BETTER TOGETHER

Evidence of the crucial role that citizens play in fighting corruption

tearfund

Better together
Evidence of the crucial role that citizens play in fighting corruption

Written by Melissa Lawson

Tearfund is a Christian relief and development agency building
a global network of local churches to help eradicate poverty.

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Executive summary

Corruption is the abuse of power for private gain. It harms economic growth, undermines trust and social cohesion, is a major challenge for development – and it is the poorest and most marginalised people whom it impacts most. This is why Tearfund believes that corruption must be tackled – and now.

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is the most comprehensive global agreement on corruption which, if implemented, could significantly reduce corruption and contribute to sustainable development. Yet, despite more than 150 countries signing up to the Convention, corruption is still rife worldwide. UNCAC is not having the impact that it should.

Tearfund argues that for UNCAC to be effective there needs to be an emphasis on bottom-up approaches to anti-corruption work. Corruption permeates every level of society and takes place in local communities. Therefore progress to tackle it must be all-encompassing, involving communities where corruption takes place, as 'people can reach all corners' of the country.[1]

This paper therefore outlines some of the **practical ways in which citizens and their elected representatives have played, and could play, a part in tackling corruption and implementing UNCAC**.

Citizens are shown to be key agents in preventing corruption through watching and monitoring others, holding leaders to account in fulfilling anti-corruption commitments, and changing a culture of indifference. They are crucial in enforcing legislation, through reporting, whistle-blowing and challenging corrupt officials directly.

As custodians of the state, elected representatives have proved that they can ensure strong anti-corruption legislation, effective oversight of the executive branch and citizen representation in various national and international arenas. This should be a role that all elected representations undertake.

States, donors and civil society organisations must therefore support and engage citizens and their elected representatives in the fight against corruption.

- States must raise awareness of anti-corruption efforts, ensure that reporting corruption is simple and safe, increase budget transparency, inform parliament and citizens of their anti-corruption commitments, and publish the name and contact details of the UNCAC review focal point on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) website.[2]

- Donors should financially support bottom-up approaches to anti-corruption work and parliamentary strengthening programmes, as well as putting in place measures to ensure that their own house is in order.

- Civil society organisations have a role in supporting communities to monitor and report corruption, facilitating dialogue between leaders and communities, and mainstreaming anti-corruption work.

- Elected representatives should lead by example and engage citizens, call for strong implementation of UNCAC and consider joining the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption.

For full details, see page 20 which further outlines the recommendations and includes practical suggestions on how to facilitate this engagement to ensure that corruption is addressed at the community level.

Tearfund therefore calls on the Conference of State Parties to UNCAC to put citizens and elected representatives at the heart of the agenda, to ensure that UNCAC 'has teeth' and that corruption is tackled effectively.

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1 Interview, Transparency International Zimbabwe

2 The UNCAC review focal point is the main person or agency responsible for the review process within a given country.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

> 'If fully enforced [the United Nations Convention Against Corruption] can make a real difference to the quality of life of millions of people around the world. And by removing one of the biggest obstacles to development, it can help us achieve the Millennium Development Goals.'
>
> Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General, October 2003.

Corruption is the abuse of power for private gain, at the expense of others or of society as a whole. It is a manifestation of poor governance and is a major challenge for development, economic growth and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

To the poorest people in society it translates as: a traffic police officer seeking payment to release a vehicle that is wrongly impounded for not being roadworthy; or clinic staff being paid by some patients to get rapid attention, depriving of treatment others who arrived first.[3]

The impacts of corruption are far reaching. Corruption undermines people's well-being and quality of life, destroys trust and social cohesion, weakens investor confidence and harms economic interests. In Africa alone, the cost of corruption has been estimated at US$148 billion a year, representing 25 per cent of the continent's GDP.[4] But it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who suffer its worst impacts. For poor communities, corruption results in: poorer-quality public services (eg at schools or healthcare centres) and lower levels of access to them; wasting of financial resources; reduced access to justice; the unequal treatment of women being perpetuated; trust and social cohesion being undermined; and economic poverty deepening.[5]

> 'Corruption means lower levels of education because the money that gets sent to the district is not well used. Teachers are not trained, and the infrastructure at our school is terrible.' [6]

This is why Tearfund believes that corruption must be tackled – and now.

The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is the most comprehensive global framework for tackling corruption. It is to be applauded for its strength in addressing issues of

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3   Focus group discussion, Resident Development Committee, Ndola, Zambia

4   Smith, Pieth and Jorge (2007) *The recovery of stolen assets: a fundamental principle of the UN Convention Against Corruption,* Briefing Paper. Prepared for the Basel Institute on Governance, International Centre for Asset Recovery. Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre

5   For further information on the impact of corruption on poor communities, see Tearfund's report by Gordon G, Harding S and Akinyemi A (2010) *Corruption and its discontents*.

6   Ibid. Respondent from San Juan de Lurigancho, Lima

corruption both between states and within them, with chapters addressing prevention, criminalisation, international cooperation, asset-recovery and technical assistance. If effectively implemented, UNCAC could significantly reduce corruption and contribute to sustainable development.

More than 150 countries have signed up to or ratified UNCAC. Yet, many of those states are still perceived as corrupt. **Of the 25 countries at the bottom of the Corruption Perceptions Index 2010, 80 per cent have signed the Convention;** most signed it at least five years ago.[7] The Convention is clearly not having the impact that it should. While we recognise the importance of current donor and governmental efforts to tackle corruption by building the capacity of state institutions through financial and technical assistance, it is clear that these alone are not sufficient. Other complementary approaches need to be developed.

Consequently, this paper looks at the role of citizens and their elected representatives, particularly in developing countries, in tackling corruption and implementing UNCAC. Corruption occurs in all societies and therefore citizens and elected representatives in all countries have a role to play and could make a significant difference in the fight against corruption. So the majority of the recommendations in this paper apply to all governments. That said, this paper particularly focuses on developing countries as corruption is more likely to perpetuate poverty in these communities and as a relief and development agency, we are committed to overcoming poverty.

As they are most impacted by corruption, local communities in developing countries have a central role to play in tackling the problem.[8] Tearfund therefore emphasises the need to adopt a bottom-up approach to anti-corruption work, alongside a sanctions-based approach, to increase the sense of public responsibility and accountability and to create a culture that condemns corrupt practices.

