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SIDE THIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

-Overview of Corruption Issues 2015

-TI-SL Launches Anti-Bribery Campaign

-TI-SL Engages Community Heads on Corruption, Accountability and Transparency

-CPI Report 2014 –Do we Deserve Better?

-Corruption Quotes, Jokes And More.....

And more...



Overview of Critical Issues on Corruption for the year 2015



Lavina Banduah (Mrs.)
Executive Director

The year 2015 continued to be a challenging year for Sierra Leone.

This was due to the fact that the Ebola Outbreak remained prevalent for most part of the year. As with the Ebola Outbreak so also was the issue of corruption, lack of accountability, transparency and the virtue of Integrity.

Months after months within the year the media continued to report incidences of corruption practices within Ministries, Departments and Agencies within the private sector and civil society. Of utmost surprise and dismay to many Sierra Leoneans was the findings of the Special Report on the Utilization of the Ebola Funds by the Audit Service Sierra Leone in February 2015.

This report revealed numerous corrup-

tion, mismanagement and embezzlement of funding/donations made by individuals, agencies, organizations and funders both nationally and internationally. This revelation underscores the precedence of the lack of the culture of responsibility and integrity of public officials.

In addition to the above, the state of constant increase in the cost of goods and services is of critical concern to the country, especially at a time when the livelihoods of most citizens have been severely affected. This state of affairs had a huge negative impact on citizen's welfare and ultimately the fight against corruption.

Although the issue of Bribery remains to topical issue, and the campaign against it has intensified, the act has continued unabated and of recent has assumed different patterns. The Global Corruption Barometer Report for 2014 released by Transparency International Secretariat in Berlin, Germany revealed that 41% of Sierra Leoneans claimed to have paid bribes to access some basic key services.

Overview of Critical Issues on Corruption for the year 2015
Continue

This showed a marked improvement from the result of the Global Corruption Barometer Report released in July 2013 which stated that 84% of Sierra Leoneans claimed to have paid a bribe to access one of eight services

TI-SL believes that addressing the issue of corruption in Sierra Leone first of all requires the following;

- Political Commitment at the highest level transcending the leadership of Ministries Departments and Agencies.
- The enforcement of the relevant laws and provision that prohibit businesses engaging in corrupt acts to use it to their advantage.
- Increased Openness and Scrutiny among all stakeholders including civil society.
- Members of the public to desist from acts that might condone or promote corruption.

Above all there is the need for governments to focus on the development of policies and strategies to assist citizens meet their ever increasing financial responsibilities against the inadequacy of monthly salaries.

There is also the need for all and sundry to make considerable efforts to engage in productive ventures and imbibe the culture of integrity transparency, accountability and nationalism.

The fight against corruption should be the concern of every Sierra Leonean.

Corruption Equation

‘Corruption is authority plus monopoly minus transparency’.

$$(A+M-T=C)$$

where

A– Authority

M– Monopoly

T– Transparency

C– Corruption

Corruption Model

$$(C=Mp+D-A)$$

Where

C- Corruption

M– Monopoly power

D– Discretion

A- Accountability

TI-SL Launches 'Anti-Bribery Campaign' in commemoration of the International Anti-Corruption Day

Transparency International Sierra Leone has launched ITS TIME TO WAKE UP AGAINST BRIBERY campaign titled 'the anti-bribery campaign' at a ceremony held at TI-SL Secretariat in commemoration of the International Anti-Corruption Day with the theme 'Breaking the Chain of Corruption'. The ceremony also encompassed a media and civil society engagement with Mr. Peter Conze, a visitor to Sierra Leone from TI Germany

Speaking at the commemoration ceremony held at the TI -SL Secretariat, engaging the Media and Civil Societies, Mr. Edward Koroma, Senior Program Officer transparency international Sierra Leone said that December 9 every year is celebrated as the International Anti-Corruption Day, and as an institution that seeks to minimize corruption and enhance transparency in every sector within the country, they have decided to commemorate the day together with other countries. He pointed out that corruption is a key factor for abject poverty in the country and that it is a must for everyone to be involved in the fight against corruption.

Giving the keynote address, Mr. Peter Conze, a representative from the advisory board of TISL Germany defined Corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. According to him it can be grand, or political depending on the sector it occurs. He said that when the word corruption is mentioned, people begin to point fingers on those occupying big offices forgetting that even those at the lower levels of society can also be guilty of corruption. He said that corruption is a chain in that it starts from the households to learning institutions and eventually ends in the public sector. According to him, people who are found wanting of corruption have started the act since childhood. He said that this is why everybody should be engaged in eradicating this menace.

Delivering his statement, Mr. Alhassan Kargbo, Public Relations Officer of the Anti-Corruption Commission said that the ACC is charged with the responsibility of prosecuting those found wanting on corruption allegations. He highlighted cases which the commission have brought to court and won and those the commission was unable to win. He said such cases were lost either because there was not enough evidence for prosecution or witnesses were not willing to give account. He pointed out that the media and the civil society groups have done very well in exposing corruption. He called on them not

to relent as the battle line against corruption is still tough. He said that the commission is ready to name and shame those guilty of corruption. To those reporting corruption, he said that the commission will endeavor to keep their complaints confidential and prosecute the individuals complained based on the information provided.

