

Transparency Wotch

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Unveiling Zimbabwe's National Anti-Corruption Strategy: Challenges and Triumphs in the Fight Against Corruption

In an ongoing battle against corruption, Zimbabwe grapples with the intricate balance of coordinating diverse anticorruption entities. The effectiveness of anti-corruption endeavours relies heavily on the seamless coordination agencies anti-corruption and stakeholders. Nevertheless, the complexity arising from institutions, overlapping mandates, conflicting agendas, ambiguity, and varying independence poses significant challenges, making it exceedingly difficult for these entities to synchronize their actions. Zimbabwe's historical struggle with fragmented anti-corruption initiatives stems from a lack of coordination among stakeholders, leading to mutual blame among anticorruption agents for the failure to meet their goals and leaving citizens uncertain about where to address their corruption-related concerns. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), initiated on July 11, 2020, emerges as a pivotal framework, aiming to synchronize efforts and streamline resources for a more effective fight against corruption.

The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) Framework

Mandated by the NACS, the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) established the National Anti-Corruption Strategy Steering Committee (NACSSC). This committee, comprising various stakeholders, oversees the NAC's implementation, fostering non-duplication of roles, optimal resource allocation, and institutional reinforcement to combat corruption.

Aligned with international anti-corruption frameworks, the NACS outlines strategic objectives, including empowering citizens, fortifying deterrence structures, transparency, protecting whistle-blowers, and recovering assets from corruption crimes.

Pitfalls and Successes

A recent National Bribe Payers Index by Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) revealed some challenges. Out

of 2,434 respondents, 59% were unaware of the NACS, and 45% lacked confidence in its ability to combat corruption, citing limited political will and a pervasive culture of corruption. Despite these hurdles, ZACC, the custodians of the strategy, collaborated stakeholders to achieve significant milestones:

- Whistle-blower Protection Legislation: The approval of the principles of the public interest disclosure (Protection of whistle-blowers) Bill in March 2022 signals progress, offering hope for enhanced whistleblower protection.
- Asset Recovery: Between 2020-2023, 12 assets and proceeds of crime were successfully recovered.
- Coordination Collaboration among anti-corruption actors has improved, contributing to heightened awareness of corruption among citizens.

Strategic Challenges

Despite these successes, strategic challenges in NACS implementation persist:

- Limited Funding: Insufficient resources pose a challenge in the successful implementation of the NACS activities. Most activities are supported by civil society organisations (CSOs).
- Perceptions and Political Will: Perceptions and assumptions impede key target attainment, exacerbated by a perceived lack of political will.
- Political Parties' Inaction: Strategic partners, particularly political parties, have shown limited support, with a lack of quorums by main actors under strategic objective 6 on enhancing political parties' transparency, political will and accountability.

As Zimbabwe navigates the complexities of anticorruption efforts, the successes and challenges encountered in the NACS journey provide valuable lessons for future endeavours in the pursuit of a corruption-free nation.



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The Director's Note

As we step into the new year, I am filled with both gratitude for the strides we've made and a renewed sense of purpose for the challenges ahead. 2023 has been a year of resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment in our collective fight against corruption in Zimbabwe. Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ) has been at the forefront of this battle, and together, we've achieved significant milestones.

Reflecting on the past year, our team has tirelessly worked to raise awareness, promote accountability, and advocate for transparency and integrity in the public and private sector. Despite the complexities and obstacles, we've witnessed a growing recognition of the importance of combating corruption for the well-being of our society. Our community engagement initiatives, awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy have contributed to a heightened awareness of the corrosive impact of corruption on our nation's development-including Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2023, we successfully partnered with various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, to foster a united front against corruption. Through collaborative efforts, we've seen increased scrutiny on corrupt practices, leading to investigations and accountability measures. Our outreach programs have empowered citizens with the knowledge and tools needed to resist corruption and demand transparency. However, as we celebrate our achievements, it's crucial to acknowledge the persistent challenges that continue to undermine our progress. The fight against corruption is an ongoing battle, and our commitment remains unwavering. As we begin the year, TIZ has set forth ambitious objectives to further strengthen our impact. Through strategic engagement with policymakers, we aim to contribute to the development and implementation of effective anticorruption measures.