The time is right for change. The UNCAC Conference of State Parties in October 2011 presents states and other actors (including donors and civil society organisations) with the opportunity to put those most impacted by corruption – the world's poor and marginalised people – at the top of the international anti-corruption agenda.

States can no longer ignore the role of citizens in tackling corruption. Recent developments in the Arab Spring have not only highlighted the inadequacy of international efforts to tackle corruption,[9] but have also highlighted the role of citizens in challenging the issue. Perhaps the prior involvement of citizens in democratic processes and anti-corruption work could have helped in preventing the violent extremity of such uprisings. Tackling corruption boosts efforts to attract foreign investment and promotes economic growth. States must therefore see it as a necessary approach in order to bring about development.

Furthermore, a key aspect of a state's commitment under UNCAC is the participation of society in the fight against corruption. Article 13 enshrines this principle and promotes the inclusion of civil society, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations in this effort. This aspect has often been overlooked and so this paper looks at practical ways that citizens and their elected representatives have played, and could play, a part.

For donors, corruption poses a direct threat to aid effectiveness as money that should be spent on development may not be used for its intended purpose. Donor strategies must move beyond technical approaches and further engage citizens and elected representatives in the fight against corruption.

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7   Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (2010): 60 per cent of all 25 countries at the bottom of the CPI table signed the Convention five years ago or more.

8   For this paper, Tearfund adopts the OECD working definition of 'developing country'.

9   See *Foreign Affairs*, 'Fighting corruption after the Arab Spring', June 2011
http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67895/stuart-levey/corruption-and-the-arab-spring?page=show

Civil society organisations (CSOs), as groups which have connections with local communities, have a particular role in this, as demonstrated by examples set out in this paper.[10] But it is important to ensure that civil society participation is not confined to an elite group of academics, economists, policy-makers and legislators,[11] but rather that participation in anti-corruption policies and mechanisms is more genuine, free and meaningful – involving communities impacted by corruption and their elected representatives.

1.2 Background

This paper is the outcome of qualitative research aimed at investigating a wide range of cases where citizens and their elected representatives have been involved in implementing and monitoring UNCAC. The researcher adopted an exploratory research strategy, seeking to draw upon both expert and local knowledge and thus involving a literature review, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

The 20 semi-structured interviews involved a range of stakeholders, including global civil society organisations, NGO representatives, Tearfund partners, and members of parliament and representatives of the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption from Africa, Asia and South America.

To ensure that voices from communities in developing countries had a direct input into this research, six focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in Zambia, involving about 70 participants. These FGDs helped to establish how citizens in local communities perceive their role in the fight against corruption and to understand ways in which they have been engaged. Two of the FGDs involved members of Resident Development Committees in Ndola and the four others involved church leaders from a variety of communities (three from Ndola and one involving leaders from a range of communities across Zambia). The FGDs represent communities with a variety of income levels, but the majority of participants were from communities where the average monthly income was below 300,000 Kwa (approximately US$2 per day).

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10 Tearfund regards civil society as encompassing all those actors outside the state and therefore refers to a wide array of organisations, as noted by the World Bank: community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations and foundations. It is not limited to those with a specific interest in anti-corruption efforts.

11 Cornwall A, Robins S and Von Lieres B (2011) *States of citizenship: contexts and cultures of public engagement and citizen action.*

2 The role of local communities in tackling corruption

2.1 Why must corruption be tackled at the grassroots?

> **'Top-down approaches create an anti-corruption infrastructure. But an infrastructure is a skeleton without people to activate and use it.'** [12]

Anti-corruption regulation in the form of international conventions and national legislation is to be welcomed, but it provides only a partial answer.[13] There are eight international conventions on anti-corruption yet still six out of ten people worldwide believe corruption has increased in the past three years.[14] It is therefore clear that current international and state actions focusing on technical assistance and institution-building are not enough. The evidence also seems clear that local communities want to play a greater role in tackling corruption.

2.2 Communities want to be engaged

The 2010 Global Corruption Barometer showed that one in two people considers their government's actions to tackle corruption as ineffective, while seven in ten think that ordinary citizens can make a difference in fighting corruption.[15]

Several common themes emerged from the FGDs in Zambia. Most notably, participants claimed that they, as citizens and local community leaders, can educate, raise awareness and sensitise citizens to the impacts of corruption. Community leaders claimed that if supported they would help educate citizens on their rights, on ways that they can tackle corruption and on how they can report corruption.

Communities discussed their function in monitoring and reporting corruption, raising issues with members of parliament and passing on information to the media. Church leaders stated their particular responsibility in 'preaching about corruption' and highlighted the specific need to address corruption in the church. All the FGD groups stressed the need for the community to model integrity and responsible leadership. Two FGDs suggested that they could initiate anti-corruption groups which could raise awareness and support members of the community in raising issues with the relevant authority.

2.3 Implementing UNCAC Chapter 3 at the grassroots: criminalisation and enforcement

2.3.1 MONITORING, REPORTING AND WHISTLE-BLOWING

Local communities are **the central agents** in reporting corruption, thus enabling Articles under Chapter 3 of UNCAC to be implemented at all levels of society.[16] Citizens and local communities have the

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12 Beyerle S (2011) *New tactics in human rights*. See: http://www.newtactics.org/node/9480

13 Carr I (2006) *Fighting corruption through regional and international conventions: a satisfactory solution?*

14 Global Corruption Barometer. See: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2010

15 Ibid

16 Chapter 3 of UNCAC: *Criminalisation and law enforcement.*

Citizens play a central role in blowing the whistle on corruption as it occurs in local communities because 'people can reach all corners' of the country and community.

Photo: Caroline Irby / Tearfund

potential to detect all forms of corruption – grand, petty and quiet corruption.[17] Corruption permeates every level of society and takes place in local communities. Therefore progress to tackle it must be all-encompassing, involving communities where corruption takes place. Importantly, 'people can reach all corners'[18] of the country and community, thus giving local communities a unique role to play in ensuring that corruption is monitored and detected efficiently.

