feature of this exercise, as it would enable the Commission to consolidate gains made in our fight against corruption.

THE INNOCENT CONCEPT

by
DESMOND R.E. JOHNSON

When there are few schools
When there are no materials
When the teachers are not paid
They say it's me.

When there are no good roads
No salaries for workers
Poor medical facilities
They say it's me.

When there are no food supplies
When there is no transportation
And there is social unrest
They say it's me.

When there is no electricity
No water supply too
And the people are suffering
They say it's me

It's me caused this?
It's me caused that?
It's me caused this and that?
Why is everyone picking on me?

INVOLVING THE YOUNG IN THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

BY Mamie M. Caulker (Mrs)

In its first year of operation, the Anti-Corruption Commission through the Community Relations Department embarked on a massive national awareness campaign on the evils of corruption and the benefits of a corrupt free Sierra Leone. The electronic media was the main vehicle for the transmission of these messages.

Effective as this intervention has been, the Department believes that the next stage must be engaged in interactive programmes. The young especially school going children must be involved in Anti-Corruption Sensitization and Education Programmes. This will result in the development of firm attitudes against corrupt practices. Several activities have therefore been identified by the Community Relations Department to enhance the involvement of schools and colleges in the Anti-Corruption Campaign.

There is no doubt that one of the most effective ways of getting the message of probity and integrity to students is through the School Curriculum. Consequently in collaboration with the Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education, steps are being taken to design and produce moral education materials beginning with upper Primary Schools to be implemented beginning next academic year.

Essay competitions very often appeal to school going children. The Community Relations Department will conduct essay competitions on topics relating to corruption at all levels of the educational system. The objective is to encourage creativity. Prizes and Certificates will be awarded to participants and the best essays will be published in our Local Newspapers.

There is no doubt that there are many Sierra Leoneans endowed with musical talents. The opportunities to tap these resources are few and far in between. Music competitions will therefore be organised based on the Anti-



Mrs. Mamie Caulker -
Snr. Community Realtion Officer

Corruption theme. The best compositions will be recorded and aired on Local Radio Stations. It is expected that this competition will achieve the dual purpose of disseminating the Anti-Corruption message and identifying young musical talents.

Finally, school clubs have been credited for their role in successful implementation of important national programmes. The ACC has therefore decided to establish Integrity Clubs in Secondary Schools. Three Secondary Schools have been identified in the Western Area to serve as Pilot Schools. The Sierra Leone Grammar School, the Government Model Secondary School and the St. Helena Secondary School. The choice of these Pilot schools was based on Zonal locations. The Clubs were officially launched by Mrs Gracie Williams, Retired Principal of the Annie Walsh Memorial Secondary School at the YWCA New Hall on the 26th of February 2002.

When they become fully operational, the programme will be extended to other schools and the regions.

The objective is to encourage pupils, teachers and school administrators to join forces to identify corrupt practices in their schools and communities and to suggest ways of curbing them.

Educational institutions will be provided with the necessary information on the Anti-

Corruption strategy and there will be regular monitoring visits to the various pilot clubs to ensure that planned activities are implemented.

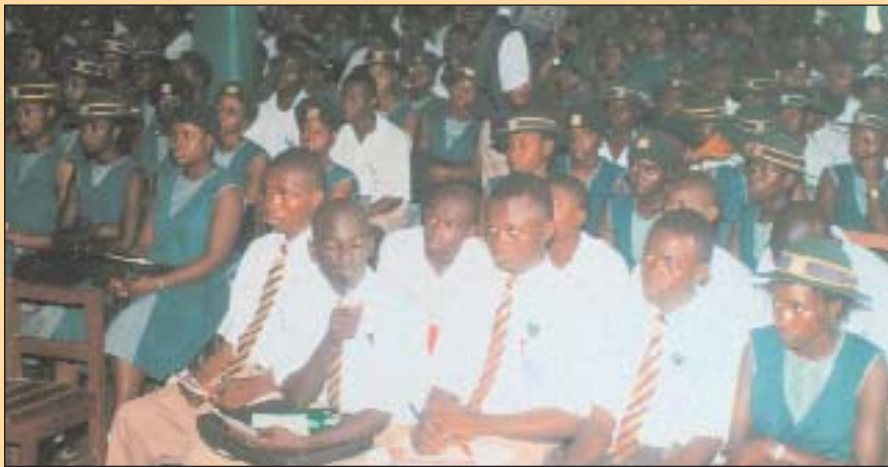
As every home in this country is linked in some way with the educational system, it is envisaged that the active participation of these institutions in the campaign against corruption will have a stronger and more positive influence on Parents, Community Leaders, Politicians and others in the corridors of power.