We recognise the power of an informed and engaged citizenry. We will continue to expand our community outreach programs. By reaching more communities, we aim to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to resist corruption and actively participate in the fight for a transparent Zimbabwe. By working together with diverse stakeholders, we can create a stronger, united front against corruption.

Together, we can build a Zimbabwe where transparency, integrity, and accountability prevail. Your continued support is instrumental in our quest for a corruption-free society. Thank you for being part of the TIZ family. Here's to a year of progress, resilience, and positive change.

Tafadzwa Chikumbu

Did you know that you can now report corruption online on the Global Leaks platform?

Use this link: https://report.tizim.org/#/



Harnessing the power of data analytics in fighting corruption

By Sharon Magumbo

Despite perennially low rankings on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Zimbabwe takes a bold step towards combating corruption by harnessing the power of data analytics. Amidst challenges in prosecuting corruption due to insufficient evidence, the nation embraces technological advancements as a catalyst for achieving transparency and good governance. As large-scale corruption persists, Zimbabwe is adopting innovative strategies, leveraging technological to address this longstanding challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic catalysed a technological shift in Zimbabwe, with widespread smartphone and online usage becoming integral to daily life, setting the stage for a paradigm shift in the fight against corruption. The Integrated Electronic Case Management System for online court proceedings exemplifies this transition. Recognising the potential of data, Zimbabwe sets the stage for a comprehensive strategy to combat corruption by leveraging the wealth of information generated in the digital realm.

Zimbabwean authorities and civic societies are now tapping into data analytics as a potent weapon in the fight against corruption. By utilising various data sources and technological platforms, the nation is exploring new avenues to enhance transparency and accountability.

Social Media as a Reporting Hub

Social media emerges as a powerful tool for collecting data on corruption trends through real-time reporting. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram empower citizens and whistleblowers to expose corruption efficiently. Transparency International Zimbabwe's corruption reporting mechanism on its website further amplifies this effort, allowing for the mapping of corruption frequency by region, providing a targeted response.

Data Mining for Auditing Public Procurement

In the realm of grand corruption tied to public procurement, data mining emerges as a crucial tool for auditing. By identifying red flags, detecting collusion patterns, and monitoring tenders, data mining applications contribute to proactive corruption prevention. Zimbabwe's recent enactment of the Procurement Regulation Act and its embrace of technology positions the nation at the forefront of utilising data to monitor corruption trends effectively.

Big Data and Data Analytics in Combatting Financial Corruption

The adoption of big data and data analytics technologies facilitates the analysis of vast datasets to identify potential instances of corruption. This is particularly relevant in areas such as public procurement, asset disclosures, tax records, and financial allocations. Collaborative efforts among Southern African countries, guided by Transparency International's research, showcase the increasing regional acknowledgment of the importance of data analytics in fighting corruption.

It's about collecting data, standardizing data, sharing data, making it interoperable, and then using data to identify patterns to detect criminal activity.

- Randy Repka



Whistle-Blowing Tools through Technology

Recognising the challenges in prosecuting high-profile corruption cases, Zimbabwe explores technology-driven solutions. A proposed whistleblower protection law gains momentum, while innovative ICT and crowdsourcing platforms provide a confidential avenue for reporting corruption by individuals within governmental agencies.

The Path Forward

For Zimbabwe to fully exploit the potential of data analytics, a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach is imperative. Capacity building through training, awareness initiatives, and legal and institutional policy reviews are essential for both governmental agencies and civil society. This strategic blend of existing initiatives and technological advancements promises a more ethical and effective use of data analytics, enabling targeted resource allocation and planning in the ongoing battle against corruption.

Procurement

Towards Institutional Transparency in Procurement

COVID-19 raised widespread debates over the role of anti-corruption agencies and oversight bodies in preventing grand corruption as well as the country's procurement process, related risks and vulnerabilities within public procurement.

