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**Let's Stop
Corruption**



Editorial

Collective Action than Rhetoric against Corruption

It is crystal clear that corruption is increasingly becoming devastating in Ethiopia. In our tradition, corruption has been considered as a vice and so people who engage in such activities have been dealt with severe measures. Likewise, they have been neglected by the society.

Now a days, however, corruption is getting higher and pervasive. It is expanding like a plague ravaging not only the public sector but also spreading its poisonous tentacles to the private sector in different forms. It is occurring both in cities and rural areas. Consequently, we have come to a situation where giving and receiving bribe is no more a vice to be scoffed at. Rather than doing things in terms of existing laws and regulations, perpetrating corruption has become a recognized way of life to make things done. Also, there seems to prevail reluctance on the side of the public to condemn and neglect the alleged corruptors.

By using the loopholes of existing rules and regulations in many of the public offices, some officials and civil servants have been perpetrating corruption offences, which are often systemic in nature. Such offences have been inflicting immense damage on the state and the population as a whole. Recent allegations of fraud and graft in the Addis Ababa City Administration can illustrate the case more clearly. The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) gold scandal and corruption in land administration in the capital Addis Ababa together with other corruption cases that have come to light in a row are also good examples to the case under discussion.

And yet, it is hard to claim that the working systems and procedures of a number of public and private organizations including the kebele administration and other administrative units are immune from corruption and malpractices.

It is, therefore, imperative that strong measure has to be taken urgently by the government, religious organizations, the private sector, civil societies, research and learning institutions, the media, the international community operating in the country and other stakeholders to combat the evil before it becomes hopelessly rampant. Otherwise, it is likely that it will exacerbate the current runaway of inflation, which in turn will make the poor more vulnerable.

NEWS highlights

PANEL DISCUSSION HELD @ GHION HOTEL ON THE ISSUE OF "CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN ETHIOPIA"

A panel organized in collaboration with the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) was held on July 3, 2008 at Ghion Hotel. The panel which was the second of the series of panel discussions envisaged to be held in this year had the theme: "Corruption and Public Service Delivery in Ethiopia: Issues on Some Selected Public Services." The aim of the panel discussion was: -

- To discuss and raise public awareness on some corruption sensitive public services;
- To facilitate the exchange of information and expertise on issues of corruption and public service delivery;
- To encourage/urge the various government offices and stakeholders streamline corruption in the programs and activities;
- To identify corrupt practices and discuss on institutional and legal gaps that could affect the proper implementation of public service delivery;
- To promote mutual understanding and shared responsibility among stakeholders in the fight against corruption; and
- To come up with possible remedies and mechanisms by which corruption couldn't be a threat to the national development.

Welcoming the participants, Ato Eyasu Yimer, Director of Transparency Ethiopia (TE), said these series of panel discussions under the title "**Deepening the knowledge on corruption Via Panel Discussion: Building well-informed Citizens about Corruption**" has greater contribution to bring professionals and participants with different backgrounds together and allow the exchange of ideas and experiences between them, adding that this would be vital to identify the problems and come up with workable solutions to the combating of corruption in the public service delivery.

On the other hand, in his opening remarks at the panel, H.E. Ato Ali Suleiman, Commissioner of FEACC, said that whilst encouraging results have been made so far in introducing new way of doing things in the civil service, a lot remains to be done in compliment to the enormous development activities being underway in the country. Primarily, public sector institutions whose services has a wide coverage and scope like telecommunication, electricity supply, financial and health sectors, revenue collectors and license authority, the construction sector and others shoulders bigger responsibility to make their service delivery quick, efficient and free from corruption and unethical behaviours. He further underscored that corruption offences go beyond the area of government institutions' public service delivery to include the private sector and non-government organizations (NGOs). In connection with this, the Commissioner pointed out various forms of corrupt practices in the private sector and NGOs. According to him, since the commission's mandate is limited to governmental agencies and development organizations, TE to broaden its scope to combat corruption and malpractices in the private sector and NGOs.

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BRIEF ON THE GOLD SCANDALES

The allegations of fraud and graft in some government institutions in Ethiopia, particularly the allegation of the transaction of fake gold in the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) have been a point of heated debate among a wide audience over the last several months. The total amount of money the government has lost by the transaction of fake gold/gilded iron has been estimated to be 158,565,960 Eth Birr.

In the mean time, charges against suspected individuals were filed after which they were deprived of a bail rights by the ruling of the First Criminal Branch of the Federal High Court in its session on March 21, 2008. Prior to this, a court had banned the transfer to a third party of any vehicles, residences, deposits or precious metals belonging to the suspects who cheated the NBE.