WHAT' AM I (PART TWO)

BY
FREDERICK BOBOR JAMES

What exactly I am
I still do not know,
Kukujumuku I am known in Sierra Leone
Does that mean I am the greasing of palm
That goes on in our places of work,
And the underinvoicing and tax invasions
That go on unchecked?
You mean I am the soliciting
And accepting of advantage?
And the demanding and paying of 10%
Before awarding contracts?
Do you think I am the misappropriating
And embezzling of public and donor funds?
May I be aptly described as favouritism;
Nepotism, sectionalism and the other
negative - isms?
Am I the architect of social disorder
And low standard of living?
Do I take direct responsibility
For our impassable roads,
Deplorable medical facilities,
Our ailing education system
And erratic electricity supply?
Do you hold me responsible
For the absence of telephone lines
And safe drinking water
In our rural communities?
I know you hold me responsible
For the ineptitude and inertia of our people
Ah, and for the 10-year rebel war!
You really mean I am...?

ACC ACTIVITIES IN PICTURES



Preliminary meeting of Pilot Project for Integrity Club at the St. Helena Secondary School



Senior Pupils of the Government Model Secondary School listening to the ACC's idea of the Pilot Integrity Club in their School



The Message of ACC's Pilot Integrity Clubs in Schools seemed to be very captivating to the pupils of the Sierra Leone Grammar School

ACC ACTIVITIES IN PICTURES



The Director—Community Relations and Corruption Prevention- Mrs. Neneh Dabo addressing the first Provincial Community Sensitization meeting at Sembehun Nestucker, South of Sierra Leone



A mammoth Community Sensitization meeting at Grafton which witnessed the participation of hundreds of residents including the displaced people from different parts of the country



Tombo village which is well known for its developed fishing industry and coastal trade with neighbouring countries, was another focus of ACC's Community Sensitization Meeting

FICTION

OUR INFORMANTS' DIARY: PART TWO

BY Frederick Bobor James

Before she left the office of the Report Centre Director, the young lady informant said, 'I am happy I have put this load down from my head'.

As a patriot she had always been haunted by the fact that huge chunks of money go down the drain in her Department every month. She had often searched her mind for an answer to this problem, but could not find one. She had no one to report it to. In fact, she dared not! She would lose her job, and on top of that, society would term her as stupid and accuse her of not being current with happenings around her.

When she heard about the Anti-Corruption Commission, her heart glowed. She knew she had finally found a solution to the problem in her Department. But she advised herself to wait a while. To watch the situation.

'Some Commissions and Committees have come and gone, and have left nothing in their trail but scorn and ridicule. I need to watch this one a little more', she said.

So when the young lady informant left the premises of the ACC that day, she was genuinely happy, but has she miscalculated? Events that unfolded days after made her even more miserable.

The Report Centre Manager quickly processed her report, collated it with the vouchers she had submitted and presented them for the reaction of the Senior Management Committee. It was the consensus of Senior Management that investigations into the activities of the Department should commence immediately.

That year witnessed the worst raining season for more than two decades. It had been raining for three days nonstop, and it was still raining that morning. The young lady informant reluctantly left her house for the office.

THE REPORT CENTRE

BY MRS JUANA DUNDAS

The Report Centre
The interface between the Commission
and society
At the Report Centre
You witness first hand
The pain the grief the injustices torture
the anguish
And disillusionment felt by the people
out there.

At the Report Centre
You cannot hide the grief/anger that
you sometimes feel
You can only identify yourself with their
plight
You can only empathise with their
complaint.

To the Anti-Corruption Commission
To the Report Centre
They come with so much expectations
With so much hope so much faith

To them the Anti-Corruption Commission
Is the panacea for all the evils meted out
to them in society.

'The rain is heavy, but I cannot do otherwise. My absence is always conspicuous', she grumbled.

The breeze started to sweep away everything. The young lady informant had to hold the edge of her lappa down firmly. The wind had turned her umbrella inside out, and was bent on embarrassing her.

'I hope this is not an ill omen. But how can I stay at home, when I am the receptionist? I have to go', she said.

A heavy storm rolled across, and nearly swept her away. In the midst of all this, she was able to board a taxi for the office. She was now in her office, almost drenched and trembling behind her table, when a young man entered.

'Good morning Madam, I am here to see your boss', he said.

'Sorry, you have to come after 2pm, he doesn't see people in the morning on Mondays, particularly when they do not have appointments', she explained. The young man smiled, and the young lady informant saw confidence and self-assertion in this smile.

