



Anti-corruption Organs and the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The Economic and Financial Corruption Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Tribunal and so on, are agencies combating corruption in Nigeria, but the greediness of those in authority, government's lack of will to indict some past and present public office holders, lack of discipline and integrity, delayed justice on those standing trial on corruption cases, have hampered the enforcement of the laws or fair determination of corruption cases in Nigeria. The study examined the various anti-corruption organs and the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Our findings are that these anti-corruption organs in Nigeria are also plagued with its problems such as poor funding from the government that established them, bad governance, ineffective democracy, politics driven by ethnical chauvinism, inefficiency of the various organs to tackle corruption, without any form of bias or favouritism. The study concludes that, although there are adequate laws or machinery to curb corruption in Nigeria, the activities of the anti-corruption organs should continually be made public, transparent and accountable so as to win the confidence of members of the Nigerian society.*

Key words: *Anit-corruption, fight against corruption, Nigeria*

1. Introduction

There is plethora of definitions of corruption. These definitions are variegated and quite often confusing. Therefore, attempts at providing a generally acceptable definition of corruption have defied a consensus. This is so because, some of the approaches at defining corruption have been rather hasty, partisan or discriminative. It is like the attempts made by a dozen blind men at describing an elephant. Each described the creature from his angle of touch. In philosophical, theological, or moral discussions, corruption is spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. In economy, corruption is payment for services or material which the recipient is not due, under law. This may be called bribery, kickback, or, in the Middle East, baksheesh. In government it is when an elected representative makes decisions that are

influenced by vested interest rather than their own personal or party ideological beliefs. Corruption can be said to be dishonestly using one's position or power to one's advantage, especially for money. Here, there is the implication of restricting corruption to those acts that violate the virtue of honesty. But corruption deals with more issues than dishonesty. Likewise, to define corruption as any act by a public official who violates the acceptable standard of behavior in order to serve his private or selfish ends. This definition suggests that only public officials are involved in corruption. The idea of trying to limit corruption to public officials would do harm to the task of dealing with such a dangerous plague in the society. Can corruption be defined as a dishonest or wicked behavior? Generally, every wicked behavior or villainy is socially reprehensible. However, not every wicked behavior should be categorized as corruption. A wicked behavior could be an act of vengeance or vendetta carried out without any clear expectation of personal financial gain. Such acts could be operations of bandits, assailants or terrorists. However, although such behavior may traumatize the society, the actors are simply not expected to perform otherwise being already depraved and perverted. In other words, every corruption is an evil and wicked act, but not every evil and wicked act is corruption. There are a myriad of standards that do not need to be disallowed by law, but which are violated from time to time, and are also tantamount to corruption. For example, certain patterns of dressing do not have to be allowed by law, yet they are considered right or wrong in a given society. As to what constitute immoral behavior, it is questionable if prostitution should be classified as corruption.

Any active involvement in public life, whether executive, business or commercial, demands a disposition of sanity, that would provide a conducive environment for wholesome living for all. This is the essence of human maturation, the acceptance of moral responsibility. It is in such an atmosphere that man is able to experience normative development, secure and humane existence. This is the scenario that constitutes the basic conditions for the detection of the virus of corruption, which is a departure from the *status quo* (from the start), Alatas (1980). One can now address the issue of what corruption is. Chinhamo and Gabriel (2007) view corruption as the perversion or abandonment of a standard. First is that in every incidence of corruption, there must have been an established normative standard. Put differently, a normative standard precedes an act of corruption. In every human set up, there are levels of quality, behavior, decency, value and measure, which are adjudged necessary and acceptable for social well-being. The absence or alteration of these standards will result in chaos, insecurity, retrogression and frustration.

Secondly, corruption is not simply the abandonment, but perversion of these standards. Mere abandonment of standards may stall or impede growth. What really corrupts is the perversion of the standards. An act of perversion consists in the alteration or change in an established normative standard in an unnatural and often harmful way. Every act of perversion in public life is not only an abnormal and aberrant behavior but also injuries and damaging to the social system. It leads to social unsoundness, decay and morbidity.