Advantages of eProcurement











66 e-procurement [facilitates the flow of information which] gives confidence to all the critical stakeholders about the public procurement process.

How eProcurement Works?















PRE-AWARD PHASE

POST-AWARD PHASE

...the legal framework already exists partially and this should be leveraged upon to fast track the adoption of e-procurement in Zimbabwe.

Critical pillars



eGovernment reforms



Legislation amendments are needed



Partnership & expertise from experienced countries

of successful eProcurement.



Inter-agency co-ordination & use of a common standard





Strong commitment from leaders.











Interrogating the correlation between corruption and the media in Zimbabwe

By Richard Mugobo

Corruption often flourishes in an environment where the free flow of information is non-existent and opaque governance systems reign supreme. In Zimbabwe, the right to access information, although enshrined in the country's constitution, often exists as a tokenistic gesture. The media, in all its various formats, occupies an integral role in exposing corruption to public scrutiny and fighting against impunity. However, to perform that duty of speaking truth to power without fear of intimidation, the media must exercise unfettered press freedoms. The Zimbabwe National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2020-2024) recognises the media as one of the most important actors in the fight against corruption in Zimbabwe. For the media to effectively play a watchdog role, there are a few critical questions that need to be raised, interrogated, and answered.

Do we have press freedom?

Press freedom and Zimbabwe are uneasy bedfellows. Regrettably, the Zimbabwean media's ability to report on corruption has often been curtailed by restrictions on the sector's freedom and independence. Amnesty International, in its latest advocacy briefing entitled "Human rights under attack: A review of Zimbabwe's human rights record in the period 2018-2023," highlights that the culture of intimidation and harassment of journalists has persisted under the current government. Since the 2018 elections, there has been well documented incidents where journalists have been persecuted simply for expressing an opinion. In 2021 alone, at least 15 journalists were assaulted, detained, or arrested by security agents for carrying out their work. In the past five years there has also been cases of throttling of the Internet to stifle the free flow of information.

Does the Zimbabwean media foster transparency and accountability?

An informed citizen is an empowered citizen, and the media is a vehicle that relays critical information to citizens. Has the Zimbabwean media performed its rightful purpose of speaking truth to power and ensuring the powerful are accountable to the public through sharing relevant, accurate and credible information? Has the media opened a space for an exchange of citizens' opinion about how they are governed? Do we have an independent and diverse media landscape, with quality journalism adhering to ethical standards? Answers to these questions are hotly contested, depending on the pole opposite one sit.

Corruption in the media: Who shall hold the media accountable?

Ideally, the media must also be able to hold itself accountable. It should have a moral standing to challenge power. In most cases, the media panders to profit and the interests of capital at the expense of the ordinary citizen. Issues of 'brown envelope' abound in the local media landscape. In all this, we tend to forget that the media itself can be captured, to the extent of representing business or political interest, at the expense of public interest. It must not be lost to all that the media also exists to make money.

When has the media held power to account?

The Drax scandal in 2020 expose is one latest and prominent example of how journalism can hold power to account. The scandal, initially exposed in April 2020 by Mduduzi Mathuthu, editor of a popular online tabloid, came to full public attention at the end of May after it emerged the company involved, Drax International, ad invoiced government US\$28 per mask for disposable masks whose wholesale price was under US\$4 for 100 from reputable local suppliers. Media revelations prompted a public outcry and subsequent dismissal of and court proceedings

against Obadiah Moyo the then Minister of Health and Childcare.

Do we have investigative journalism in Zimbabwe?

For the media to be able to provide detailed in-depth expose, there is need for adequate resources to be deployed. In Zimbabwe, the challenges that face investigative journalism hinders its ability to play a crucial watchdog role that promotes transparency and accountability as a counterbalancing power.

Is community media an alternative?

The proliferation of digital media has given rise to new forms of journalism, with community media initiatives emerging in different parts the country. These community rooted and usercentric media organisations, small as they are, have been able to hold local authorities to account, while providing timeous and relevant information to the communities that they serve. Community media houses have grown exponentially, especially during the Covid 19 lockdown, despite struggling financially. Initiatives such as Community Podium and CommuTalk are perfect examples of non-profit participatory media organisations that have managed to create inclusive platforms for voices of marginalized communities to be heard.