As noted by one respondent, communities can monitor corruption as 'everyone knows what their neighbour is doing' and is able to 'keep track of their neighbours' accumulation of wealth and unexplained activities'.[19]

Community monitoring through budget tracking groups and score cards has been demonstrated to be successful in helping prevent corruption. For example, in Zimbabwe, Transparency International has been involved in initiating 48 Accountability Monitoring Committees, all of which have been trained in budget tracking, empowerment initiatives and registering complaints, enabling them to monitor and report corruption more easily.[20]

> 'The general public may not know which official has greasy fingers until they are caught, but they can sense when public money has been stolen.'[21]

With effective whistle-blower mechanisms in place, communities can report instances of suspected corruption. In Sierra Leone, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has initiated a telephone hotline

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17   Tearfund regards *grand corruption* to take place at the highest levels of political authority and decision-making; *petty corruption* to take place at lower levels and generally involving much smaller sums; and *quiet corruption* to refer to the failure of public officials to deliver services or inputs that have been paid for by the government.

18   Interview, Transparency International Zimbabwe

19   Interview, Hon. Given Lubinda, member of parliament, Zambia, and Chair APNAC

20   Interview, Transparency International Zimbabwe

21   *Zambian Economist*, 'Understanding Corruption in Zambia (Monthly Essay)', 29 April 2011. See: www.zambian-economist.com

as well as a web page to allow members of the public to report corruption anonymously.[22] It has been noted that since then the ACC's performance has greatly improved. According to the US Department of State country profile of Sierra Leone (2010), the ACC investigations conducted since 2008 have led to the removal of at least 13 officials and, in a number of cases, resulted in convictions and prison sentences. The ACC also managed to recover approximately US$2 million for the government.[22]

The medicine mafia

In Argentina, the ongoing 'medicine mafia' case highlights the role of local communities in reporting possible cases of corruption. Citizens accused a group of pharmaceutical businessmen, dubbed the 'medicine mafia', of creating fake medicine and then selling it to union-run hospitals.[24] Patients reportedly became suspicious that their drugs were not working when their hair did not fall out as expected and thus raised the issue with the union and the Health Ministry, before finally a Union member blew the whistle on the case. The case came to light because citizens suspected corruption and reported their suspicions, prompting an investigation which is still ongoing.

2.3.2   DIRECTLY CHALLENGING CORRUPT OFFICIALS

Furthermore, communities can challenge corrupt officials directly, particularly through collective civic action. When acting together, citizens can have an even greater impact in ensuring that corrupt officials are challenged and/or prosecuted.

A chance to stand united

In India, the civil society organisation Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) organises *jansunvanis*, a participatory social audit in which government officials are bought face to face with citizens in a public gathering. In advance of the meetings, MKSS demands copies of financial records and citizens from the relevant local government districts carry out a detailed analysis of the records, particularly the expenditures. At the meetings, ordinary rural people get a chance to stand united against corrupt authorities and speak out fearlessly about their experience of extensive corruption. In one audit in Rajasthan, it is reported that innumerable instances of false practice by local officials and elected representatives came to light, such as the names of fake workers who were paid wages. As the names of officials and details of expenditure were exposed, more and more cases of corruption reportedly came out into the open. In one instance, the collective anger of the people forced an engineer of the State Electricity Board to make a public reimbursement of Rs 15,000 to a farmer.[25]

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22   The ACC has also embarked on an extensive campaign to raise awareness and to educate the public.

23   Chêne M (2010) U4 Expert Answer: *Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Sierra Leone*.

24   The majority of Argentina's workforce get healthcare through schemes run by their respective trade unions. For more information, see: http://www.argentinepost.com/2009/10/video-argentinas-medicine-mafia-its-fake-drugs.html

25   U4 Helpdesk Query: *Tackling corruption that affects the poor most* (See: http://www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/query.cfm?id=62) and World Bank *Empowerment case studies: Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan* (http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEMPOWERMENT/Resources/14653_MKSS-web.pdf)

Faith-based organisations have a particular role in education and awareness-raising. They can help effect culture change so that citizens challenge corrupt practices.

Photo: Eleanor Bentall / Tearfund

2.4   Implementing UNCAC Chapter 2 at the grassroots: preventing corruption

2.4.1   CHANGING THE CULTURE

Communities, if engaged, empowered and supported, can change the cultural norms which condone or turn a blind eye to corruption. Through education and awareness-raising, citizens build capacity to tackle the issue. Examples of mobilisation methods include flyers, dramas and education of children at school. In Zambia, TV programmes have highlighted the impact of corruption, and local radio stations around the country offer citizens an opportunity to talk about the issues.[26] Faith-based organisations have a particular role in this regard. Many FGD respondents in Zambia noted that the local church has a role in 'preaching against corruption' and modelling integrity and good leadership, thus helping to change the culture to one that condemns corrupt practices.[27]

All these approaches can sensitise citizens to the ill effects of corruption on the whole community and educate citizens on their central role in its prevention.[28] Over time, such public awareness helps change the culture to one where citizens have the confidence to raise issues of corruption in the public sphere and one where individuals refuse to participate in corrupt activities.

2.4.2   CITIZEN MONITORING PREVENTS CORRUPTION

The more corruption is monitored and reported by a community, the less likely people are to be involved in it. Citizen and community monitoring, such as in the methods noted above (see 2.3), help prevent corruption as officials know that they can no longer get away with illicit activities scot-free. In Kenya, for example, a policy of setting up school bank accounts means that money is now transferred directly from the national government to schools to pay for all teaching and learning materials

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26   Interview, Hon. Given Lubinda, member of parliament, Zambia, and Chair APNAC

27   Eg Baptist church FGD

28   Carr I (2006) *Fighting corruption through regional and international conventions: a satisfactory solution?*

(teachers salaries are paid separately). This information has been made public (sometimes through posting it on notice-boards outside the school) and the National Council of Churches Kenya has developed a capacity building initiative whereby parents are supported to monitor this expenditure.[29] Such monitoring helps to ensure the effective use of public funds and helps prevent corruption as any fraudulent activity is more likely to come to light.[30]

2.4.3 MONITORING THE FULFILMENT OF ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITMENTS AT A LOCAL LEVEL

Communities have a central role in monitoring the implementation of UNCAC and holding leaders to account for their anti-corruption commitments.