It is to be remembered that earlier the Federal Police Commission (FPC) arrested four senior executives of the NBE, three chemists working for the Ethiopian Geological Survey (EGS) Laboratory and other business men suspected of this scandal. According to the information obtained from the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC), 39 suspects have been so far prosecuted. The cases of the suspects have continued to be seen through court proceeding.

Global Corruption Report Launched

The Global Corruption Report (GCR) 2008 launched across the globe on 25th of June with the theme "Corruption in the water sector." The central message of the report is put as "Urgent action is needed to mobilize all stakeholders to develop practical ways of tackling corrupt practices in the many and varied parts of water sector." In addition to the water corruption, the report also discloses the 2007 edition of corruption perception index that ranked about 180 countries. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which reflects levels of corruption in the public sector as perceived by business people, country analysts and ordinary citizens points out alarming levels of corruption in the majority of countries covered by the index. These include many of the world's poorest nations including Ethiopia.

Rank of selected countries as rated in the year 2007

| Country Rank | Country /territory | Score* |
|--------------|---|--------|
| 1 | Denmark, Finland, New Zealand | 9.4 |
| 4 | Singapore, Sweden | 9.3 |
| 6 | Iceland | 9.2 |
| 7 | Netherlands, Switzerland | 9.0 |
| - | - | - |
| 138 | Cameroon, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Paraguay, Syria | 2.4 |
| - | - | - |
| 179 | Myanmar, Somalia | 1.4 |

* Score 10 denotes the most clean state, and 0 most corrupt

YOUR VOICE

Transparency Ethiopia (TE)-supported weekly Amharic radio program on corruption issues has been launched since April 20,2008. The program has been aired on radio Fana, FM 98.1, from 5 PM to 5: 20 PM every Sunday. The overall aim of the program is to educate the public on the essence, manifestations and adverse effects of corruption, and consequently contribute to the creation of a corruption intolerant society in our country.

One of the radio programmes which has achieved a lot by way of attracting significant number of audiences is the Q & A programme. Over the past six months, there has been strong and interesting competition between listeners in responding the different questions presented through the programme.

In this edition, we will focus on some of the views of participants of the radio programme who responded to the question regarding the meaning of the concept 'fair trade'. Accordingly, a number of listeners from Addis Ababa have expressed their feelings on the term.

A listener named Mahlet Gashaw said," if a business person or organization acquires its fortune in a lawful manner along with a clear understanding of the idea of a free trade, seeks its objective above the consid-

eration of profit making and takes in to account a country's level of development, customers' interest with respect to their health, financial strength, culture and history , then we can say that such a person or a business firm is practicing fair business principle."

Ermias Endale was another participant who gave his views on the issue. According to Ermias, when the buyer affords to buy goods and services on competitive prices, when the business transaction takes in to account the changes in terms of economic and social aspects, when those business practices impeding the conduct of business competition are avoided at all costs, when there is an application and utilization of advanced technology, when we are able to avoid working procedures which arrests free market and the economic progress of the society, which is so essential for the common good of the people, when unlawful business activities ruining the reputation of

INTEGRITY AWARD

Integrity means having the strength to resist a bribe, the courage to report an act of corruption, or the willingness to take action and stop the abuse of power for private gain. Therefore, integrity award is given to those individuals or organizations to recognize their remarkable job around these issues. Transparency International's (TI) Integrity Awards is a good illustration to this.

In today's world where corruption blights both rich and poor countries, it can never be contained without the active participation and commitment of individuals and other stakeholders to combat it. The reason for this is that fighting corruption requires more than tools and programmes; it requires role models who inspire others.

Nowadays, we can see increasing tendency of intolerance towards the offences of corruption and corruptors worldwide. By the same token, corruption is bound to attract maximum attention. This change can be traced back to the bravery and determination of individuals who fight corruption, many of whom have paid for their integrity with their lives.

As it is very well known, dealing with the problem of corruption is inconceivable without the determination of the men and women who take individual and collective action to tackle corruption at the source. In effect, these people are important allies of leaders who make every effort to improve the lives of all citizens. Hence, it is vitally important to recognize and give voice to these remarkable people.

Launched in 2000, TI Integrity Awards aims at honouring the bravery of individuals and organizations around the globe whose efforts are making a distinct difference in curbing corruption. The program's goal is to give greater recognition to the efforts of journalists, civil society activists, government and corporate whistleblowers who work to investigate and unmask corruption, often at great personal risk.

So far in its eighth year, the Integrity Awards have honoured individuals and organisations from Asia and Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. These

have included journalists and public prosecutors, accountants and government officials along with leaders of civil society.

Some African citizens were among those individuals who were conferred the Integrity awards for their resolve and commitment to fight corruption. For example, up on the beginning of the awards in 2000, Mr. Mustapha Adib, a Moroccan Air Force captain, was awarded for his courage in denouncing his corrupt superiors. The act costed him a five years prison sentence by the Military Court of Rabat.