Community Podium creates spaces and develops resources for participatory civic media to thrive and in the process, enable communities to reclaim their voice. These community media organisations are guided by the desire to promote access to information and strengthening the inclusion of marginalized voices, which often leads to meaningful public participation, offering a bottom-up opportunity to combat corruption. While Veritas, News Hawks, Fact Check ZW and Zim Fact expose corruption and maladministration at a national level, community initiatives take a microscopic approach of exposing corruption at the lowest levels and amplify the effects it has on society's lowest common denominator.

The rise of social media.

The emergence of social media platforms has unleashed new possibilities of holding power to account. Social media is considered more widely accessible, and more resistant to top-down control compared to traditional media. Zimbabwe's connected population makes use of a variety of different social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and TikTok. With enough fact-checking, social media can be a powerful weapon against corruption. Barring the pitfalls of fake news attached to it, social media has shown immense power to mobilise public opinion thereby increasing citizen engagement. However, the Cyber and Data Protection Act of 2021 limits social media freedom.

What's the way forward?

Zimbabwe needs a robust media ecosystem that can hold power to account. Currently, the media is under resourced, at times compromised and at best self-censored. There is need for the media to deeply introspect and realign its role as providers of information to citizens. In the fight against corruption, respect for truth and the right of the public to truth should always be the first duty of the journalist. The quest for media freedom must be amplified. Authorities must also adhere to the Constitution of Zimbabwe and ensure that the values and principles it enshrines are translated into legislation protecting the rights to access information and freedom of expression.

Empowering Women: A Crucial Element in the Fight Against Corruption for Inclusive Development

By Tracy Mutowekuziva

Amid the global pursuit of gender equality, social justice, and inclusive development, the critical role of promoting and protecting women's rights takes center stage. In a nation contending with corruption, the impact on gender inequities is magnified, hindering progress towards true gender justice. The detrimental consequences of corruption are particularly felt by women, impeding their access to essential services, and perpetuating exploitative practices within the informal sector.

Corruption's corrosive influence exacerbates challenges faced by women, especially in marginalized communities, where essential resources are scant. Funds earmarked for public services, crucial for women's well-being, are diverted through corrupt practices, intensifying obstacles to quality healthcare, education, and other vital resources. Beyond basic services, corruption fosters exploitative practices and extortion in the informal sector, leaving women trapped in cycles of poverty and vulnerability.

Addressing the disproportionate impact of corruption on women demands the implementation of targeted strategies. Empowering women in anti-corruption efforts involves formulating and supporting gender-responsive policies, ensuring access to justice, legal protections, and active participation in decision-making processes. A focused approach can break the cycle of vulnerability, fostering gender equality and empowering women to assert their rights.

Crucially, the inclusion of women and marginalised communities in the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) emerges as paramount. Active participation empowers women to shape policies impacting their lives, contributing valuable perspectives and experiences to enhance the strategy's effectiveness. Diverse voices aid in identifying and addressing corruption risks, leading to more inclusive and sustainable solutions. By involving these groups, anti-corruption measures can be implemented fairly, fostering trust in governance, and holding institutions accountable.

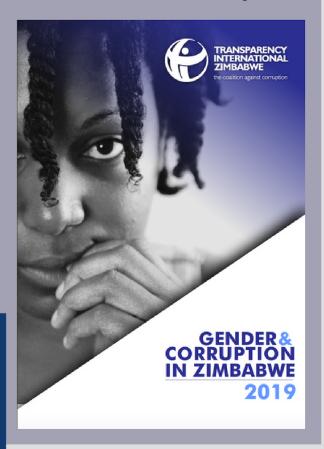
Beyond combating corruption, the inclusion of women and marginalised communities in anti-corruption efforts has broader societal implications. Opportunities for participation and representation create a sense of ownership and engagement, bridging social divides and promoting dialogue. Inclusive strategies build partnerships among different groups, fostering social cohesion and collective action against corruption. By actively involving diverse voices, these efforts not only combat corruption but also contribute to building trust within communities and promoting a more inclusive and just society.