In Zimbabwe, civil society organisations used flyers and media campaigns to mobilise citizens to call on public officials to fulfil their UNCAC commitments. Citizens called for those in public office to declare their assets, referring to their obligations under Article 8 of UNCAC.[31] In response to this citizen action, 13 ministers declared their assets publicly.[32]

Citizens of any state can monitor the implementation of UNCAC at the local level – and are doing so – and are key actors in calling for the implementation of the Convention throughout their country.[33]

2.5 Using technology to monitor and prevent corruption

This paper notes citizens' increased use of technology to tackle corruption at the local, national and international levels. Recent developments in the Arab Spring have highlighted the role of social media in challenging corruption. In many uprisings, Facebook and Twitter 'played the role of the community organising platform' and broke a barrier of fear to challenge corruption.[34] The social networks helped citizens to organise protests, counter rumours, share information and analyse the validity of government statements.[35]

Technology has also helped communities to be more effective in carrying out their roles in preventing corruption, monitoring public service delivery and enforcing national anti-corruption legislation. This has meant information about corrupt behaviour can be shared much more effectively.

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29 See Right to Education: http://www.right-to-education.org/node/14

30 Furthermore, Kenya has recently set up a new website making government data public and accessible. As the site develops, it promises to include census data, government expenditure, parliamentary proceedings and public service locations. The data is broken down into county and district levels and uses maps, interactive charts and tables and raw data. For more information, see: https://opendata.go.ke/

31 Article 8 of UNCAC: Codes of conduct for public officials

32 Interview, Transparency International Zimbabwe

33 Another example of citizens holding leaders to account for anti-corruption commitments is in Kuwait, where the group Youth Against Corruption mobilised citizens to encourage election candidates to take corruption seriously. Citizens requested that candidates sign a pledge to tackle corruption and then used this as an advocacy tool to hold the candidates to account for their commitment once they came to power. Furthermore, they used the opportunity to 'name and shame' candidates who were unwilling to commit to tackling the issue. Interview with Dr Naser J Al-Sane, Chair GOPAC

34 See Thomas Hémery presentation at the Overseas Development Institute: http://www.odi.org.uk/events/documents/2673-presentation-mark-harvey.pdf

35 Ibid

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I paid a bribe

One example of the use of technology to fight corruption is a website called *I paid a bribe* (www.ipaidabribe.com), which was launched in August 2010 by the founders of Janaagraha (meaning 'people power') to give Indians the chance to report their experiences of bribery.[36] In the first 11 months, more than 11,000 bribe experiences were reported across 416 cities in India. An early example of the website's success were postings prompting the Transport Commissioner of Karnataka to use the website to identify the procedures most prone to corruption; consequently, 20 senior officers were cautioned and new technologies were introduced to minimise bribe-taking.[37] In addition, the website has 'evolved into a consumer comparison site where people can also get information in different languages on how to avoid paying bribes'.[38] The site is having a further social benefit as citizens have reportedly avoided paying a bribe by simply mentioning the website to corrupt officials – and this includes citizens who have not even visited the site. The impact of the site has had a trickle-down effect on all levels of society.

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Another example of technology being used for positive effect is *Check my school*, an initiative by a civil society organisation in the Philippines that allows citizens to use SMSs (text messaging) and a website to report deficiencies, excess, complaints and praise for their schools.[39] A team of volunteers is deployed to verify reports and, due to a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Education, the government follows up reports.[40] Such projects should be encouraged, particularly as increasing proportions of the world's population have access to technology,[41] and the positive effects can trickle down to all levels.

2.6   What hinders local communities in tackling corruption?

Despite communities regarding themselves as having a role in tackling corruption and proving instrumental in tackling corruption, there are numerous challenges which hinder their engagement. These challenges must be addressed by states, donors and civil society organisations if local citizens and communities are to be enabled to play this key role.

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36   See: www.ipaidabribe.com

37   BBC online article by MJ Campion, 'Bribery in India: a website for whistleblowers'.
      See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13616123

38   Ibid

39   See: http://14iacc.org/social/techies and http://www.checkmyschool.org/

40   Ibid

41   According to the International Telecommunication Union's *The World in Figures 2010*, 90 per cent of the world's population have access to mobile networks and 80 per cent of the population in rural areas.
      See: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/material/FactsFigures2010.pdf

2.6.1   LACK OF SENSITISATION

> 'In Sierra Leone, if a person is in a position of responsibility or power, the community members expect that person to live at a certain level, which is often beyond their pay cheque. This results in persons of responsibility abusing their position in order to finance their expected lifestyle. And no one challenges this – they expect it.'[42]

A lack of sensitisation and 'ignorance'[43] about corruption leads to a culture of apathy and indifference. This is particularly pertinent in rural communities where less work has been done to involve and educate citizens.[44] Knowledge about the impacts of corruption and the responsibility of those in positions of authority is not being transferred to people at the grassroots.[45] This was highlighted by several FGD participants, as well as by interviewees from Africa, Asia and South America. Respondents commented that in many contexts corruption is all-pervasive and culturally accepted. In some communities, particularly among the poorest and most marginalised people, there is a lack of awareness of the linkages between lack of service delivery and corruption.[46] This lack of sensitisation results in citizens accepting the status quo rather than challenging the instances of corruption that they encounter.

There is therefore a specific role for governments and civil society organisations to play in addressing this issue. Citizens need to be made more aware of the impact of corruption on the whole community, and some of the methods outlined in this paper (such as flyers, media work, billboards, radio stations, dramas etc) may help in this regard. Faith-based organisations need to engage their communities more readily by 'preaching about corruption' and supporting citizens in reporting and challenging instances they encounter. Furthermore, education on corruption and people's rights needs to be included in the national curriculum so that citizens are sensitised to the issues from a young age.

2.6.2   LACK OF INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Lack of information and transparency is another key challenge to tackling corruption at the grassroots. In Zambia, communities are often unaware of the various mechanisms they can use to report corruption; some FGD groups noted that they can raise issues with police officers but were unaware of other mechanisms available. This situation is further aggravated when the community regards the only mechanism they know – the police – to be corrupt.[47]

Consequently, governments must make this information more readily available. Citizens need to know the various ways in which they can report suspected cases of corruption. And the reporting methods need to be simple and accessible eg anonymous telephone hotlines, websites, SMSs or anonymous comment boxes.

