

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
NATIONAL INTEGRITY PROMOTION PROGRAMME (NIPP)
THE LAUNCH OF THE MULTI-MEDIA PRODUCTS OF THE NIPP
3 DECEMBER 2003
STATEMENT BY JUSTICE S V MTAMBANENGWE, ACTING
OMBUDSMAN

Ms. Diana Swain, Country Director of USAID,
Permanent Secretaries and Senior government Officials,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to thank you for honouring this launch of the NIPP multi-media products with your presence. I have no doubt that issues of integrity, and more specifically, the fight against corruption carries your support. Our mutually dedication and commitment to make Namibia a corruption free country is in the national interest and should unite us in building an exemplary national integrity system that should be the envy of our continental and sub-regional contemporaries.

The National Integrity Promotion Programme is an effort to fulfill one of the important mandates of the Office of the Ombudsman as articulated in Act 91 (f) of the Namibian Constitution, namely “the duty to investigate vigorously all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public monies by official and to take appropriate steps, including reports to the Prosecutor-General and the Auditor-General pursuant thereto”.

The launch of the multi-media products generated by the National Integrity Promotion Programme under the Office of the Ombudsman seems timely given the current status of corruption in Namibia. The corruption perceptions index (CPI) of Transparency International published in October 2003, positions Namibia 11 points below the 2002 CPI at 4.7. The Africa Competitiveness report also published in November 2003 reports Namibia’s loosing its ranking amongst the top 5 on the African continent. While there may be some doubts about the accuracy and motivation of these measures, there can be no doubt judging from the daily coverage of corruption-related instances in the media, that Namibia faces a tough battle ahead in realizing a corruption-free country and that now and not tomorrow is the time to make combined efforts to address the problem. To quote what the Legal Assistance Centre said in commenting on the Anti-Corruption Act of 2003 “Corruption is a serious drain on any society’s resources, since it depletes and misdirects public funds and it undermines legitimate business and government practices. The investigation into the business practices of the Social Security Commission this year opened the eyes of many Namibians

to the extent of the problem in our country. But this was not the first investigation or scandal that came to light in recent years”.

The National Integrity Promotion Programme was launched on the 26 February this year signaling the formal commencement of a proactive initiative within the Office of the Ombudsman to empower the general public to combat corruption through a sustained effort to raise public awareness. This launch also focused the efforts of the Office of the Ombudsman in building a coalition of private sector and public sector partners to strengthen national integrity in Namibia.

A question to be answered at this juncture is “What progress the Office of the Ombudsman had made towards achieving the objectives of the NIPP?” I am happy to report that marked progress was made in implementing the various components of the NIPP, including the scheduled launch of multi-media products developed as part of the National Integrity Promotion Programme. We have been able to successfully engaged a number of grassroots based organizations, umbrella bodies and selected special agencies in carrying the integrity and anti-corruption public awareness outreach to targeted sectors of the Namibian community. We have also been able to develop a risk assessment tool for public institutions. This tool would generally equip public institutions to assess their vulnerabilities to corruption and unethical behaviour, leading to the development of an in-house plan deal with identified vulnerabilities. The National Integrity Promotion Programme has also enabled the Office of the Ombudsman to strengthen the skills of its Investigation team to deal with their investigative duties effectively.

The Multi-media public awareness campaign is part of the 5-component strategy adopted under the National Integrity Promotion Programme to meet the objective of a grassroots outreach aimed at raising public awareness around corruption related themes throughout Namibia. The products of the multi-media public awareness campaign are intended to also provide further tools to the coalition partners for their interaction with grassroots through some of their envisaged activities such as seminars, information sessions, workshops, etc. These products will be distributed to as many institutions as possible, hopefully reaching as many sectors and regions of the Namibia. We trust that these items inclusive of pamphlets, educational booklets, promotional video, radio dramas, posters, radio adverts, newspaper adverts, etc will play its part in empowering Namibians to play a part in reducing corruption and thereby increasing the benefits to be accrued from efficient and effective public services.

Notwithstanding, the potential impact of these multimedia products, the ball is in every Namibians court, to become active partners in the fight against corruption. When we knowingly choose to ignore and become victims of corruption, we not only condone corruption, but support the methodical raping of our resources by a few “greedy” at the expense of ordinary Namibians. We all have a role in realizing the dream of a corruption-free Namibia.

I would at the occasion of this launch like to extend our word of thanks to the USAID for supporting this initiative. We have no doubt that through their support, the National Integrity Promotion Programme will continue to make a significant contribution towards fighting corruption in Namibia. We trust that this partnership started with the National Integrity Promotion Programme will continue into the future as we take stock and adjust our approaches towards improving our national integrity system in Namibia.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to officially launch the multi-media products of the National Integrity Promotion Programme. I will hand it over to Mr. Geiseb, to present products developed under the Multi-media awareness campaign.

I thank you.