

# ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

## New Vision

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Justice Mulyagonja said resources got through corruption can be used to disrupt peace and cause violence. Photo by Tony Rujuta

## Report corruption

In Uganda, the *Anti-Corruption day* theme is *Reject and Report Corruption-Your responsibility*. The celebrations to mark the day will be held at Hotel Africana.

"It calls upon others and not necessarily anti-corruption agencies, to report corruption to the established Anti-Corruption agencies," The Inspectorate of General Government, Mulyagonja explains. She said this is derived from the constitutional aspirations of Ugandans. The national Constitution empowers citizens to be whistle-blowers and report any instances of corruption.

"Ugandans need to understand the impact of corruption in their day-to-day activities and in their lives. You need to ask yourself this question and once you find the answer then you will be encouraged to report corruption," Mulyagonja stated.

# United against corruption

By Jacqueline Emodok

Every year, about \$1 trillion is paid in bribes, while an estimated \$2.6 trillion is stolen annually through corruption, which is the equivalent of more than 5% of the global GDP. According to the United Nations Development Programme, funds lost to corruption are an estimated 10 times the amount of official development assistance.

In Uganda, the 2015 report of the Parliament estimates that the country has lost more than sh24 trillion to corruption in the last 10 years. The picture is not any different from Transparency International's survey of 2015, which ranks Uganda as the 29th most corrupt among the world's 167 countries.

The National Service Delivery Survey 2015 by Uganda Bureau of Statistics, People and Corruption put the Uganda. Police at 63% as far as bribery, fraud and extortion are concerned.

The force is closely followed by tax officials at 48%, Judiciary at 45%, public sector at 44% and business executives at 40%.

Corruption is a serious problem that can undermine social and economic development in societies, regions and countries. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against corruption and designated December 9 as the International Anti-corruption Day, to raise awareness on corruption. Governments, the private sector, non-

governmental organisations, citizens and the media around the world are joining forces to fight the upheaval.

This year's Anti-Corruption Day theme is *United Against Corruption for Development, Peace and Security*. The joint global campaign highlights corruption as one of the biggest hindrances to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by focusing on how corruption affects education, health, justice, democracy, prosperity and development.

### Understanding the theme

"The theme indicates that for us to develop at a reasonable pace and achieve our development agenda as a country and the world, we must deal with corruption," the Inspector General of Government, Irene Mulyagonja said.

Charles Mulozi Olweny, the co-ordinator for governance and social accountability at ActionAid Uganda, a non-governmental organisation says Uganda can only fully realise the SDGs if the Government gets rid of corruption.

"We cannot access education services if the money allocated for the sector is misappropriated by people in positions to use it money, instead of making the sector better," Olweny said.

"Thousands of innocent people die from curable diseases, like malaria, because the funds that are supposed to support infrastructural and technical development are misappropriated," Olweny added. When it comes to issues such as the rule of law, constitutionalism and

## THE INSPECTORATE HAS INSTITUTED MEASURES TO TRACK SUSPICIOUS TRANSACTIONS

good governance, corruption has a direct impact because it breeds impunity as people use money to evade justice. Mulyagonja said corruption also results in the absence of confidence in the Government.

"It can lead to the removal of the Government either through peaceful means or by a revolution when it becomes unbearable," she says.

The statement highlights the last part of the theme, which is for peace and stability. If you have people involved in corruption, there will be agitation among those who are observing the vice thrive and this can culminate in violence, which threatens security.

"When the corrupt accumulate resources, you do not know where they take them. Those resources can be used to disturb peace and even cause violence to erupt," Mulyagonja said. She notes that corruption is related to illegal acquisition of arms, terrorism is financed by corruption, sometimes, and, in some incidences the proceeds of money laundering also go into illegal acquisition of arms,

which threaten security.

### Advancing the theme

"We are already advancing the theme because we have adopted strategies to fight corruption. We have the national anti-corruption strategy, various laws that have been put in place and there are institutions to fight corruption," Mulyagonja notes.

The Government has three main strategies, which fall under the Inspector General of Government (IGG) mandate is three-fold.

IGG is an anti-corruption agency that supervises the implementation of the leadership code of conduct and also has the mandate to ensure that public offices adhere to the rule of law and principles of natural Justice in the work that they do.

The Inspectorate has instituted measures to track suspicious transactions, which are monitored by the Financial Intelligence Authority and the banks. This is to ensure that the country does not have an influx of monies that destabilise the economy.

### Way forward

Ironically, Uganda has had a rather strong legal and institutional framework to combat corruption, but has not translated into the desired outcome in as far as fighting corruption is concerned.

"We have the Anti-Corruption Court, the IGG, Auditor General and other anti-corruption agencies, but also the legal framework like the Anti-Corruption Act 2009 amended last year. We need the framework to be backed up so as to reduce the rise of

corruption in Uganda," Olweny says.

He notes that there should be recovery of public assets and misappropriated or stolen funds from individuals and officials found guilty charged with corruption.

The Government should also strengthen anti-corruption institutions especially the Police and the IGG both financially and technically. The financial aspect is to facilitate investigation of cases and technical human resource that cannot be compromised.

"For example, the Police is mandated to fight corruption, but they are not remunerated adequately. It is like a dog chasing a thief who has meat; the thief will keep dropping the meat and the dog will keep stopping to eat, so, by the time the dog wakes up, the thief has disappeared," Olweny said.

### Why report corruption?

"Sitting here at the Inspectorate of Government, I will read reports of corruption that have been reported directly or indirectly in newspapers, but I will not be able to find where corruption is. So, it is important for corruption to be reported to the anti-corruption agencies so they can follow up and do their work," Mulyagonja says.

The anti-corruption agencies comprise; the Auditor General PPDA the Uganda Police, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the service Commissions-Public Services Commission, Health Service Commission, Education Service Commissions, and Inspectorate of Government.