



Africa Anti-Corruption Day: COVID-19 relief funds and illicit financial flows top concerns for Transparency International chapters in latest call to action

11 July - On Africa Anti-Corruption Day, 28 Transparency International chapters across Africa have sent an open letter to the leaders of the African Union (AU), reminding them of their anti-corruption commitments and urging additional measures as a matter of urgency.

The organisations highlighted their concern over the region's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the livelihoods of all African citizens and deepened inequalities. Extensive funds are needed to reverse these effects, but corruption threatens to divert money away from important areas like health care and food. These 28 organisations are therefore calling for states to open up procurement information, and sanction and prosecute any abuses of COVID-19 recovery funds. This letter comes at the backdrop of the Auditor General's report on COVID-19 funds which exposed government ministries, agencies and departments which failed to account for the COVID-19 funds in Zimbabwe.

The letter also recognises that tens of [billions of dollars](#) in illicit funds leave Africa every year, which is money that could be ploughed into essential public services for its people. It calls on leaders to accelerate strategies to combat these illicit financial flows and roll out reforms such as "know your customer" requirements and an end to secretive company structures.

While the near-universal ratification by African States of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption is commendable, the letter calls attention to poor translation of this into action at national level.

Read the full letter here: https://www.tizim.org/sdm_downloads/ti-z-open-letter-to-african-union/

Rueben Lifuka, vice-chair of Transparency International, said:

"This is a critical moment for the African region and its people. If corruption is not addressed urgently, it will block efforts to rebuild after the devastating pandemic and the region's hopes of charting a path to a stronger future. Fairly and transparently managing large-scale COVID-19 recovery funds and preventing billions of dollars from exiting the region through illicit means should be top issues for all leaders. On this Africa Anti-Corruption Day, we need the AU and governments of African states to heed the experts and action strong, decisive anti-corruption reforms."

Notes to editors:

- The latest Corruption Perceptions Index shows that public sector corruption across Africa stands at an average of just 33, the lowest regional score in the world: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/cpi-2021-sub-saharan-africa-amid-democratic-turbulence-deep-seated-corruption>
- More than [one in four people across Africa](#) paid a bribe to access public services, according to the largest and most detailed survey on citizens' direct experiences of corruption, the Global Corruption Barometer: <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/africa/africa-2019>

The Executive Director is available for interview.

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