Journalist and other civil society organizations were given the opportunity to ask questions and answers were given for such questions.

To mark the day the Anti-Bribery Campaign was launched, it is an idea of transparency international geared towards minimizing the extent at which individuals both in the private and government sector ask for or give bribes.

Edward Koroma, senior program officer transparency international Sierra Leone gave the overview of the campaign that was launched by Peter Conze



At the commemoration ceremony

**Submitted by: Adenike Temple (Mrs.)
Program Officer-TI-SL**

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL SIERRA LEONE ORGANIZES A ONE PUBLIC DIALOGUE FORUM ON TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Transparency International Sierra Leone has organized a one day Citizens' Public Dialogue Forum at the Tombo Community Centre in the Western Area Rural District. The main objective of the forum is to create a platform for local authorities and community people to dialogue on issues that are affecting transparency, accountability and development in their various communities, and to also examine and evaluate the steps taken so far by the Village Heads to promote accountability, transparency and citizens' participation in the use of development resources and decision making processes in their various villages.

This activity catered for thirty six participants (36) drawn from Village Heads, women and youth groups and traditional and tribal leaders. The main objective of this event is to bring together a cross section of the Village Heads and representatives from their various communities.

During the forum, each Village Head made a presentation on efforts made so far in addressing accountability, transparency and citizens' participation on issues in their various villages. Before the presentation by the Village Heads, a presentation on Transparency, Accountability and Participation was made by Mr. Edward B. Koroma the Project Coordinator. This was done to set the stage for the presentation and subsequent plenary discussions. At the end of the presentations by the Village Heads, community representatives at the event had the opportunity to react on the presentations made by the Village Heads and proffer suggestions on the way forward. From the presentations made by the Village Heads and the reaction of the village representatives, it was clear that the Village Heads have indeed made some remarkable efforts in promoting accountability, transparency and citizens' participation in discharging their various roles and responsibilities. However, they still need to do more to ensure utmost accountability, transparency and citizens' participation that will in turn contribute to sustainable village development.

At the end of the presentations and discussions, the following were recommended to foster transparen-

cy, accountability and citizens' participation in village communities.

- The village community people should be engaged in a sustainable manner through community and Town Hall meetings.
- There should be adequate information flow between the Village Heads and the village community people.
- Village community people should always endeavor to attend meetings summoned by the Village Heads so that they would be able to make meaningful input to issues affecting governance and development in their various villages in developmental activities.
- Village Heads should effectively use community radio stations to engage village communities as this is one of the most reliable source of information in many local communities.
- Village Heads should organize themselves well and set up a Council of Village Heads that will be charged with the responsibility of protecting and promoting the welfare and interest of Village Heads.



Corruption Quotes

- Village Heads should effectively engage youths in the planning and implementation of development activities to ensure successful and sustainable implementation

This activity is part of a one year pilot project titled “Promoting Democracy and Development in Western Area Rural District through Increased Citizens' Knowledge and Cooperation with Village Heads”, currently being implemented in the Western Area Rural District by TI-SL with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

**By Edward .B. Koroma (Mr.)
Senior Programs Officer**

Corruption Quotes

‘money and corruption are ruining the land, crooked politicians betray the working man, pocketing the profits and treating us like sheep and we are tired of hearing promises that we know they’ll never keep’
Ray Davies

‘Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy as they are today’.
Mahandas Gandhi

‘The fight against corruption is never easy. It has never been and never will be. It exacts a toll on our families, our friends and especially our children. In the end, I believe as in my case, the price we pay is well worth holding on to our dignity’.
Frank Serpico

‘Corruption is worse than prostitution. The later might endanger the morals of an individual; the former invariably endangers the morals of the entire country’.
Karl Kraus

‘We have seen over time that countries that have the best economic growth are those that have good governance, and good governance comes from freedom of communication. It comes from ending corruption. It comes from a populace that can go online and say this politician is corrupt, this administrator or this public official is corrupt’

Ramez naam

‘We must weed out corruption and build a strong system of justice that the people can trust.’

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

‘Democracy must be built through open societies that share information. When there is information, there is enlightenment. When there is debate, there are solutions. When there is no sharing of power, no rule of law, no accountability, there is abuse, corruption, subjugation and indignation.’

Atifete Jahgjaga

**Credit:
Kumba Kasse-Gborie
(Intern– TISL)**

The 2014 Corruption Perception Index- Do We Deserve Better?