Resulting from the activities of fraudsters, corrupt public officials and bad governance by our leaders, the rising spate of corruption in Nigeria has led to loss of confidence in Nigeria by its citizens at home and abroad. Internationally, Nigeria has been blacklisted as a State in

which, integrity and transparency are alien and where no transactions occur without corruption. There is inadequacy in the enforcement of our existing laws, ineffective control in the award of contracts, absence of rule of law, unregulated economy and cases of preferential treatment in the conduct of government business. The Economic and Financial Corruption Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), the Code of Conduct Tribunal and so on, are agencies combating corruption in Nigeria, but the greediness of those in authority, government's lack of will to indict some past and present public office holders, lack of discipline and integrity, delayed justice on those standing trial on corruption cases, have hampered the enforcement of the laws or fair determination of corruption cases in Nigeria. This paper will examine the various organs or agencies combating corruption in Nigeria and the impact of these anti-corruption organst in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

2. Anti-Corruption Organs or Agencies in Nigeria

We will examine the following anti-corruption organs or agencies in Nigeria and the laws establishing each of them:-

2.1. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

This Commission was established by Act 2004, laws of the federation of Nigeria. It is the designated Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) in Nigeria, which is charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating the various institutions involved in the fight against money laundering and enforcement of all laws dealing with economic and financial crimes in Nigeria. Sections 2 and 3 of the Act made the Commission to be composed with the following persons or officers:-

2:(1) The Commission shall consist of the following members –

(a) a chairman, who shall -

(i) be the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Commission.

(ii) be a serving or retired member of any government security or law

enforcement agency not below the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police or equivalent; and

(iii) Possess not less than 15 years cognate experience

(b) the Governor of the Central Bank or his representative; and

(c) a representative each of the following Federal Ministries

(i) Foreign Affairs,

(ii) Finance,

(iii) Justice,

(d) the Chairman National Drug Law Enforcement Agency or his representative;

(e) the Director General of –

(i) the National Intelligence Agency,

(ii) the Department of State Security Services or his representative;

(f) the Registrar-General of the Corporate Affairs Commission or his Representative;

(g) the Director-General, Securities and Exchange Commission or his representative;

(h) the Managing- Director, Nigeria- Deposit Insurance Corporation or his representative;

(i)the Commissioner for Insurance or his representative;

- (j) the Postmaster-General of the Nigerian Postal Services or his representative;*
 - (k) the Chairman, Nigerian Communications Commission or his representative;*
 - (l) the Comptroller-General, Nigeria Customs Services or his representative;*
 - (m) the Comptroller-General Nigeria Immigration Services or his representative;*
 - (n) a Inspector General of Police or his representative*
 - (o) four eminent Nigerians with cognate experience in any of the following, that is finance, banking or accounting; and*
 - (p) the Secretary to the commission who shall be the head of administration*
- (2) The members of the Commission, other than the Chairman and the Secretary shall be part time members*
- (3) The Chairman and members of the Commission other than ex-officio members shall be appointed by the President and appointment shall be subject to the confirmation of the Senate.*

3:*(1) The Chairman and members of the Commission other than ex-officio members shall hold office for a period of four years and may be re- appointed for a further term of four years and no more*

(2) A member of the Commission may at any time be removed by the President for inability to discharge the functions of his office (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body or any other cause) or for misconduct or if the President is satisfied that it is not in the interest of the Commission or the interest of the public that the member should continue in office.

(3) A member of the Commission may resign his membership by notice in writing addressed to the President and that member shall, on the date of the receipt of the notice by the President, cease to be member

Section 6 of the Act provides that the Commission shall be responsible for -

- (a) The enforcement and the due administration of the provisions of this Act;*
- (b) the investigation of all financial crimes including advance fee fraud, money laundering, counterfeiting, illegal charge transfers, futures market fraud, fraudulent encashment of negotiable instruments, computer credit card fraud, contract scam, etc.;*
- (c) The co-ordination and enforcement of all economic and financial crimes laws and enforcement functions conferred on any other person or authority;*
- (d) the adoption of measures to identify, trace, freeze, confiscate or seize proceeds derived from terrorist activities, economic and financial crimes related offences or the properties the value of which corresponds to such proceeds;*
- (e) The adoption of measures to eradicate the commission of economic and financial crimes;*
- (f) The adoption of measures which includes coordinated preventive and regulatory actions, introduction and maintenance of investigative and control techniques on the prevention of economic and financial related crimes;*
- (g) The facilitation of rapid exchange of scientific and technical information and the conduct of joint operations geared towards the eradication of economic and financial crimes;*
- (h) The examination and investigation of all reported cases of economic and financial crimes with a view to identifying individuals, corporate bodies or groups involved;*
- (i) The determination of the extent of financial loss and such other losses by government, private individuals or organizations;*
- (j) Collaborating with government bodies both within and outside Nigeria carrying on functions wholly*

