

**SPEECH OF THE OMBUDSWOMAN, ADV. BIENCE GAWANAS, TO
LAUNCH THE
NATIONAL INTEGRITY PROMOTION PROGRAMME**

WINDHOEK, 26 FEBRUARY 2003

First of all, a very sincere "thank-you" to all of you who could make it so early this morning... I am quite in awe of the strong positive responses we have received thus far in support of the National Integrity Promotion Programme, since we started talking about it a year ago, and since we started activities in January.

This shows that most Namibians do not support corruption. If we get the opportunity, most of us would be happy to join a movement to fight corruption and build a society on a foundation of integrity. It is not just coincidence that corruption has been making headlines so much of late. It is not just coincidence that our beloved leaders such as His Excellency the President, our Honourable Prime Minister and our church leaders have taken such a strong lead this year, although it is perhaps happy for me that they have given this programme such an enormous boost.

Why is corruption high on our agenda? For me, the answer is that, 13 years into our independence, we are starting to move towards adulthood as a nation. We are starting to decide our own values and how we want to live. Through actions and institutions, we are seeking to build the habits that will be the foundations of the society and the country that our children will inherit. We are determining what sort of people we want to be, who should be praised as the heroines and heroes of peaceful and independent Namibia.

Namibia we aim to become. To move otherwise, to prefer greed, self-enrichment, dishonesty, nepotism, or just a culture of entitlement is to undermine the ideals on which our nation is built. The values are in our programme logo, a Namibian fish eagle, "Serving Namibia with Integrity, Honesty and Pride".

How will the National Integrity Promotion Programme rise to this challenge? The mission of my Office is to promote and protect human rights, to ensure a fair and effective administration, to combat corruption and to protect the environment and natural resources of Namibia. Since the President appointed me in 1996, I have felt that promotion of positive values against corruption is just as important, if not more important, than penalizing the few who are brought to book. To widen the work of our Office, we looked for coalition partners in this positive effort.

From this stems the National Integrity Promotion Programme. I would like to take this chance to thank most sincerely our coalition partners... the Namibia Association of Local Authority Officers, the Namibia Institute for Democracy, the Namibian Chapter of Transparency International, and our funding agency, the United States Agency for International Development.

Our aim together is to work with as many organizations as possible to promote the positive values of integrity and to get civil servants, citizens, in fact everyone possible, to want to play their part in building Namibia, in establishing a society which turns our slogan into reality - fairness, equality, justice.

The programme's main goal is to prevent and minimize corruption through raising public awareness of the causes, effects, and costs of corruption on development, human rights and service delivery. Our coalition.. of public and private institutions and of people.. will promote and strengthen integrity systems at all levels of Namibian society.

Specific objectives are:

What is our primary goal as a nation? The ideals remain the same as they have been for decades. That is to improve the standard of life of so many of the poorest Namibians. At the top of the priority list of human rights are the social and economic rights such as the right to enough food, clean water, shelter, schooling, healthcare and other needs to live a life of basic human dignity and to be able to enjoy opportunity.

What I mean is that in our country, many of our compatriots live in deepest, starkest poverty, without work, with too little food, suffering AIDS, male violence and many other causes that stop them living a life of basic dignity. When we talk about fighting corruption, about promoting integrity, about human rights, we do so firstly because we believe that the maximum resources available must be targeted to improving the quality of life of the poor by realizing their social and economic rights. Corruption diverts such money away from those in need. The cost of corruption is usually far more than the money gained by an individual. It includes the cost of disrupting control and accounting systems so that fraud cannot be detected, it includes the years that people must live with the results of corrupt tender or improper administration, it includes demotivated staff and clients.

Is corruption a human rights issue? Yes, because mismanagement and corruption which leads to bad governance, impacts negatively on human rights, development and transparency and accountability. Good governance, good management practice and good administration are about ensuring that maximum efficiency is applied in delivering government and other services to our people.

Integrity, the core of the programme, is defined as "consistency in action that is in harmony with a person's values", such as justice, fairness, ubuntu, service. To paraphrase a well-known self-improvement guru, it is critical both for individuals and for societies to start with values, to translate them into actions, which become habits through being repeated, and then become character. This is the

- Conducting surveys to assess and publicise to what extent Namibians, both the general public and civil servants, see their institutions and organisations as open, transparent, efficient and accountable, how aware they are of corruption, whether they see it as a problem, and whether they have actually experienced corruption.
- Creating a coalition
- Creating new, expanding and supporting existing national and local integrity systems. Promoting the creation of ethic rules, ethic offices, or codes of conduct in public institutions and organisations, educating the public on corruption issues and national integrity systems, and influencing the behaviour of corrupt and potentially corrupt individuals.
- A public awareness campaign which will use pamphlets, posters, newspaper inserts and advertorials, an educational booklet, radio and television broadcasts, and so on. The findings of the survey will help the campaign target specific messages, service delivery issues and problems, as well as targeting those vulnerable to engage in corrupt practises.
- Workshops on stakeholder risk assessment, bringing people from national, regional and local government together with non-government and community based organizations, businesspeople and others involved in preventing fraud, corruption. The workshops will introduce procedures to encourage self-assessment and have follow-up workshops to receive feedback and provide guidance for action towards the strengthening and improving of the integrity systems.
- Coalition partners throughout the country are required to plan, organise and implement activities that will reach all Namibians, educating and encouraging debate and open discussion
- Complementing existing programmes to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsman to promote integrity in Namibia and to investigate instances of corrupt practices and fraud in the public and private sectors

Although this is the official launch, we decided to do this with the ball already rolling since January, so that we would have some achievements to report this morning.