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42   Interview with representatives of the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone

43   FGD group at the Theological College of Central Africa, involving church leaders from a range of communities across Zambia

44   Interview with Hon. Godfrey Beene, Zambian member of parliament and member of APNAC

45   Interview with representatives of the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone

46   Interview with Ezequiel Niño, Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia, Argentina

47   FGD with church leaders held at Apostles Revival Pentecost church, Zambia

Budgetary information should be made available at the grassroots so that local communities such as this one can monitor and track the use of public funds.

Photo: Samuel Hauenstein Swan

There is a lack of transparency or knowledge regarding the fees that citizens should be paying (eg for healthcare). This means that citizens can end up paying 'additional fees' unwittingly – which are then pocketed by corrupt officials. Budgetary information at the local community level is not simple, accessible and available, meaning that citizens are unable to hold local authorities accountable for expenditure. In Nigeria, for example, one respondent commented that the agricultural budget for Plateau State is given as a single figure, rather than being broken down into different budget areas. This prevents communities and civil society from monitoring its use and holding the relevant department accountable for its expenditure.[48]

States therefore need to educate citizens on the expected cost of public services. As one respondent commented, 'Those who are a little bit informed are able to raise their heads when a public servant asks for a fee.' Budgetary information needs to be made accessible, broken down into figures relevant to the community level and simplified so that citizens can easily access and use the information to hold leaders to account. Cases such as Kenya's school budgets (see page 9) are examples of practices that model transparency and facilitate accountability and should be replicated in other sectors and elsewhere.

2.6.3   FEAR AND LACK OF SPACE

Crucially, there is a lack of political, legal and social space for local communities to be involved in challenging corruption. Despite states committing to Articles 32 and 33 of UNCAC (which stress the need for states to take appropriate measures to protect witnesses, experts, victims and reporting persons), citizens are reluctant to report and whistle-blow as they fear reprisals. Furthermore, in some instances, national legislation restricts the activities of NGOs (particularly when involved in exposing corruption) or the freedom of the press, or prevents citizens from having the space to congregate.[49]

Removal of such legislative barriers is a prerequisite to citizens' participating in anti-corruption work. Furthermore, states must have in place corruption reporting mechanisms that are simple and accessible

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48   Interview with Tearfund country representative, Nigeria

49   Anonymous interview

for citizens. As has been noted already, anonymous telephone hotlines, websites, SMSs or comment boxes have proved useful tools and have enabled states to uncover instances of corruption and recover funds.[50] Ensuring that witnesses' identities are protected is also crucial to ensure that the general public has confidence to raise issues without fear of reprisal.

2.6.4 LACK OF AWARENESS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITMENTS

Respondents from all three continents commented that local communities are unaware of the state's anti-corruption commitments, especially UNCAC. All noted that citizens are not aware of the UNCAC review process. The implementation of UNCAC itself would be a huge step forward in tackling corruption. Therefore citizens' lack of knowledge on the state's anti-corruption commitments needs to be addressed so that states and citizens can take responsibility for its implementation.

States therefore need to better inform citizens of their anti-corruption commitments, especially UNCAC, and encourage them to participate in the monitoring and implementation of the Convention. For this to be effective, citizens should be engaged in the UNCAC review process. Prior to the UNCAC country review, states should initiate a review action plan that includes a commitment to announce publicly the review process and plans for citizen participation. States should announce publicly the name and contact details of the review focal point and invite a peer country visit whereby peer reviewers are encouraged to meet with local communities. Once the review is complete, the final report should be published in full and presented before parliament, and the general findings should be disseminated to the general public.

In addition, anti-corruption work (among states, academics, policy-makers and CSOs) is often elitist. Technical language used hinders the general public from engaging with corruption issues. This accessibility is a challenge that needs to be addressed by states, civil society and parliamentarians if citizens are to play their part in monitoring and implementing UNCAC at a local level.

2.6.5 LACK OF CONFIDENCE THAT THINGS CAN CHANGE

The above challenges are further perpetuated by citizens' lack of confidence that things will change. Communities noted that, even when they report issues of corruption through various mechanisms eg police or anti-corruption commissions, they are often dismissed or ignored or receive no response to their concerns.[51] This further erodes trust in the state's political will to fight corruption and creates a lack of confidence in anti-corruption reporting mechanisms.

It is crucial therefore that states demonstrate political will to tackle corruption. As one interviewee noted, 'People follow the pace of government.' [52] Governments must increase citizens' confidence by strengthening the capacity of existing anti-corruption institutions (the police, judiciary, anti-corruption commission etc) so that these mechanisms do not face internal corruption, do not disregard

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50   As noted in the Sierra Leone example (page 7).

51   This was highlighted by interviewees in Zambia and Zimbabwe. In Zambia, the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption has raised several cases with the Anti-Corruption Commission, but at the time of writing there have been no prosecutions as a result. The ACC reportedly claims this is due to lack of capacity.

52   Interview with Hon. Godfrey Beene, Zambian member of parliament and member of APNAC

citizens and always provide reporters with an adequate response. Civil society organisations should support communities to challenge and report instances of suspected corruption, for example through accountability monitoring committees.

'As a community in general, we do not even know what our right is, what the law says about a lot of issues, and when we have an idea, we do not know who to report it to, as sometimes the very people we may report either intimidate or threaten us.'