or in part analogous with those of the Commission concerning -

- (i) The identification, determination, of the whereabouts and activities of persons suspected of being involved in economic and financial crimes,
- (ii) The movement of proceeds or properties derived from the commission of economic and financial and other related crimes;
- (iii) The exchange of personnel or other experts,
- (iv) The establishment and maintenance of a system for monitoring international economic and financial crimes in order to identify suspicious transactions and persons involved,
- (v) maintaining data, statistics, records and reports on person, organizations, proceeds, properties, documents or other items or assets involved in economic and financial crimes;
- (vi) Undertaking research and similar works with a view to determining the manifestation, extent, magnitude, and effects of economic and financial crimes and advising government on appropriate intervention measures for combating same
- (k) dealing with matters connected with the extradition, deportation and mutual legal or other assistance between Nigeria and any other country involving Economic and Financial Crimes;
- (l) The collection of all reports relating suspicious financial transactions, analyse and disseminate to all relevant Government agencies;
- (m) Taking charge of, supervising, controlling, coordinating all the responsibilities, functions and activities relating to the current investigation and prosecution of all offenses connected with or relating to economic and financial crimes;
- (n) The coordination of all existing economic and financial crimes, investigating units in Nigeria;
- (o) maintaining a liaison with office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Nigerian Customs Service, the Immigration and Prison Service Board, the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, all government security and law enforcement agencies and such other financial supervisory institutions in the eradication of economic and financial crimes;
- (p) carrying out and sustaining rigorous public and enlightenment campaign against economic and financial crimes within and outside Nigeria and;
- (q) carrying out such other activities as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it under this Act. Section 7 (1) of the Act vest the following powers to Commission: –
 - (a) cause investigations to be conducted as to whether any person, corporate body or organization has committed any offence under this Act or other law relating to economic and financial crimes
 - (b) cause investigations to be conducted into the properties of any person if it appears to the commission that the person's lifestyle and extent of the properties are not justified by his source of income;
- (2) The Commission is charged with the responsibility of enforcing the provisions of –
 - (a) the Money Laundering Act 2004; 2003 No.7 1995 NO. 13
 - (b) the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995;
 - (c) the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act 1994, as amended;

- (d) The Banks and other Financial Institutions Act 1991, as amended; and
- (e) Miscellaneous Offences Act
- (f) Any other law or regulations relating to economic and financial crimes, including the Criminal code of penal

2.2. The Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)

This commission (otherwise abbreviated as ICPC), was established on 13th June, 2000, by an Act of the National Assembly. The Act seeks to prohibit and prescribe punishment for corrupt practices and other related offences in Nigeria. Following the approval of the Presidency, through the Federal Executive Council, a directive was given by Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation via Circular HOCSF/498/133 of 15th October 2001 to Ministries, Parastatals and Agencies to establish Anti-Corruption and Transparency Monitoring Units (ACTU) to assist the ICPC in performing its functions in Ministries/Extra-Ministerial Bodies and Agencies, except prosecution, under the active supervision of the Commission. In specific terms, the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Monitoring Units (ACTUs) are set up to facilitate investigations by professional detectives or investigators from the Commission as well as serve as the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the Commission about the goings-on in the Ministries, Parastatals and Agencies [pertaining to corrupt practices. An earlier circular from the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation dated 2nd October 2001, Ref. No. OHCSFMSO/192/94, equally stipulated that the Units should operate as autonomous outfits with direct functional linkages with Ministers and Administrative Heads of their Units should report all allegations of corrupt practices to ICPC with copies to the appropriate Minister and Permanent Secretary, except where they are suspected to be involved. The Mission of the Unit is to act as the eye and ear of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offence Commission (ICPC) to entrench a culture of due process, accountability, transparency, equity and business unusual. The Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) provides the main link between the Ministries and Parastatals on one hand and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). This is achieved, through the main link between the Ministry and its Parastatals on one hand and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in such specific areas on the other hand. Receiving of oral and written reports of corrupt practices or conspiracy to commit or attempt to commit or commission of an offence of corruption from the members of the public and employees of the Ministry. Examination of the practices, systems and procedures in the Ministry and its Parastatals and where such practices, systems and procedures aid/facilitate fraud or corruption and take appropriate actions/measures to prevent them. To educate all the officials of Ministries and Parastatals to refrain from bribery, corruption and other related offences by organizing seminars, lectures, placing appropriate and well seasoned anti-corruption posters in very conspicuous places within the Ministries and Parastatals premises and distribution of anti-corruption hand bills to visitors to the Ministries and Parastatals.