1. The Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit started preparations for the survey on the 10th of February and we will jointly plan the way forward at the end of next month.
2. The office has already been overwhelmed with the proposals submitted by prospective coalition partners in December and January for possible funding through NID's sub grants. These include festivals, dramas, graphic art, workshops, training programmes in several regions of the country, community and schools meetings. Would be coalition partners include political parties and audit firms, and organizations from Kavango to Keetmanshoop.

In September, we are planning a National Integrity Promotion Week, to raise public awareness of national integrity promotion and anti-corruption efforts throughout the country. To quote one author: "the real victims of corrupt practice are ordinary citizens, who are often ignored as key role-players in the prevention of corruption".

In conclusion, I would like to say that this work to promote human rights and particularly social and economic rights is close to the mandate of the Ombudsman. Each year we tackle, and in nearly all cases resolve, hundreds of complaints usually maladministration and mismanagement. These are in addition to the one or two high level investigations - such as the National Housing Enterprise and Social Security Commissions, which grab the headlines, where our reports unearth top level problems. In every activity, the Ombudsman seeks the positive, to reinforce governance, to help management to do better, to prevent recurrence.

Speech by the Auditor General, Dr. F. Tjingaete
Launch of NIPP
26th February, 2003

Ombudswoman, esteemed invited guests and members of the media.

I am indeed honoured to be witness to this occasion today, having been associated with one of the most important anti corruption institutions for the past years. It has always been my belief that oversight institutions do not only have a duty to combat corruption through investigation of actual incidents of misappropriation of funds, but also an obligation to actively promote and educate citizens on matters of national integrity.

May I venture to say that, State coffers are currently being drained by persons of no conscience for the poor, the hard working, the 'man in the street' so to speak. People often regard it as the duty of this or that organisation to make sure that the inappropriate does not happen, to see to it that fraud and corruption is detected and punished, to unravel the mysteries of the criminal minds in our midst. And while one might agree with that perception to an extent, it is also a fact that unless the whole community becomes involved in this battle, in the quest for a non-corruptible society, ladies and gentleman I can promise you that it will be a battle lost. It will be time wasted.

I have been informed that this national integrity promotion programme will ciphon through to all the levels of society, of communities, of the population of this country wherever they might find themselves. The anticipated grassroots outreach campaign which will include various activities, will be directed, amongst others, at school children, at young adults, at grown-ups and the elderly alike. Everyone will have the chance to become involved in this cleansing operation. And a cleansing operation it will be. Integrity comes from within and it starts with me and you.

If you are asked for money to entitle you to a service which should be delivered by a government organisation free of charge, you should not be desperate enough to make the payment. If you are treated with hostility and disrespect when you approach government officials, you should make your voice heard so that the guilty ones can be brought to book. If you are requested by enumerators to take part in the service delivery surveys, also a component of this programme, co-operate rather than leaving it up to the next person to answer the questions

Media Release
Office of the Ombudsman

26 February 2003

National campaign boosts integrity and ethics, fights corruption

Preventing corruption is at least as good as tracking down and punishing a few individuals, says the Ombudswoman, Adv. Bience Gawanas. She was speaking today (Wednesday) at the launch of a nationwide campaign to promote attitudes and behaviour that will encourage all Namibians to avoid corruption.

The National Integrity Promotion Programme (NIPP) will initially run for one year. Partners are the Namibia Association of Local Authority Officers, the Namibia Institute for Democracy and the Namibian Chapter of Transparency International.

Funding for the programme comes from the United States Agency for International Development. Activities include a survey on attitudes and actual experiences of corruption, newspaper, television and radio publicity. NID can fund projects by community and other organizations in all regions such as dramas, community and school meetings and posters, and has already received many applications.

Training will help organizations and groups assess risks, build anti-corruption systems and develop staff, including in the Office of the Ombudsman where increased demand is expected. A National Integrity Week is planned for September.

Adv. Gawanas says: "Our aim is to work with as many organizations as possible to promote the positive values of integrity and to get civil servants, citizens, in

fact everyone possible, to want to play their part in building Namibia, in establishing a society which turns our slogan into reality - fairness, equality, justice."

Recently several national leaders, including His Excellency the President, the Honourable Prime Minister and the Bishop of the Lutheran Church and other community leaders, have spoken out against corruption and behaviour that undermines development. Adv. Gawanas called for Namibians to rally to these leaders and start building a Namibian national character based on ethical values such as integrity, fairness, honesty and service. "The maximum resources available must be targeted to improving the quality of life of the poor by realizing their social and economic rights. Corruption diverts such money away from those in need."

She explained that the cost of corruption is usually more than the money an individual gains. It includes disrupting administration and accounting systems to cover up, years of after-effects for instance of a corrupt tender, and demotivated staff and clients.

"Good governance, good management practice, transparency and accountability are about ensuring that maximum efficiency is applied in delivering government and other services to our people." She identified human development and the basic social and economic rights of the poorest Namibians, getting them enough food, shelter, housing and education to live a life of human dignity, as still the nation's top priority.

For more information on the National Integrity Promotion Campaign please call Cathy Hoff in the Office of the Ombudsman on (061) 2073225.

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