Focus group discussion, Zambia

3 The role of elected representatives in tackling corruption

3.1 Why do they have a role?

Corruption is the manifestation of poor governance. If corruption is to be addressed in the long term, then governance structures must be improved and strengthened.[53] Parliaments and other equivalent agents of political society stand at the apex of the accountability system and are the institution through which the government is held accountable to its citizens.[54] This is why Tearfund believes that parliaments – and other agents of political society – can play an important role in delivering effective, accountable governance and in tackling corruption.[55]

> 'Before setting up anti-corruption commissions, we should first talk about empowering parliaments.'
>
> John Githongo, anti-corruption activist, 2008.[56]

Elected representatives have a three-pronged democratic responsibility – representation of citizens, oversight of the executive branch and passing legislation.[57] Tackling corruption not only requires all these elements to be working effectively, but also requires that parliamentarians use all three approaches to ensure that UNCAC is implemented and monitored at a national level.[58]

3.2 Parliamentarians want to be engaged

Several common themes emerged from discussions with members of parliament, representatives from the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption and African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption. In all cases, it is clear that elected representatives regard it as their role to monitor and challenge corruption. Many commented that they have a responsibility to hold the executive to account, to use parliamentary privilege to challenge issues and to ensure that they represent citizens. Several elected representatives noted that they wanted to be more engaged in anti-corruption work and to encourage further participation from other elected representatives. They also commented, however, that there are numerous challenges preventing them from doing so, such as lack of knowledge, lack of resources and lack of political space.

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53 Some of the FGD participants commented that elected representatives are involved in corruption. But it is important to note that there is the potential for corruption within every person and thus every institution. As the individual elected by the citizens, they stand at the apex of the accountability system and therefore have a particular role in tackling corruption.

54 Chêne M (2007) U4 Expert Answer: *Parliamentary approaches to corruption*

55 Hudson A (ODI) and Wren C (One World Trust) (2007) *Parliamentary strengthening in developing countries*

56 Read John Githongo's lecture *Governance and the Fight against Corruption* here: http://governanceinafrica.wordpress.com/2008/11/15/john-githongo-governance-and-the-fight-against-corruption/

57 GOPAC (2008) Declaration, position statements and resolutions, Kuwait: 3rd global conference

58 GOPAC (2008) Position statement and resolution on parliamentary support for the United Nations Convention Against Corruption

> 'In a parliamentary democracy, it is the cardinal role of parliament to hold the executive to account and to have an oversight role. This is the intrinsic role of parliamentarians.' [59]

3.3 Ways in which elected representatives can tackle corruption

3.3.1 REPRESENTATION

Elected representatives have a key role in addressing the dysfunctional relationships between state and citizen. Ultimately, through democratic processes, parliamentarians are accountable to the electorate.[60]

Genuine representation of citizens' interests in political processes can make a strong contribution to the fight against corruption. Mechanisms that empower citizens to participate and engage in political debate, on an ongoing basis rather than just during elections, can improve parliament's legitimacy and help to establish a healthy balance of power.[61]

Through their representation role, elected representatives have a responsibility to ensure that citizens' complaints are visible and monitored. In Zambia, members of the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC) raise issues with the Anti-Corruption Commission on behalf of citizens.[62] Not only does this strengthen elected representatives' role in terms of ensuring that citizens' concerns are heard and investigated, it also helps to rebuild trust between state and citizen.

Elected representatives, through their position of authority, can raise issues internationally if concerns are disregarded domestically. This can help put further pressure on the state to ensure that corruption issues are investigated and prosecuted. International review processes offer an opportunity for elected representatives to highlight corruption cases in the international arena. For example, in Kuwait, parliamentarians used the opportunity provided by the OECD Convention on Foreign Bribery review to highlight potential instances of grand corruption.[63] It is for this reason that involving elected representatives in review mechanisms, especially the UNCAC review process, is essential to ensure that corruption cases are not ignored and that citizens' views are represented.

3.3.2 OVERSIGHT

Most parliaments have a constitutional mandate to oversee government, hold the executive accountable for its actions and ensure that it operates within an ethical, accountable and legal framework.[64] Parliamentary oversight in general can help combat corruption,[65] particularly in terms of the oversight of financial integrity issues, ie awareness and oversight of sources of revenue and expenditures, particularly during the execution of the national budget. In terms of implementing

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59   Anonymous interview

60   Chêne M (2007) U4 Expert Answer: *Parliamentary approaches to corruption*

61   Ibid

62   Interview with Royd Katongo, APNAC Secretariat

63   Interview with Dr Naser J Al-Sane, Chair GOPAC

64   Chêne M (2007) U4 Expert Answer: *Parliamentary approaches to corruption*

65   GOPAC (2008) Declaration, position statements and resolutions, Kuwait: 3rd Global Conference

UNCAC, parliamentarians can play an important oversight role in monitoring national efforts to implement and domesticate UNCAC.

Parliamentarians have several tools at their disposal to ensure oversight of the executive branch, including: raising questions in the House or through committee meetings, committees of enquiry or ombudsmen offices.[66] These mechanisms can be and have been used, for example in Zambia where parliamentarians have raised questions in the House and have referred to UNCAC in calling for budgetary allocations for anti-corruption agencies.[67] In Kenya, parliamentary committees have probed suspicious cases by summoning technocrats and ministers to explain their expenditure, recruitment and choice of state corporation chiefs.[68]

3.3.3   PASSING LEGISLATION

Parliaments have a responsibility to ensure that anti-corruption legislation is in line with the state's UNCAC commitments. Collectively, elected representatives can petition and vote in a number of laws, including anti-corruption legislation and laws regarding freedom of information, party funding or electoral campaigns. Individually, parliamentarians can initiate strong legislation by tabling Private Members' Bills, such as MP Anas Sarwar's Bill in the UK which calls for increased revenue transparency in the extractives sector. Such mechanisms allow issues of corruption to be moved up the political agenda and potentially incorporated into other pieces of legislation.

3.3.4   RAISING AWARENESS

Finally, elected representatives have a responsibility to ensure that citizens are well informed of anti-corruption mechanisms, of their rights, and that they are active participants in the fight against corruption. APNAC chapters in several countries have been involved in awareness-raising; for example, the chapter in Zimbabwe has been involved in commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day by organising community dramas and flyers etc. Such efforts help to engage citizens in the fight against corruption, while facilitating trust and dialogue between elected representatives and citizens.