'I am not lying, that has been his policy since he was transferred to this Department. I do not want to invite his wrath. Please come back at 2pm', she tried to explain.

'I am from the ACC, I have a letter for him. If you do not mind, you can sign for it', the young man from ACC said.

'Anti-Corruption, have you come to arrest my boss?' the young lady informant said, rising from her seat.

'I have a letter for him', I said.

'Please wait let me find out if he can see you', she said and rushed into the office of her boss.

'Yes sir, there is someone at the reception to see you', she said, sounding panicky.

'But you know I see no one at this time of the day. Why come and announce him?' he asked, almost braying.

'But sir, he says he comes from the Anti-Corruption Commission', she stammered.

The boss became pale, seated transfixed and tapping the table incoherently with a pen. The silence that dawned on the room amplified the drumming of the pen against the table.

‘He is from the Anti-Corruption Commission, sir,’ she broke the silence.

‘Tell him to come in,’ the boss said, faking a smile. The young lady informant also managed to smile.

When she went home after work, the young lady informant could not eat. She never thought that the Commission could respond to her report so quickly.

As night crept in, she lay in bed debating if she had done the right thing by reporting the corruption at her Department to the Commission.

‘I do not care if this is going to cost me my life. Somebody has to help the Commission to burst the paralyzing pillage of public funds going on in this Department,’ she resolved.

She was soon among the whole lot of the staff of her Department, and her boss was trying to know from them who must have reported about the corruption at the Department to the Commission. When it was her turn to answer questions, she felt sweat running down her brow. She was not sure what the appropriate thing was to do – to deny or to admit that she had actually reported the matter to the Commission.

She did not want to lie, she was convinced she had done the right thing, but it had a far-reaching effect for her to admit. As she was thinking what to say, the rest of the staff started to murmur.

‘I did not report the matter to the Commission, and I do not know who did it,’ she lied. She felt tears forming in her head, but she will not allow them to mature and drop. If she cried, she would give herself away. She started to pray silently. She knew she had lied. She did not want to lie, but in the circumstances she had no choice.

As she prayed, her voice began to get louder and louder. She was praying for herself, her Department and her boss. She was praying for the Anti-Corruption Commission and the whole country.

‘She was now crying freely and pronouncing words from her prayer loudly.

‘God bless my boss, my colleagues and this Department.’

‘A-a-amen!’ her colleagues roared.

‘Papa God, empower the Anti-Corruption Commission to reduce corruption in this country!’ ‘Halleluiah!’ her colleagues shouted.

‘God Almighty, please help this country and plant patriotism in the heart of all her children.’ ‘A-a-amen!’

When the young lady informant woke from the sleep, she was sweating profusely. She lay quietly pondering the dream she had just had.

JOKE



Leopard had just had a good feed that morning
When it began to rain. He ran into a deserted farmhouse.

Whilst waiting for the rain, Cunning Rabbit too ran into
the same farmhouse, and was standing face-to-face
with Leopard.

Rabbit held his breath and began to say his last prayer.

Leopard smiled at him and said, ‘Give me three
reasons why I should not eat you’.

Rabbit thought fast and then said, ‘One, because I did
not know that you were here. If I knew, I would not
have come’. Leopard nodded his head.

‘Two, I know you are not hungry, if you were, I would
have been a dead man by now.’

Leopard smiled and nodded his head again.

‘Finally, if I go to town and tell people that you and
I met face-to-face, they will not believe me’.

Leopard was so amused that he laughed loudly and
then beckoned to Rabbit to depart.

Frederick Bobor James

APPRECIATION OF THE EYE

The concept of the eye is a central theme in the Anti-Corruption Commission's education and sensitization campaign against the evils of corruption and the benefits of a corrupt-free society. The eye has also become the name of the Anti-Corruption Commission's quarterly newsletter. Some say the Eye is Anti-Corruption Commission itself. The eye actually refers to the sharply focused and penetrating eye of the Martial Eagle, a powerful sense that it uses to search for and capture its prey with precision.



Ivan Ajibola Thomas -
Public Relations Officer

The Eagle's Eye in the Anti -Corruption Commission's perception is only a symbol of the eye of every patriotic Sierra Leonean who wishes to support the efforts of the Anti-Corruption Commission in the fight against corruption in the country. It is the eye of every member of the public who should be watchful, observant and vigilant to detect suspected corrupt practices in our public institutions and report such incidences to the Anti-Corruption Commission. With this collective responsibility, it would be easier for the Anti-Corruption Commission to detect corrupt officials with precision and bring them to justice.