3. The Impact Of Anti-Corruption Organs In The Fight Against Corruption In Nigeria

During the independence broadcast by President Goodluck Jonathan on October 1, 2012, he stated that the survey on global corruption perception on Nigeria by Transparency International (TI), showed that the third best improvement in the fight against corruption, is Nigeria, scoring 1.5 points. That Nigeria follows the United States of America which scored 2 points, while Bangladesh scored 2.3 points. Mr. President's broadcast had attracted several criticisms from some sections of Nigerian citizens and media, but Transparency International had in less than 24 hours dismissed the existence of such assessment contained in Mr. President's broadcast (Business Day, October 25, 2012). Opposition parties, including the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), have since faulted the president and demanded his apology to Nigerians for the "false claims." While the ANPP said the claim was meant to boost the administration's ego, ACN called for the investigation of the source of "a claim that has exposed his administration and the entire country to global ridicule." The Federal Ministry of Information blamed a newspaper for "misleading" the president through its September 12, 2012 publication of a synopsis of the most recent Transparency International's report entitled: "FG's anti-corruption initiative impacts Nigeria's global perception". According to a memo by Reno Omokri, Dr. Jonathan's Special Assistant on News Media, "as is the practice worldwide, we accept the premise that whatever is published in the media and goes unchallenged is the truth". The memo stated that the above quoted comments were relied upon in coming to the conclusion that Mr. President honestly came to in good faith. To this day, Transparency International has not disputed the findings of Business Day.

Observers say that in spite of efforts to justify the inclusion of the purported report in the president's speech and vouch for the "credibility" of the source, it smacks of naivety for president's speech writers to rely on a newspaper for such a weighty claim. However, this should not detract from the value of the address where the president reviewed the progress of the nation in its 52 years of independence, listed the gains of his administration and spoke of hope for the country. The fight against corruption should begin with every Nigerian; we need to change our mindset from negative into positive. Corruption starts from the mind and reflects in our daily actions. It has become like a stronghold in the mindset of many Nigerians; that to make financial, academic or political success it has to be via corrupt means. The educational, political, sports, force, health, power and banking sector in this nation are all contaminated with corruption. We have to beware of this monster that is eroding our good moral values and slowing down the developmental process in Nigeria.

The slogan "Nothing goes for nothing" is what has engulfed the mindset of many Nigerians making them to believe that they have to bribe their way through anything. Some

University lecturers seek to have a carnal knowledge of their students to score them high in an exam and some students are willing to gladly part away with their bodies for such an offer. A police man want to take bribe on duty and a politician want to loot the treasury for future generations. Internet fraud known as 419 is now the order of the day. Many people lobby for contracts either with their money or their body.

Nigeria's greatest setback is corruption. We have lost our values in the eyes of other continents of the world because we have refused to fix this problem. Ghana as a black nation is preferred in their dealings and fast-developing because they have reduced corruption to the barest minimum. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and other anti-corruption agencies must bare their fangs on corrupt citizens and government officials. We must not allow any individual or corporate bodies to buy our conscience and tie us down from doing what is right, no matter our status in the society. While there are several anti-corruption agencies in the country, there are no clear demarcations on which of them should be responsible for investigating and prosecuting the case as they simply duplicate their mandates.

Multiplication of agencies performing similar roles has been drains on the nation's purse. The cost of governance in Nigeria is one of the highest and most expensive in the world. The dubious duplication of functions, financial recklessness, nepotism and cronyism in recruitments are largely influenced by the establishment of unnecessary agencies, which also promote corrupt practices. In an effort to address the high cost of governance, a Presidential Committee on the Rationalisation and Restructuring of Federal Government Parastatals was established. Led by former Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Steve Oronsaye, the committee has proposed some positive initiatives as well as some controversial suggestions. While the committee recommends far-reaching decisions to reduce the excessive overhead and recurrent expenditures, which in some quarters have been translated to mean retrenchment of workers, the report indeed exposes duplication of responsibilities and schedules of duty among agencies of government. The committee was able to adhere strictly to its terms of reference which include; to study and review all previous reports/records on the restructuring of Federal Government parastatals and advise on whether they are still relevant, to examine critically the mandates of the existing federal agencies, parastatals and commissions and to determine areas of overlap or duplication of functions, and make appropriate recommendations to either restructure, merge or scrap the duplicates.

