



ZIMBABWE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

"Refuse, Resist and Report Corruption"

SUNDAY MAIL ARTICLES

ZACC Strategic Plan Finalised as the War Against Corruption Gathers Steam

By Commissioner John Makamure

Corruption is commonly defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Key international organisations such as the United Nations, World Bank and Transparency International are unanimous on this definition. Forms of corruption include bribery, nepotism, cronyism, embezzlement, fraud, extortion, abuse of office and money laundering.

Corruption can be classified into petty and grand corruption. The former is everyday abuse of entrusted power by low and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens who often are trying to access basic services in hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies. Grand corruption is abuse of high level power that benefits the few at the expense of the many, and causes serious and widespread harm to individuals and society.

The Administration of His Excellency President Emmerson Mnangagwa has identified corruption as the number one enemy to economic revival and sustainable socio-economic development. This is why key policy documents such as the Transitional Stabilisation Programme and Vision 2030 have elaborated on the urgent need to implement measures to fight corruption without fear or favour if the policy targets are going to be realised.

It is against this background that the new Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), headed by renowned High Court Judge Justice Loyce Matanda-Moyo, was established to lead the fight against the vice. Upon assuming office in July, the Commission immediately embarked on a strategic planning exercise in order to provide the organization with a sense of direction and measurable goals and objectives.

I am happy to say that the five-year strategic plan (2020 – 2024) is now in place. For the first time, ZACC' strategy is results based in line with the Integrated Results Based Management System that Government has adopted. The two key result areas of the strategy are investigation of corrupt cases and arrest of the culprits; and prevention of corruption. Because of the current frightening high levels of grand corruption, the Commission has decided to allocate 60 percent of its resources to investigations and the remaining 40 percent to prevention programmes. Basically, the Commission is determined to thoroughly investigate all suspected cases of grand corruption and ensure that the culprits are prosecuted. We are aiming for a very high conviction rate which can only come about if the Commission carries out thorough investigations, and submit high quality dockets to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for prosecution. We are of the strong view that ZACC must be granted powers to prosecute corruption cases while the NPA must concentrate on other numerous

criminal matters. This will certainly speed up prosecution of corrupt cases. ZACC can prosecute through the recently established Anti-Corruption Courts.

Conviction alone is not enough. We would like to see assets recovered from the culprits for the benefit of the nation. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Financial Intelligence Unit estimates that US\$500 million worth of assets is lost annually through corruption. ZACC is strengthening its asset recovery unit in order to recover this wealth for the country.

The strategic plan identifies six expected outcomes from the work of the Commission. They are as follows:

- a) Increased investigations for prosecutions
- b) Increased asset recovery
- c) Improved access to ZACC services
- d) Enhanced awareness of the dangers of corruption by citizens and institutions
- e) Improved anti-corruption legislation and policies
- f) Improved ZACC work performance

Achievement of all these outcomes will go a long way in realising the ZACC vision of “*A citizenry and institutions that uphold integrity and good governance for a corruption free Zimbabwe by 2030*”. A corruption free Zimbabwe will see higher levels of Gross Domestic Product being realised and the well-being of society being enhanced.

The ZACC Strategic Plan will be complemented by the development of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy through a highly inclusive process. This is because citizen groups are a vital cog in any anti-corruption initiatives. The new ZACC will bring all stakeholders on board regardless of political, religious, gender or any other affiliation. The Commission will, in the next couple of weeks, embark on provincial consultative meetings to gather citizen views on the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. We expect business membership organisations, church groups, trade unions, women’s groups, youth organisations and civil society organisations in their various forms, to participate fully in these consultative meetings. This will forge national ownership of the strategy.

Another area the new ZACC is prioritising is policy and legal reform. It is true that Zimbabwe boasts of good pieces of legislation to fight corruption. These include, among others, The Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) 2013; Prevention of Corruption Act; Anti-Corruption Commission Act [Chapter 9:22]; Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime Act; Bank Use Promotion and Suppression of Money Laundering Act; Serious Offences Act; and Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act. While we are rich in terms of statutes, there is still need to make the legal framework robust enough. For example, important pieces of legislation such as the Anti-Corruption Commission Act are still to be fully aligned with the Constitution. ZACC is working on proposals for full alignment, and we are giving this exercise the urgency that it deserves.

In the same vein, a law to protect whistle blowers is long overdue. Whistleblowing is the act of drawing public attention, or the attention of an authority figure, to perceived wrongdoing, misconduct and unethical activity within public, private or third-sector organisations. Although there are provisions in the Prevention of Corruption Act to protect whistle blowers, these provisions are not considered comprehensive enough. Lack of easily accessible, anonymous complaints mechanism, lack of protection from employer reprisals in the workplace, and lack of physical protection (including relocation) have severely hampered

the work of the Commission. Nearer home countries with whistle blower laws are South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Tanzania and Botswana.

Now that the new ZACC has settled down, we would like to vigorously pursue the fight against corruption through robust prevention programmes, criminalisation, law enforcement, asset recovery, collaboration, public education and publicity/information exchange. We equate the fight against corruption to a real war experience. Normally a war constitutes a series of battles. As ZACC, we may be happy to win battles but we will only celebrate the day we win the war against corruption.

Commissioner John Makamure is the ZACC Spokesperson and Chairs the Committee on Prevention and Corporate Governance.

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