Even though corruption takes place in secret, yet those who are involved in it may leave trails of information, which could be accessible to other people within the system. Those people within the establishment who are privy to such information or evidences would become the Eye only when they report their suspicions to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

In your daily private and public engagements, you may come in contact with people who are involved in some shady or clandestine financial transaction which might be detrimental to the economic development of the state. These unscrupulous individuals may be siphoning what belongs to you as a citizen of this country. Stop the culture of silence; don't say it does not concern you. It concerns you. These economic crimes, which you don't want to talk about, are responsible for your

poverty and your inability to provide basic necessities for your loved ones. So if you are patriotic enough, you would report shady dealings to the Anti-Corruption Commission thereby becoming the Eye.

The Eye, which has been established as witnesses, informants or aggrieved parties of corrupt practices, may be reporting very powerful influential Public Officials within the society but they need not be afraid. The Anti-Corruption Act 2000 made adequate provisions to protect the Eye. The identity of the Eye would never be exposed, except in the symbol of the Eagle's Eye so that the Eye will always continue to be watchful and report corrupt practices.

The Anti-Corruption Commission uses the symbol of the Eagle's Eye effectively to demonstrate to the world that it cannot succeed in the fight against corruption without the support of the government and the general populace. It is only with the assistance of members of the public (The Eye) that the Anti-Corruption Commission will be able to zero-in on corrupt Public Officials with precision, just as the Martial Eagle would use its eye to catch its prey without missing. Public Officials and those dealing with them may become prey to the Eagle if they are not prepared to change and make restitution. What should the Eye be looking for?

The Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2000 unequivocally stated the corrupt practices in Part IV of the Act. These include corrupt acquisition of wealth, misappropriation of public funds or property, misappropriation of donor funds or property, soliciting and accepting advantage, etc.

These are some of the provisions according to the Act, which the Eye should be looking for and reporting them to the Anti-Corruption Commission. The report centre would be ready and willing to receive complaints from the Eye, investigate and prosecute where necessary.

The power of the Martial Eagle is the symbol of the power of the people. No individual can stand against it, if collectively the people of the nation, out of their own free volition, are willing to minimize corruption in the country. This power can be demonstrated by reporting corrupt practices today so that our children may enjoy the benefits of a corrupt-free society tomorrow.

In a nutshell, the Anti-Corruption Commission's Eye is your eye watching over the management of your public institutions, revenue collection and expenditure. Therefore the Anti-Corruption Commission invites you to work in partnership and cooperation with the institution to reduce corruption, which is said to be endemic in the country.

Remember the Eagle's Eye represents the people's eye watching over the state. If Anti-Corruption Commission is known as the Eye, it is because it uses the Eyes of the public to succeed in its investigations and prosecution of offenders of corruption.

**CORRUPTION
PROMOTES POVERTY
AND
UNDERDEVELOPMENT**

CORRUPTION AND THE BENEFITS OF A CORRUPT FREE SOCIETY

It is a bold step taken by the government of Sierra Leone to fight this menace of corruption in our society. Like a cancerous disease in a body, it destroys every living organ and drives the body to its death.

Corruption could be defined in various ways. The entire definition stems from the fact that the action of the corrupt individual is dishonest, bad, impure and unacceptable.

The Anti-Corruption Act, 2000 identifies a number of corrupt practices. These include the following:

- (a) Corrupt acquisition of wealth
- (b) Soliciting or accepting advantage
- (c) Using influence for contracts
- (d) Corrupting Public Officer
- (e) Soliciting or accepting advantage for Public Officers
- (f) Misappropriation of Public Funds or Property
- (g) Misappropriation of donor funds or property
- (h) Impeding foreign investment

(i) Corrupt transactions with agents.
The consequences of corruption in our society have not only been severe but devastating. Corruption is a form of public theft. Funds are diverted out of the country, denying the opportunity to put them to productive public use. The consequences are of a political, economic and social nature.

In politics corruption affects the way our political leaders take decisions. More often they undertake wrong projects, accept wrong prices, contract the wrong contractors who deliver substandard materials. Promotion too is based not on merit but political party affiliation, causing square pegs to sit in round holes. The fund meant for provision of social services like hospitals and schools are shipped away from those who truly need them. All of these lead to lack of accountability, which may eventually lead to a break down of the rule of law.



Desmond R.E. Johnson
Community Relations Officer

The consequences of corruption are always quite visible in a country's economy and economic development. Businessmen compete to become the highest briber. There is no competitive market and the gap between the rich and poor becomes wider. International aid is often diverted to other use and the intended recipients do not benefit at all. Businessmen bribe their way through and evade all forms of taxation, depriving the country of much needed revenue.