The key recommendations of the report include the abolition of 38 agencies, 52 mergers and reversion of 14 agencies to departments in their relevant ministries. Generally, it suggested that statutory commissions should be reduced from 263 to 161. It further recommends a management audit of 89 agencies to capture biometric features of their employees as well as

discontinue government funding of professional bodies and councils. The committee stated that it found duplications and overlaps in the mandates of many agencies and parastatals, noting that successive administrations established these agencies without regard to existing laws. The report indicated that the Federal Government would be saving about N1 trillion within 3 years of implementation. It is noteworthy that some agencies could be strengthened with added empowerment through mergers, for instance, the proposed National Emergency Management and Refugee Commission (NEMAREF) and Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) that may be saddled with fixing salaries of public servants and to takeover functions of the Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC), which was created by former President Olusegun Obasanjo a few years ago. Meanwhile, the committee has recommended the merger of the anti-corruption bodies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB). If the government accepts and implements the recommendations, these bodies would serve as department within the larger Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). According to the report; "The establishment of strong departments among others, in the proposed consolidated structure is desirable as they would handle Prosecution, Investigation, Prevention (Advocacy), and Asset declaration/ forfeiture" (Shuaib, 2012). The report also recommends the elevation of the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) to Anti-Corruption Tribunal to try all corruption cases in the country. The recommendation, if implemented, would ensure that regular courts that are overburden with other cases will no longer try corruption-related matters whether by politicians, civil servants or business persons. The report clearly states that: "The Code of Conduct Tribunal should be renamed Anti-Corruption Tribunal and upgraded to the status of a Court of Superior Records with the responsibility for handling only corruption cases from the proposed merger of EFCC, ICPC and the Code of Conduct Bureau.

Extant anti-corruption laws should be repealed, while a new one is enacted to accommodate the consolidation of EFCC, ICPC and the Code of Conduct Bureau." Some of the cases being handled by EFCC, ICPC and others ought to have been brought to the CCT for quick determination. The CCT is a court of summary trial which by law should not waste time in most other cases that are before the other anti-corruption bodies like the EFCC, ICPC and CCB. The nation does not need a special court as being advocated in some quarters to deal with the cases of corrupt public officers. As it is presently constituted, the Code of Conduct Tribunal has the power to impose punishments ranging from vacation of office and disqualification from holding any public office by officers found guilty of contravening any of the provisions of the Act, especially on misconduct and corrupt practices. It also has the power to seize and forfeit to the state of any property acquired through abuse or corruption in office. It is glaring that the regular courts are ineffective in attending to corruption cases, such that high profile cases

involving politicians drag on for many years, without an end in sight. On the other hand, the suspects continue to enjoy their loots while their lawyers who are paid hefty fees deliberately prolong litigation endlessly. It was only lately after the appointment of Justice Umar Danladi as Chairman of the Code of Conduct Tribunal that some corruption cases like that against the former Governor of Lagos, Ahmed Bola Tinubu were dispensed with within a short period. This demonstrates capacity and ability of the tribunal to expedite actions on cases brought before it. The proposed Anti-Corruption Tribunal (ACT) from existing Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) should be independent and autonomous with the capacity for repression of corrupt acts and observe the principles of expeditiousness, effectiveness and efficiency in the administration of justice. Branches of the tribunal should also be created in each of the six geopolitical zones to facilitate speedy trials and disposal of corruption cases.

The administration of President Goodluck Jonathan should examine the report and implement the worthy recommendations therein. The submission should not be swept under the carpet like similar past reports on rationalisation especially that of Ahmed Joda and Allison Ayida. In ensuring fairness before the implementation of the report, the government should engage the stakeholders, especially the labour and the legislature to iron out grey areas before their endorsement.

Although, the fight against corruption in Nigeria is beyond a particular Sect or Agency; it is a collective fight. The judiciary needs to awake to their call to duty and sanitize the system as to bring corrupt practitioners to book. This is to serve as an example to other intenders as it has been said "No one is above the law." We must not vote into power people we know from history have skeletons in their cupboard. Nigerians arise in the fight against corruption.

4. Conclusion

For effective control of corruption in Nigeria, the society must develop a culture of relative openness, in contrast to the current bureaucratic climate of secrecy. And a merit system (instead of the tribal bias, state of origin and nepotism or favoritism, which have coloured the landscape) should be adopted in employment and distribution of national resources and so forth. More importantly, the leadership must muster the political will to tackle the problem head-on. Regardless of where it occurs, what causes corruption or the form it takes, the simple fact remains that corruption is likely to have a more profound and different effects in developing countries like Nigeria than in wealthy and developed societies.

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