Findings from the Gender and Corruption Report, 2019:

- 69.6% of respondents agreed that there is a link between the sex of a person and corruption in Zimbabwe.
- 47% of the respondents noted that men were more likely to initiate corruption dealings as opposed to women.
- 64.3% agreed that there was a difference in the pattern of paying bribes between men and women
- 58.9% of the respondents believe that having women in positions of authority would in result less corruption.

To understand more about gender and corruption in Zimbabwe, read this report:





The Anti-Corruption Dimension in the 2024 National Budget: A Transparency International Zimbabwe Perspective

Introduction

On November 30, 2023, the Minister of Finance, Economic Development, and Investment Promotion, Mthuli Ncube, unveiled the 2024 National Budget themed "Consolidating Economic Transformation". While the budget predominantly focuses on domestic revenue mobilisation, particularly through tax reforms, it has faced criticism for its potential adverse effects on ordinary citizens in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, the 2024 National Budget lacks a specific emphasis on combating corruption, despite its persistent impact on the efficient management and utilisation of public resources.

Budget Implementation Context in Zimbabwe

As the 2024 budget aims to consolidate economic transformation, the looming threat of corruption poses a significant challenge to these efforts. To fortify the fight against corruption, strategic financing of institutions such as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), specialised Anti-Corruption Courts, and the National Prosecuting Authority is imperative. Allocating sufficient resources to these entities is crucial for the effective realisation of the government's 2024 targets and goals.

2023 National Budget Allocations for Anti-Corruption Agencies- Key Observations

	Budget Allocation for Anticorruption Institution 1		
No.	Institution	Proposed Allocation 2024	%
1.	Zimbabwe Anticorruption Commission	ZW 59, 642, 465,000 Billion	0.10
2.	National Prosecuting Authority	ZW 98,272, 646,000 Billion	0.17
3.	Judicial Service Commission	ZW 274, 035, 502,000 Billion	0.46
4.	Office of the Auditor General	ZW, 116,964, 994,000 Billion	0.20
5.	Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage	ZW 3, 931, 884, 366,000 Trillion	6.60
	Grand Total	ZWL\$4,480,799,973,000 Trillion	7.53%

Present initiatives and strategies indicate a constrained budget allocation for the anti-corruption endeavor. The recently proposed 2024 budget, mirroring patterns from preceding years, demonstrates inadequate investments in anti-corruption measures. Minister Mthuli Ncube has openly recognised the undercapitalisation of pivotal institutions aimed at bolstering investigations, prosecuting corruption cases, recovering proceeds of crime, and fortifying preventive measures against corruption and related malpractices, spanning both the public and private sectors.

The focus of the budget is consolidation of economic transformation, as shown by large allocations towards key public sector institutions like agriculture, education, health, infrastructure among others. Historical precedence shows that much of those resources allocated are lost through mismanagement and corruption. This is attributed to weak systems, institutional and policy gaps inherent in the whole anticorruption fight. These corruption and institutional flaws have been exposed on an annual basis by the Auditor General through the Audit Reports.

The government of Zimbabwe has allocated Z\$59.6 billion to the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) to fulfill some of its operational requirements for the effective execution of its mandate in 2024. However, given the prevailing nature and extent of corruption in the country, the allocated budget

appears to be insufficient to cover all envisaged anti-corruption initiatives, particularly in light of ZACC's ambition to decentralise its operations across various provinces. The budget statement also highlights the necessity for 'specialised critical skills,' encompassing property valuation, procurement, engineering, financial intelligence, auditing, and accounting within the Asset Recovery and Investigations Departments of the Anti-Corruption Commission. These specialised skills mandate continuous capacity building, both in terms of the institution and its human resources. Furthermore, the budget fails to explicitly address the support needed for the effective implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2020-2024), with national budgets since 2020 lacking a dedicated allocation to ensure its comprehensive implementation.