Corruption has significant social impact. As the gap widens, the crime rate increases. There is a total breakdown of our moral values. The professionally qualified people are forced to leave the country. Thus there is a thorough brain drain and an obvious collapse of the state. It is high time we as a nation decide to change our attitude and put corruption as a thing of the past. We must also realize that a corruption free society has a lot to benefit from. Generally, there would be a continuous increase in the Government's revenue base. Government in turn would be able to address the needs of the people. More hospitals would be constructed, more schools, more road networks developed, better transport facility, availability of food supply, water supply, electricity, etc.

The gap between the rich and the poor would be narrowed. This means that the rate of development would increase. There would be a constant increase in the standard of living. Our leaders must know that unless they take the lead in the fight against corruption the Anti-Corruption Commission would just be beating a dead horse.

Having said this, I want to bring the attention of my readers to some points made at the Laurentian Seminar held in Canada, 2000.

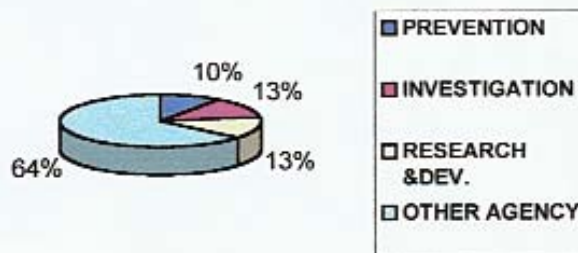
- Parliaments are an integral part of the development of National Integrity Systems
- Parliamentarians must fight against corruption by first setting a good personal example. They should be role models who uphold the integrity of Parliament.
- Parliamentarians need to convince their party leaders of the need for reform. They should cooperate across party line.
- Parliamentarians can help mobilize the population against corrupt practices.
- Parliaments and civil society should work in partnership to combat corruption and hold governments accountable.
- Parliament can make a major contribution in anti-corruption efforts by exercising its accountability function, such as through the Finance and Public Accounts Committees.
- Parliaments and supreme audit institutions like Auditors-General need to work co-operatively in fighting corruption. They must ensure effective follow-up so that their work produces concrete results.
- Parliaments should work for a budgetary system that will ensure government adequately accounts for its programmes and policies.
- Parliamentarians should partner with like-minded colleagues, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations to address the transnational dimensions of corruption.
- Parliaments should seek to develop action plans setting out shared objectives and practical measures to control corruption.

Quarterly Statistics of Reports

JANUARY - MARCH 2002

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	DEPART. TO.	PERCENTAGE (%)
PREVENTION	8	8	5	21	8
INVESTIGATION	11	10	17	38	15
RESEARCH & DEV.	11	11	16	38	15
OTHER AGENCIES	53	43	66	162	62
MONTHLY TOTAL	83	72	104	259	

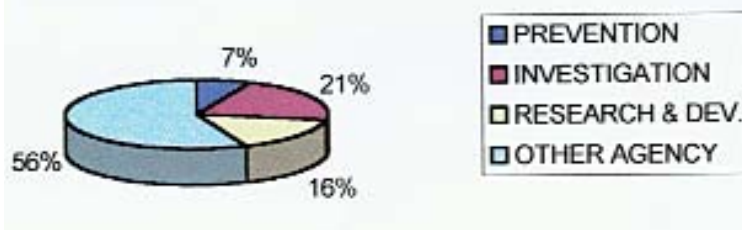
Quarterly Statistics January - March 2002



OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2001

	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	DEPART. TO.	PERCENTAGE (%)
PREVENTION	7	13	3	23	9
INVESTIGATION	23	28	10	61	20
RESEARCH & DEV.	17	12	18	47	15
OTHER AGENCIES	60	72	41	173	56
MONTHLY TOTAL	107	125	72	304	

Quarterly Statistics October-December 2001



The table above shows the monthly departmental distribution of reports for the period October 2001 - March 2002.

A look at the figures shows that there is a decrease in the total number of reports received in the 1st quarter of 2002.

The percentage of reports referred to Other Agencies increased from 56% in the 3rd Quarter of 2001 to 61% in the 1st Quarter of 2002.

This does not only show that the cases meant for Other Agencies are in the majority, but that they are increasing on a quarterly basis.

Though we seem to be overburdened with cases that are meant for other agencies, we however appreciate your trust and cooperation.

We are still encouraging people to come forward with complaints on issues of corruption.

