

CSO OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT ON CORRUPTION

1. THEME: PROPOSED STATE HOUSE ANTI-CORRUPTION UNIT NEGATES THE BASICS

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, thanks for recognizing corruption as enemy no.1 for Uganda's development.

While presiding over Labor Day celebrations in Namutumba District on May 1st, Mr. President you announced that a plan to set up another small unit in your office for investors to ring directly if anybody asks them for a bribe or delays decisions.



2. A REVIEW OF ANTI-CORRUPTION INSTITUTIONS, LEGISLATIONS AND POLICIES



Already, State House harbors at least 2 known parallel organs for the same purpose - the broadly mandated State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SHACU) and the Health Monitoring Unit meant to focus on public health service delivery.

Other legally established government agencies responsible to promote good governance and fight corruption include

the Inspectorate of Government, the Auditor General, the Ministry of / Directorate of Ethics and Integrity, the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA). We have various oversight and sectoral committees in parliament, including the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Local Government Accounts Committee, Committee On State Assets and State Enterprises (COSASE). Police Anti-Corruption Unit, Crime Intelligence Unit, Financial Intelligence Authority, even at local government level we have the likes of District Public Accounts committee. The Directorate of Public Prosecution, the Anti-Corruption Court, international Crimes Division – the list goes on. When it comes to legislations we have, inter alia, the Whistle Blowers' Act 2010, Access to Information Act 2005, the Anti-Corruption Act 2009, Leadership Code Act 2017, Anti Money Laundering Act 2017 All these are either wholly or at least partially tasked to play a part in fighting corruption; and finally we have the 1995 constitution Chapter 3 section 17 (i) states that It is the duty of every citizen of Uganda ... to combat corruption and misuse or wastage of public property.

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Each of the last 5 government manifestos and the NRM 10 point programme before them have had anti-corruption as the cardinal objective. We have the Zero Tolerance to Corruption Policy, a series of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) and each of the inministries has a Zero Tolerance to Corruption Policy. The agencies responsible for investment including Uganda Registration Services Bureau, the Uganda Investment Authority, Uganda Revenue Authority, and private sector bodies like Private Sector Foundation (PSFU) – all have Zero Tolerance to Corruption Policies in place which highlight procedures for exposing and fighting corruption. Each of the above MDALGs and institutions have been working and producing reports; a number of individuals and / or offices have been implicated; a few have been sanctioned but the majority of cases have been ignored. Recommendations of accountability committees, Auditor General, Inspectorate of Government, and Civil society have gathered dust. Some of these institutions have even gone ahead to coordinate under such umbrellas as Inter-Agency Forum (IAF) against corruption and the Accountability Sector MDAs/LGs.

3. THE HISTORY OF FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN UGANDA

Every year on 9th December which is the International Anti-Corruption day, Mr. President you address the country on corruption. In a recent case you cautioned IGG Betty Kamywa to “go slow on lifestyle audit because we are still lucky that our corrupt people are corrupt here”. Maybe you could reconsider that statement and allow her to include that as a strategy. So why is the subject of corruption still topical in your speeches? What information is Every time there is an issue, government hastens to create a body to address it. You have previously used your military might to fight and win various wars. We remember when you would take a roll call about previously biting problems and they were absent because you had solved them.

4. UGANDANS HAVE A DREAM – HELP US REALISE IT. YES, YOU CAN!

In a nutshell, we as Ugandans have a dream as to when corruption will be history. How, one may ask again! There could be many strategies but all can be collapsed into one – the Political will to exterminate the vice AT ANY COST. But creation of another agency is more or less soothing a deep septic wound with mere Vaseline. Moreover, the funding of all these offices will be at the expense of other social economic services, within the already constrained budget, of which public debt is a huge component. The recent case of Iron sheets for Karachunas in Karamoja is a good starting point where everyone will realise how costly corruption can be to them – acting both as a sanction for culprits and deterrent to the rest of us. For God and Our Country.

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