Concerning the establishment of anti-corruption courts, the budget statement emphasises the imperative of adequately resourcing specialised anti-corruption courts to ensure the expeditious prosecution and resolution of all corruption cases. However, the budget remains silent on the specific allocation intended for these specialised courts. Moreover, the persistent issue of sluggish prosecution and resolution of corruption cases, widely acknowledged and discussed, remains largely unaddressed. This delay is often attributed to a lack of coordination between the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). While the NPA holds the mandate to prosecute cases, ZACC possesses investigative and arresting powers, leading to a prolonged process. To address this, the 2024 budget should actively reflect efforts to establish and fund effective synergies among all pertinent anti-corruption stakeholders in Zimbabwe. Without such collaborative measures, the nation will continue to witness protracted prosecution and resolution of corruption cases within ZACC, NPA, and specialised anti-corruption courts. The necessity for a comprehensive, stand-alone budget that encompasses all involved entities is crucial for efficiently addressing corruption, preventing mismanagement, and curbing the abuse of allocated resources.

The government intends to pursue the enactment of the Lay Bill on Anti-Corruption and Whistle-blowers Protection Bill which protects whistleblowers and enhances their willingness to partake in testifying against suspects. The budget does not specify how it will ensure such laws will be hastened.

Conclusion

The fight against corruption needs to be financed. Particular areas of interests are adequately financing the institutions mandated to fight against corruption and supporting legal frameworks. Transparency International Zimbabwe therefore recommends that in successive budges the government should:

- Increase anti-corruption budget This will help to curb high illicit financial flows and increase government financial coffers. Rampant corruption in Zimbabwe is depriving the government to fully realize its developmental targets and leakages within the public sector are matters of concerns. A baseline study by Transparency International Zimbabwe revealed high levels of corruption within the public sector.
- Invest in the National Anti-corruption Strategy While the government has come up with National Anti-corruption Strategy for the period 2020-2024, in line with the Article 5 of the UNCAC to which Zimbabwe is a State-Party. The



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strategy has not been yielding positive results because of limited resources and some sub-committees has not been functional due to limited budget being allocated to anticorruption agencies like the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission. In Article 33 of the UNCAC, State Parties are encouraged to incorporate into their domestic legal systems appropriate measures that provide protection against unjustified treatment of persons who report any acts of corruption. The protection of reporting persons is relevant to all the three purposes of UNCAC, which are to: (a) promote and strengthen measures to prevent and combat corruption more efficiently and effectively; (b) promote, facilitate and support international cooperation and technical assistance in the prevention of and fight against corruption, including in asset recovery; and (c) promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property. As such, the proposed budget should have also prioritized enough resources towards the next strategy.

• Full implementation of digitalization of public procurement system - While the proposed budget highlighted initiative and efforts to adhere to e-procurement (eGP) to avoid colossal violation of procurement procedures within public

institutions. The government should modernising the procurement system. This will enhance transparency, accountability, integrity and boost public government confidence.

• Hasten enactment of whistleblower blower protection legislation - The government of Zimbabwe should expedite the development of legislation and an effective institutional framework to protect general citizens from discriminatory or disciplinary action (i.e., employees or any individual) who disclose in good faith and on reasonable grounds certain suspected acts of wrongdoing or corruption to competent authorities. TI Z therefore believes that whistleblowing is one of the most effective ways to detect and prevent corruption and other malpractice and as such whistleblowers must be protected by the law. Public officials are most likely to detect wrongdoing in the workplace, such as fraud, misconduct or corruption. This alone will help citizens to have confidence or come forth reporting corrupt malpractices as they know they will be protected by the laws that would have been put in

COMING SOON!!

The Corruption Perceptions Index 2023 will be published on 30 January. This year, our analysis will focus on how weakening justice systems contribute to a lack of accountability public officials, thereby allowing corruption to thrive.

In 2022 Zimbabwe ranked 157 out of 180, do you think we have improved from that position this year?

Follow us on our social media accounts to learn more.

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2023



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