3.4   What challenges or hinders elected representatives in tackling corruption?

3.4.1   LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

> 'Parliamentarians don't know about the UNCAC. It has not been properly publicised – amongst the elite or the public.'[69]

The research behind this paper found that elected representatives sometimes struggle to challenge corruption due to a lack of awareness, lack of knowledge and/or lack of resources. Many representatives have a poor understanding of corruption, especially as outlined in UNCAC. Such lack of knowledge results in elected representatives being less likely and less able to use their legislative, oversight and

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66   Chêne M (2007) U4 Expert Answer: *Parliamentary approaches to corruption*

67   Interview with Hon. Godfrey Beene, Zambian member of parliament and member of APNAC

68   See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11728194

69   Interview with Dr Naser J Al-Sane, Chair GOPAC

representative responsibilities to tackle corruption in their state. Several representatives also noted the lack of resources, both to educate other parliamentarians and also to engage their constituencies in the fight against corruption.

Consequently, states should inform parliament of its UNCAC commitments and report regularly on its plans for and progress on implementation. States and donors should support education and capacity building programmes for elected representatives, particularly informing them of international commitments such as UNCAC. Increased knowledge and support would enable elected representatives to embrace fully their three-pronged responsibility to tackle corruption and implement UNCAC.

3.4.2   LACK OF SPACE

Lack of space for elected representatives to challenge corruption is a key issue. This is particularly pertinent in terms of the UNCAC review process. Despite being custodians of the state, parliamentarians from several countries noted that they have not been actively involved in this process. In one country, participants noted that it was difficult for parliamentarians even to find out which office was coordinating the review process. Participants in another country claimed that, even when the APNAC group requested the information from UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), it received no information on the focal point or process.[70] In Zambia, respondents stated that the only engagement that parliamentarians have had is through CSOs (U4 and partners) organising workshops on the review process. One member of the Zambian Public Accounts Committee noted that parliamentary committees were not informed of the review process and have not been involved in the self-assessment.[71] Such lack of involvement means that, despite having an oversight role, representatives have been unable to input into the state's review.

This is why Tearfund calls on states to involve parliamentarians in the UNCAC review process. Parliamentarians must be involved in the review process from the start in order to fulfil both their representation and oversight responsibilities, and therefore should input into the self-assessment and meet with the peer reviewers. Once completed, the final UNCAC review report should be presented before parliament and should be subject to a debate on the actions that need to be taken. Furthermore, state parties to UNCAC should agree at this year's Conference of State Parties to allow the Secretariat to the Convention (UNODC) to announce the focal point for each state under review. This will allow citizens and elected representatives to access information on the process more easily and therefore engage in the review.

Lack of space for elected representatives is particularly difficult in a highly politicised environment, where it is often opposition parties that challenge perceived corruption on the part of the governing party. Some representatives noted that challenging corruption appears to be a political decision, and so some elected representatives will not be willing to take this risk. Alternatively, they fear they may not be taken seriously as others may suspect their accusations are politically motivated.[72]

Yet, if they are fulfilling their responsibilities, elected representatives within the governing party should also be involved in challenging corruption using the various approaches available. Involvement in organisations such as the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) is one mechanism that supports all elected representatives, from all parties, in engaging in anti-corruption work and may provide representatives with a helpful platform from which to challenge corruption.

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70   Anonymous interview

71   Interview Hon. Given Lubinda, member of parliament, Zambia, and Chair of APNAC

72   Interview with Ezequiel Niño, Asociación Civil por la Igualdad y la Justicia, Argentina

4 What needs to be done?

4.1 Recommendations for states party to UNCAC

> 'The government has become toothless and too corrupt themselves, such that the citizen is no longer listened to, or safe to fight corruption.' [73]

4.1.1 RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

Governments need to raise awareness of the impacts of corruption and the mechanisms that citizens can use to report it. Possible methods outlined in this paper include education on corruption as part of the national curriculum, songs, billboards, flyers, community dramas and the use of the media.

4.1.2 MAKE REPORTING CORRUPTION SIMPLE, ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE

States must ensure the anonymity and protection of witnesses and reporting persons, to address citizens' fear of reporting suspected cases of corruption.[74] Corruption-reporting mechanisms need to be simple and accessible. Examples of initiating anonymous hotlines, websites and suggestion boxes have proven to be successful in this regard.

4.1.3 EMPHASISE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES

States must regard citizens as key agents in strategies to tackle corruption. National anti-corruption strategies should emphasise citizen education, engagement and participation. Furthermore, the state must include mechanisms for the public to input into the strategy and its monitoring, to increase transparency and a sense of public ownership.

4.1.4 INFORM CITIZENS OF THE EXPECTED COSTS FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

States must better inform citizens of the amount they should expect to pay for fees, especially in the context of public services. This will help citizens to avoid paying 'additional fees' which are pocketed by corrupt officials.

4.1.5 INCREASE BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

Governments should ensure that budgetary information is available at the grassroots so that local communities can monitor and track the use of public funds. Posting information in public places, eg outside schools or online, are examples of methods that can facilitate this transparency.

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73 Focus group discussion, Resident Development Committee, Ndola, Zambia

74 This is a requirement under Articles 32 and 33 of UNCAC

4.1.6 STRENGTHEN AND RESOURCE ANTI-CORRUPTION INSTITUTIONS

States must demonstrate political will and strengthen the capacity of existing national anti-corruption institutions (the police, judiciary, anti-corruption commissions etc) so that public institutions are less subject to internal corruption, do not disregard the general public and always provide citizens with an adequate response. This will help to increase public confidence in reporting corruption and help ensure that cases are adequately investigated and prosecuted.

4.1.7 REMOVE LEGISLATIVE BARRIERS THAT PREVENT CITIZENS FROM CHALLENGING CORRUPTION

States must remove any national legislation which restricts the activities of NGOs or the freedom of the press, or which prevents citizens from having space to congregate. This is a prerequisite for citizens to monitor and tackle corruption.

4.1.8 INFORM PARLIAMENT AND CITIZENS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITMENTS AND ENGAGE THEM IN THE UNCAC REVIEW

State parties should inform parliament of their UNCAC commitments and report regularly on their plans for and progress on implementation. States should publicise the UNCAC review process and should invite a peer country visit, encouraging the review team to meet with local communities. The final UNCAC review reports should be published in full and presented before parliament, with the general findings disseminated to the public.

4.1.9 INVOLVE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

State parties need to see the role of the elected representative as central in the fight against corruption and parliamentarians should be involved in the country plans to implement UNCAC. States should ensure that elected representatives are involved in the UNCAC review – during the self-assessment, in the course of a country visit and in discussions surrounding follow-up action plans.

