

# ADDRESS

OF

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Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk about Botswana's experience in the fight against corruption - Secondly I want to thank you most sincerely for counting on Botswana in your consideration to host this conference. Botswana is a young country with a small population but a long history of democracy accountable government and good governance. Governmental transparency and accountability have always been cherished as a means of empowering the public sector and civil society institutions in the decision making process and adherence to the rule of law.

At Independence in 1966, Botswana adopted a system of multi-party democracy and put in place control measures against corruption, which inter-alia included the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, an independent office of the Auditor General, Independent judiciary and separated the powers of the Legislatures from that of the Executive. We also had in place, transparent procurement procedures that include open and public tenders, which have been revised from time to time to keep pace with our economic development and the changing environment.

Still at independence Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world, but the eventual discovery of minerals, in particular diamonds changed her entire economic structure. Over the years Botswana became a comparatively wealthy country with substantial foreign reserves. This was of course achieved through prudence and the government giving effect to policies that maintained a steady programme of development and at the same time restricted the outflow of foreign reserves thus, building up the country's assets.

In recent years restrictions have been relaxed in order to attract foreign investment and participation in major development projects. As these activities increased, then, so did the possibility of unscrupulous persons trying to make fortunes by illicit means, at the expense of the people of Botswana. Well documented

problems with the Botswana Housing Corporation in 1992, resulted in the loss of many millions of dollars through either mismanagement or illicit activities. The Botswana Housing Corporation scandal arose out of a situation where the demand for services exceeded capacity to supply, thus creating enormous challenges for the organisation, its employees and, more importantly, the management to meet the target. In the process procurement control measures were either overlooked or relaxed, if not avoided, in an attempt to expedite production. This was the worst mistake ever to be committed in our country.

In order to deal with these and other problems, Botswana also made a determined effort to tackle the rising problems of corruption in both the public and private sector. It was realised that the impact of these offences can be so gradual that they are not recognised as serious and accordingly tolerated. The Corruption and Economic Crime Act, 1994 which established the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime is a proof of Botswana's recognition of the problems and potential problems the country faced. In enacting the 1994 Act, Botswana adopted what is now commonly known as a three co-ordinated strategy of (1) Investigation (2) Corruption Prevention and (3) Public Education. These strategies are meant to make corruption more visible.

Our experience is that the strategies to limit corruption, have to be realistic and achievable and should be tailored to meet the needs of the nation. Over ambitious endeavours which cannot deliver the results can be counter-productive. Like other reforms, policies intended to address corruption have to be constantly implemented over long term, because these offences are essentially a governance issue. They thrive because of the opportunities created by weaknesses in the management system. The idea therefore, is to eliminate the weaknesses that are likely to create the opportunities. Opportunity is a hybrid factor comprising of human and organisational factors, so any attempt to eliminate prevent or detect any anomaly, must first isolate its causes.

By way of illustration the human factor will relate to the individual's personality, needs and knowledge of the system to be able to explore whatever weaknesses that are available. For instance, individuals who aspire to have high standard of living or high profile life style and who adore material things, but are beyond their means of income, may find themselves heavily indebted. This may exert financial pressure on them and where the control measures in the system are weak they may end up taking advantage to satisfy their personal needs. Organisational pressure on the other hand may arise out of colleagues influence in the organisation which usually leads to collusion. For instance, employees make excuses for their corrupt practices under the guise

that everybody does it. An accountable system will curtail and minimise all these ill feelings.

To combat corruption effectively needs positive educational and preventive strategies, reinforced by the fear of detection and punishment. These offences will not be eradicated until society refuses to tolerate them and individuals are prepared to oppose or question the criminal conduct of those wielding power and influence.

Our Public Education programmes are developed to achieve two specific objectives thus:- to educate the public against the evils of corruption: and to enlist and foster public support. Preventive measures are accompanied by strategic campaigns to strengthen public responsibility and accountability. Through such campaigns we have gained public support and re-established the traditional democratic belief that offenders must be caught and punished. We have developed systematic community participation programmes, that encourage positive attitudes towards enhanced ethical standards in the work place, community participation is also encouraged through three main features thus:-

1. Information - tell the public about the work of DCEC, services provided, how reports can be made and are handled. Periodically this includes press briefings about the work of

DCEC and, as and when necessary about completed investigations which have led to prosecutions

2. Explanation - explain often in details, the spirit and provisions of the Corruption and Economic Crime Act, and
3. Thirdly, "Promotion" to promote a favourable image of the DCEC by greater public awareness of the consequences of higher moral and ethical standards.

These messages might include positive attitudes towards discipline, sense of pride in providing an efficient public service, business ethics and social responsibility. Quite often these are integrated with corruption prevention talks on accountability of supervisors, the manager's role in minimising corruption opportunities through quality management. DCEC also organise joint functions/activities with local organisations, which may be government, parastatal, private or voluntary agencies and sports or cultural body. The main advantage of such joint functions are acceptance and recognition of the importance of the DCEC's role and its integration into the life of the Community.

These campaigns are bolstered by hard hitting, widely distributed posters, and radio campaigns emphasising what corruption is, why it is an evil and encouraging public support of our initiatives.

These campaigns can and do produce positive results as a public opinion survey has confirmed. The number of complaints made to DCEC, is also proof that the public have confidence in the organisation, confidence which is essential if progress is to be made.

On Prevention, DCEC has statutory duty to advise Government Departments and Public Bodies to secure changes in their procedures and practices to reduce the likelihood of corrupt practices. This service is available free of charge to the private sector, but offered on request.

I have already alluded to the manager's role in minimising corruption opportunities. It should be noted that such opportunities are not self contained areas of weakness and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Management and organisational deficiencies breeds corruption opportunities. Our campaign strategy is designed to inoculate the idea that the prevention of corruption is ultimately a management responsibility and can be more readily achieved when senior staff apply the right quality management principles.

The DCEC therefore conducts assignment studies within an organisation and makes recommendations on how the management can optimise management efficiency to reduce or

minimise corruption opportunities. After the study, DCEC launches the report by way of a seminar inviting all the stakeholders to discuss the recommendations. DCEC then monitors the effectiveness of the agreed recommendations and any policy and procedural changes involved. DCEC also advises Senior Management on draft legislation, proposed policies and draft procedures. This is to ensure that corruption prevention measures become an in built feature into these instruments before implementation.

And of course DCEC has an enforcement role to which a large percentage of its resources are devoted for there has to be deterrence also. DCEC's overall strategy is to coalesce public education, prevention and enforcement into a meaningful attack on the whole problem, rather than aspects of it. We believe we have made a successful start and it is gratifying that some of our neighbouring countries and even countries further from our boundaries are looking at what we have achieved and using Botswana as a model for their own anti-corruption campaigns.

Finally, I want to applaud action by OECD in their global anti-bribery efforts. That leaders of many international corporations pay bribes has been acknowledged by those conglomerates themselves, but for a long time there has been a perception that corruption was only a problem for developing and under-



developed countries or countries that were perceived to be on the demand side. From Botswana's perspective, we welcome the shift in the mind-set. Corruption is a two-way traffic that always involves a giver and the receiver. We support the measures taken by OECD to address the supply side of the equation, because without supply there can be no demand.

Thank you.