

DSG (Dr) Josephine Ojiambo's Talking Points

Preliminaries

1. Salutations
2. Thanks to the initiator and organizers of today's event. The theme 'Tackling Corruption Together" underlines the significance which the Commonwealth Secretariat attaches to this global issue. It is not a Commonwealth issue it is a global issue.
3. I recall the Commonwealth Heads of Governments' abhorrence to corruption and their commitments to tackling systemic corruption, including extortion and bribery pronounced at their meeting in Durban in South Africa in 1999. This was even before the coming into effect of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. At the Durban meetings where they endorsed the Framework for Commonwealth Principles on Promoting Good Governance and Combating Corruption.
4. The Heads of Government again reiterated their commitment at their subsequent meeting in Abuja in Nigeria in 2003 and called upon all member countries to sign the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) whenever it opens for signature and requested the Secretariat to provide assistance to member countries for its implementation.

Corruption

5. Corruption is the anti-thesis of good governance and the rule of law. It does not discriminate in regards to the level of economic or social development of countries, nor is it specific to any type of government. With globalisation, it does not matter where corruption occurs, the menace has a global effect, requiring global action and condemnation to root it out of the system.

6. Weak legal frameworks and weak policies characterize the environment where corruption thrives. Thus the Commonwealth Secretariat has been in the forefront of promoting and raising of awareness for the ratification and implementation of the global anti-corruption convention and the implementation of FATF¹ 40 Recommendations against money laundering and terrorism financing.
7. Though most countries have criminalised corruption in one form or the other, it persists partly due to lack of political will and/or appropriate strategies to inhibit it.
8. In recognition of these challenges and following the commitments of the Heads of Governments and the mandates to the Secretariat, a Commonwealth wide anti-corruption strategy was developed.

Commonwealth Initiative - Partnerships and Networking

- Part of the strategy, which includes the tool kits and model laws SG spoke about, is the community of practice we have developed in the Commonwealth to ensure maximum cooperation and sharing of good practice.
- In 2011 the Secretariat established an Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) in Commonwealth Africa. The annual Heads of ACAs meeting acts as a focal point for the network, providing a forum through which Heads exchange best practice information and peer-review each other on anti-corruption measures and experiences. This has led to inter-agency bench-marking and mutual cooperation among the ACAs. Experience-sharing and learning among the ACAs have helped build and nurture anti-corruption agencies to adopt strategic alliances and best fit practices through Practitioner Exchanges.
- Based on the success of the Commonwealth Africa ACAs, the Secretariat established the Association of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption

¹ Financial Action Task Force

Bodies in Commonwealth Caribbean. Heads of 12 Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commissions in Commonwealth Caribbean have been sharing and benchmarking learning, country innovations and international best practices. This has helped built and nurtured anti-corruption agencies to adopt strategic alliances and good fit practices in the Caribbean region.

- Apart from regional networking to ensure joined action against corruption, we are also involved in in-country or peer-to-peer collaboration by way of placement and mentoring programmes as well as twinning programmes.
- This programme is practice oriented and it aims at enhancing capacity, promoting high standards and principles in the administration of criminal justice and the professionalism of criminal justice officials of Commonwealth jurisdictions. On request, the Secretariat will facilitate the short-term placement of criminal justice officials from jurisdictions needing capacity and professional enhancement in any specialised area of criminal justice practice, to criminal justice agencies of Commonwealth member countries possessing the requisite specialisation.
- Such placements are for a specified period of time, usually three weeks, allowing officials to gain practical experience. It could also be by way of pairing two Commonwealth countries to assist each other with knowledge and experience. One of the countries needing assistance and the other willing to provide assistance in the form of knowledge and know-how required, would be facilitated by the Secretariat to sign an MoU with each other to develop mutually beneficial cooperation in the sharing and exchange of knowledge, ideas, good practice and lessons learned on a continuous basis.
- Uganda, St Lucia, Mauritius, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Nigeria have benefitted from the placement and mentoring programme and the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission has been twinned with the West Australia Police under the same programme.

- In August 2015, the Secretariat in collaboration with UNODC created a Network of Cybercrime Justice Practitioners for the East Africa region to share information and provide informal assistance in the investigation and collation of electronic evidence to each other as well as sharing best practice in the ever dynamic nature of cybercrime. The network is currently chaired by Kenya and is coordinated by UNODC office in Nairobi.

Specific Initiatives

SG Scotland announced this morning the setting up of:

- A Commonwealth Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform. This Office will assist in crafting templates for legislation and best practice implementation to strengthen public safety.
- A validation system so we can have Commonwealth standards for compliance with good procurement practice.

In summary, the Commonwealth has contributed to the fight against corruption by offering Best practice toolkits which can empower governments to be on the front foot against corruption and fraud in their jurisdictions. If we are able to deliver on all of these the Commonwealth Secretariat would have contributed significantly to the

achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 which focuses on peace, justice and the building of strong institutions.