In 2003, Dr. Dora Nukem Akunyili, a Nigerian Citizen, was one of the three awardees. The award was conferred for her because she tackled corrupt practices in the manufacturing, import and export of drugs, cosmetics and food products.

In 2004, the award went to two Kenyans, Constable Naftali Lagat and David Munyakei since they helped to expose the Goldenberg scandal pertaining to illegal transactions between the Central Bank of Kenya and Goldenberg International. This corruption offence is known to be one of the largest and most complex financial scandals in Kenyan history.

In 2005 Abdou Latif Coulibaly, a journalist and the head of the first Senegalese private press group, from Senegal was one of the awardees along with Israeli and Indonesian citizens. He was awarded in response to his commitment in bringing to light the country's biggest financial scandals, embezzlement cases, and irregularities in public contracting.

The TI Integrity Awards Committee consists of 11 individuals from across the world who have been active in the anti-corruption movement for many years. They serve as the jury for the awards and confer with the TI Board of Directors. Nominations are accepted for individuals and organisations as well as activist(s) from any walk of life. Besides, the action of the nominees should be one likely to attract interest and emulation in other parts of the world and must be particularly imaginative, innovative or courageous and deserving of wide international recognition. Nominations are subject to independent vetting under the guidance of the Integrity Awards Committee.

TRANSPARENCY ETHIOPIA

**DEDICATED TO THE
FIGHT AGAINST
CORRUPTION!!**

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PANEL DISCUSSION...

Three Papers on the theme were presented by Mr. Garbis Korajian, Dr. Yayehirad Asnake and Ato Bezabih Gebreyes. The panel was moderated by Dr. Hailemichael Abera, President of the Ethiopian Civil Service College.

The presentations were followed by a question and answer session which generated considerable debate that dealt with a wide range of issues. This allowed participants to forward comments, suggestions and raise issues that they did not understand. It also enabled the presenters to clear areas of misunderstandings.

Participants were drawn from the whole spectrum of stakeholders including prominent personalities, public officials, professional groups, academia, the private sector, the NGO community and the media.

In his closing statement, Dr. Hailemichael Abera urged every segment of the society including the government, religious institutions, non-government organizations, individuals and others to exert their effort to fight corruption so as to accelerate the development of the country which in his view is something that can be achieved. He concluded his remark by expressing gratitude to all participants who attended the panel actively.

THE ROLE OF CSOS IN THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

The civil society Organization (CSO) includes every individual, group, Community, organization or business outside Government.

- CSOs must Campaign and push for policy change in the laws in a manner that will support the fight against corruption.
- CSOs must continue to serve as watch dogs in the implementation of transparency and accountability measures in governance.
- CSOs should initiate and support prevention and education programs against corruption.
- CSOs should engage, support and partner with Anti- Corruption Agencies in the Fight against Corruption.
- CSOs should strive to serve as watchdogs against abuses by the anti-corruption Agencies in the fight against corruption.
- CSOs at all levels should organize against corruption.
- CSOs must also demand accountability from the anti-corruption agencies.
- CSOs must exhibit Zero-tolerance for corruption and discourage the society from celebrating and honoring corrupt people.

YOUR ...

business individuals is restrained, when there is a conducive environment for Ethiopia's accessibility in international market and when we use all the instruments that the economic policies give us to do so to deal with the interest of business men and consumers, then we can assume that a fair trade truly exists.

The last person who gave his opinion on the topic is Nahusenay Kebede. He said, "Just because some business individuals give emphasis to the living condition of buyers and the market situations, this doesn't entail that they don't really care about their business objective. Rather, their intent should be seen in terms creating a conducive, flexible and profitable business environment. Since such business practice is based on a commitment to fundamental values of transparency and accountability, it will allow sellers to be successful in business endeavors as well as in their private and social life." According to Nahusenay, when we are committed to give services to those who need it at the best appropriate time and place, we are thus said to have given consideration to our selves, our country and the society. This valuable endeavor is also a moral obligation from which we can acquire mental satisfaction.

Finally, Nahusenay said there can be no arguing that there is no lofty commitment on the part of some business individuals in our country when it comes to poverty reduction efforts. What we see is a situation where in every opportune moment, greedy merchants are engaged themselves in illegal business activities to make profit over night. In contrast, those who do their business in legally and sell their items at reasonable prices contribute their share to the alleviation of poverty. Generally, it should be understood that the concept of free market constitutes the value of integrity, transparency and accountability.

NOTICE

BROWSE TRANSPARENCY ETHIOPIA'S WEBSITE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:
<http://www.transparencyethiopia.org>

RADIO PROGRAMME

LISTEN AND PARTICIPATE IN THE WEEKLY RADIO SHOW OF TE-EVERY SUNDAY@5:00 ON FM 98.1 -MUDAYI PROGRAMME