Looking at the ranking and score of our country (Sierra Leone) in the corruption perception index of 2014 released in 2015, there can be no need for surprises. According to the 2014 rankings, out of 167 countries ranked, Sierra Leone was ranked 119 together with other countries like Azerbaijan, Guyana and Russia, this position has not been changed since 2012 (as far as the records I have can show). The country scored 31 out of hundred. For better understanding, according to the report, score- 100 means that that particular country is corruption free, therefore if a country scores like 50 and above then that country is making headway in reducing corruption practices. However, if a country scores below 50, it shows that the country in question is somehow doing little or nothing in the fight against corruption/ corrupt practices. A point to note is that the ranking and scores are based on perception (what do citizens of such countries perceive about corruption) and the amount of information available at the time of the research. Some countries are at the bottom of the corruption index because at the course of the research, either because there were not enough information to ascertain the obvious or such countries are most often than not involved in conflict.

For the sake of brevity, I will look at three broad as-

pects in this piece which will be the ranking and score which I have already started doing, give a synopsis of the reality on the ground and try to suggest what we can do to improve on our ranking and score viz a viz the way forward.

As I have mentioned earlier, we are 119 out of 167 countries ranked and we scored 31 as of 2014. For me the ranking does not matter anymore, because for the past two years, there has not been any change, not too discouraging though because we do have our partners in crime who always stand by us Russia, Guyana etc despite the fact that we are yearning for improvement. Corruption is what we want to eradicate and that we must be committed to. We scored 31, quite impressive, the highest score over the past years (2013, 2012 etc).

Let's compare this data to the present situation on the ground. When we as a country missed the millennium development challenge in 2015, there were hues and cries all over the place by some government officials who think we were above board. For me that was hypocrisy to at its peak. The United Nations formulated 7-8 outstanding things that the government was to accomplish at that given time. Prominent amongst them was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, to what extent could we say that the government have accomplish this. In fact the situation is as worse as ever. The number of beggars in the streets have increased, many Sierra Leoneans go to bed hungry, etc. are these not indicators of poverty and hunger? Not to talk about the countless homeless children and the aged roaming the streets of Freetown having nowhere to sleep.

Another is to achieve universal primary education and to promote gender equality. The government is talking about free primary education, I think it should be re-phrased as free primary education structures because in such schools, how many qualified and committed teachers do we have there. Even the structures are not conducive for learning to take place. Parents are now leaving the government assisted schools to

The 2014 Corruption Perception Index- Do We Deserve Better? - Continued

it should be re-phrased as free primary education structures because in such schools, how many qualified and committed teachers do we have there. Some of the structures are not even conducive for learning to take place. Parents are now leaving the government assisted schools to find private schools in the name of getting quality education. It is no surprise when we also see tertiary education deteriorating the way it is because if the primary level cannot be handled tell me what do you expect.

Furthermore, the government should reduce maternal health and reduce child mortality. Well you can say we tried. Yes we did. With the arrival of the free health care services there have been remarkable improvements according to UNICEF ranking. We use to be one of the worst countries when it comes to maternal health and child mortality. Moreover, the government is to combat HIV&AIDS, malaria and other diseases. We also tried in this aspect but more needs to be done. Malaria is still ravaging the lives of our people as well as other diseases. Our health care system is still poor.

On the same vein, we were asked to ensure environmental sustainability. This is another difficult task we cannot handle, if ever we tried. It is obvious that those at the echelon of society are the ones leading the menace against the environment. Talk of the timber logging and some of the, mining contract signed etc, do the average sierra Leonean knows anything about them. I do hear a jingle on radio that says that Sierra Leone is one of three countries to be seriously affected by climate change. If that be true then we must stand up to face the music.

At transparency international Sierra Leone, we do look at corruption stories in the daily publications on newspapers and to be honest there is not a single day that we do not see corruption stories, in fact in one

publication there can be more than three report of corruption ranging from bribery, fraud etc. taking all this issues highlighted, do we actually deserve better? Corruption is rife everywhere and at every level of society. What should we do then to improve on this phenomenon should be everybody's concern.

Corruption is the enemy of development and of good governance. It must be got rid of. Both the government and the people must come together in order to achieve this national objective. The Anti- Corruption Commission should be independent devoid of political interference. If this is done, we can get efficient commission that is able to execute its mandate. There should be a collective Mayfair against corruption. People must be willing to expose corruption at all levels. Public officials should stop taking and asking for bribes. Getting rid of corruption should be a collective fight. You refuse corruption, others expose corruption whiles another punish corruption defaulters. By so doing we beat down corruption and invariable score above 50 and be amongst the almost corruption free countries.

By: Kumba Kasse-Gborie (Intern TISL)

Jokes on Corruption

- “A man who has never gone to school may steal a freight car, but if he has a university education he may steal the whole rail road.
- ‘I see..... The U.S will provide financial help to Ukraine if the leaders confront corruption. Because, if anything stops corruption, it’s bribing someone else to stop corruption’.
- ‘I don’t know what’s shocking: the attempt to fix 380 football matches, or that Liverpool could only score one against a team whose keeper was paid to concede three’.

By: Kumba Kasse-Gborie (Intern TISL)

***TRANSPARENCY IS BEAUTIFUL WHEN YOU HAVE NOTHING
TO HIDE....
LET US BE TRANSPARENT IN OUR ACTIVITIES...PEACE!!!***

Watch out for a summary of corruption stories reported in our local tabloids for the first quarter of the year in our next edition.