4.1.10 PUBLISH THE UNCAC REVIEW FOCAL POINT ON THE UNODC WEBSITE

State parties to UNCAC should agree at this year's Conference of State Parties to allow the Secretariat to the Convention (UNODC) to announce the focal point for each state under review. This information should be published on the UNODC website and include the name and contact details of each focal point. States under review should also publicise this information within country. This will allow citizens and elected representatives to access information on the review process more easily and engage in the review.

4.2 Recommendations for civil society organisations

4.2.1 RAISE AWARENESS AND SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

NGOs have strong connections with local communities and therefore have a responsibility to instil awareness by simplifying messages and discussing the causes and impacts of corruption in the local context. Faith groups in particular have a duty to present the moral case to the community and ensure that they get their own house in order by modelling integrity and servant-leadership.

4.2.2   MAINSTREAM ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK

Poverty and corruption are closely intertwined. Development NGOs should seek to mainstream anti-corruption awareness into other aspects of their work. NGOs should train and educate citizens about their rights and about the responsibilities of government and leaders, and work to challenge cultures of indifference. With respect to UNCAC, NGOs have a role to play in simplifying the Convention, to make it more accessible to the general public so that it can be used by local communities to hold their leaders to account on anti-corruption commitments.

4.2.3   SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN MONITORING AND REPORTING

Citizens have electoral power, but support from NGOs gives communities greater confidence to engage in political processes on an ongoing basis and to challenge corrupt practices. Walk-in advice centres, accountability monitoring committees and the use of technology, such as websites and SMSs, all enable communities to monitor and report issues easily.

4.2.4   FACILITATE DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND LEADERS

NGOs can help facilitate dialogue and discussion between elected representatives and/or government officials and local communities, as demonstrated by the *jansunvanis* in India (participatory social audits held in a public gathering). These practices empower the community and help to address the dysfunctional relationships between state and citizen.

4.3   Recommendations for donors

4.3.1   SUPPORT BOTTOM-UP ANTI-CORRUPTION APPROACHES

Donor support should be given to grassroots NGO programmes that seek to educate, monitor and report corruption.

4.3.2   PROMOTE AND MODEL TRANSPARENCY

Donors should encourage transparency and the freedom of the media and support the generation and dissemination of good-quality, accessible local data and policy analyses that citizens can use.[75] To ensure greater aid effectiveness, donors have a responsibility to model best practice by ensuring that they publish the details of their aid in an accessible and usable manner.

4.3.3   SUPPORT PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMMES

Donors must recognise that corruption is a development issue and a manifestation of poor governance. For this reason, donors should seek to address the dysfunctional relationships between state and citizen by investing in parliamentary strengthening programmes, eg training in financial scrutiny and oversight. Donors should see parliamentarians as catalysts in local-level anti-corruption work and invest in initiatives such as the Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption which supports parliamentarians in engaging their constituencies in anti-corruption work.

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75   Unsworth S (2007) U4: *Rethinking governance to fight corruption*

4.3.4   ADDRESS INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION

Corruption is both a domestic and international issue. Donors need to ensure that their own house is in order and address ways in which they are actively and passively fuelling international corruption.[76]

4.4   Recommendations for elected representatives

4.4.1   LEAD BY EXAMPLE AND ENGAGE CITIZENS

As custodians of the state, elected representatives have a responsibility to model integrity and accountability. They should engage the local community in political processes and anti-corruption policies and practices. Parliamentarians should promote greater understanding of the negative effects of corruption and provide information on the global, national and local initiatives to combat it. Within their constituency, they should ensure that citizens are active participants in implementing UNCAC, by working alongside the community to draw up strategic plans to address corruption in the local area.[77]

4.4.2   CALL FOR STRONG IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCAC

Parliamentarians must use the tools available to them to call for full and strong domestication of UNCAC. Elected representatives should call for a transparent UNCAC review process and seek to input into the review, especially the self-assessment. During a review country visit, parliamentarians should meet the reviewers, as well as facilitating meetings between reviewers and local constituents. Elected representatives could use the opportunity provided by the UNCAC review process to increase the sense of national ownership over anti-corruption policies and practices, thus helping to promote 'internal dialogue on issues related to corruption as well as building domestic demand for reform'.[78]

4.4.3   JOIN THE GLOBAL ORGANISATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION (GOPAC)

Parliamentarians should consider joining GOPAC, an international network of parliamentarians dedicated to good governance and combating corruption throughout the world. It networks and supports elected representatives in finding innovative and practical solutions to fighting corruption.

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76   For more information see Tearfund's papers by Lawson M (2011) *International Anti-Corruption Strategy: What is the strategy?* and Newis P (2010) *Tackling corruption: joining the dots across Whitehall*.

77   GOPAC (2008) Declaration, position statements and resolutions, Kuwait: 3rd Global Conference

78   Chêne M and Dell G (2008) U4 Expert Answer: *Comparative assessment of anti-corruption review mechanisms*

5 Concluding thoughts

Tackling corruption is not easy: combating corruption is challenging power. This paper has sought to highlight the importance of a bottom-up approach to tackling corruption by championing the significance of involving citizens and their elected representatives in the fight against corruption.

Citizens have proven that they can play a central role in preventing corruption through watching and monitoring others, holding leaders to account in fulfilling anti-corruption commitments and changing a culture of indifference. They are crucial in enforcing anti-corruption legislation, through reporting, whistle-blowing and directly challenging corrupt officials.

Elected representatives have proven to be essential partners in the fight against corruption. As custodians of the state, they have a key role to play in ensuring strong anti-corruption legislation, effective oversight of the executive branch and citizen representation in various national and international arenas.

Citizens and elected representatives should no longer be sidelined in the development and implementation of anti-corruption policies and practices. Instead, they must be at the very centre of efforts to tackle corruption. Currently the anti-corruption policy-making sphere remains a weak institutional skeleton. However, with the involvement of citizens and their elected representatives, it has the potential to become active, transparent and no longer tolerant of the abuse of power.

Tearfund calls on the Conference of State Parties to UNCAC to put citizens and their elected representatives at the centre of the agenda, to ensure the effective monitoring and implementation of UNCAC.

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