

SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTEGRITY

“BUILDING A ROBUST ETHICS INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROMOTE INTEGRITY IN GHANA”

12 – 14TH OCTOBER, 2011.

COMMUNIQUE

The Second National Conference on Integrity on the theme ***“Building a Robust Ethics Infrastructure to Promote Integrity in Ghana”*** organised by the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice supported by DANIDA at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Accra, between the 12- 14th October 2011 focused on:

- Consolidating the measures and initiatives undertaken to build a strong national integrity system in Ghana, and
- Charting a way forward to establish a strong national integrity system to reduce the opportunity for corruption

Recalling the significant steps taken towards building a strong integrity system and generally improving the overall governance situation in the country at the First National Conference on Integrity in 1998 on the theme “ Towards a collective plan of action for the creation of a National Integrity system”,

Aware that Chapter 6 of the 4th Republican Constitution of the Republic of Ghana directs the State to take steps to eradicate corrupt practices and the abuse of power and endeavour to secure and protect a social order founded on probity and accountability,

Mindful that Chapter 24 of the Constitution provides a Code of Conduct for Public Officers, and

Noting that Parliament ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption on the 31st October 2003.

The participants at the Conference:

1. Appreciated the participation of H.E. John Dramani Mahama, Vice President of the Republic of Ghana for accepting the invitation of CHRAJ to participate in the Conference and for the inauguration of the National Working Group on the Development of a National Anti-Corruption Action Plan in December 2009;
2. Advised that much remains to be done to promote integrity since the First Integrity Conference in 1998;
3. Acknowledged that high ethical standards are needed in public life to reduce the opportunity for corruption and enhance the principles of probity, transparency and accountability and accepted that there is a need to strengthen the moral fibre of Ghanaian society;
4. Affirmed that transparency must be coupled with accountability to achieve integrity in the public interest;
5. Confirmed that an ethical infrastructure must embrace a values system and disciplinary approach;
6. Observed that the perception about corruption improved marginally from 2009 – 2010 on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index;
7. Expressed satisfaction that the First National Conference on Integrity saw the creation of the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition which provides a forum for the government, public and private sector institutions as well as civil society organisations to collaborate and combat corruption;

8. Commended the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition for the First National Plan of Action Against Corruption 2001-5;
9. Advised that, in accordance with Chapter 2 of UNCAC, more preventive measures on corruption be used rather than the over reliance on enforcement mechanisms;
10. Welcomed that CHRAJ has developed Guidelines on Conflict of Interest to Assist Public Officials, Identify, Manage and Resolve Conflicts of Interest and a Code of Conduct for Public Officers in Ghana;
11. Approved that the Judiciary has established a Code of Conduct for its officers and Ethics and Integrity Committees as well as Client Service and Public Complaint Units for the Judiciary and Judicial Service;
12. Endorsed the need for Judicial accountability and activism and the assurance of independence of the Judiciary;
13. Welcomed that CHRAJ has established an Anti-Corruption Department;
14. Proposed that the government adequately resource CHRAJ as the independent anti-corruption institution to effectively discharge its anti-corruption mandate;
15. Approved that anti-corruption laws have been enacted since the First National Conference on Integrity;
16. Noted however, that there are gaps in the anti-corruption laws and that the Financial Administration Tribunal has not been established;
17. Advised that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice see to the enactment of the Code of Conduct for Public Officer's Bill, the

Whistleblower (Amendment) Bill and the preparation of legislation on witness protection to assist in the prosecution of corruption cases;

18. Observed that the Freedom of Information Bill has not been enacted and urged the swift passage of the Bill by Parliament;

19. Appealed that anti-corruption laws be enforced by the relevant agencies without fear or favour;

20. Urged the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to consider an amendment to the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) to widen the definition of corruption in conformity with UNCAC and the AU Convention;

21. Expressed concern that the subsidiary legislation for some of the anti-corruption laws has not been made;

22. Recommended that there should be more covert investigations to detect corruption;

23. Proposed that an Independent Public Prosecutor be appointed to prosecute corruption cases;

24. Advised that the asset declaration regime for public officers be made more robust and that the declarations be verified and subject to public scrutiny;

25. Urged that the internal controls in public agencies be improved to check corrupt practices;

26. Approved that the hearings of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament have been made public;

27. Appealed that the Public Accounts Committee should ensure that follow-up activities of its operations are carried out;

28. Entreated that public anti-corruption agencies receive more funding and resources;
29. Acknowledged the need for enhanced international co-operation to deal with trans- national corruption;
30. Agreed that the public awareness campaign on corruption of CHRAJ be improved and that it should cater for persons with disability in society;
31. Proposed that the Statistical Service consider a periodic national survey on the knowledge of respondents on corruption issues;
32. Recommended that the media should play a greater role in exposing corruption but with more professionalism and integrity;
33. Noted that the role of civil society in fighting corruption should be encouraged but should be matched with technical ability and integrity to effectively monitor and detect corruption;
34. Decided that children and the youth be introduced to ethics and integrity education and training to imbibe the culture of integrity before their moral values are corrupted;
35. Identified the need for capacity building and training of public officials and anti-corruption agencies engaged in the fight against corruption;
36. Observed that under the strategic plan, NACAP will pursue a National Integrity Programme;
37. Recommended that Parliament adopt the NACAP and pass the outstanding anti-corruption Bills and make the outstanding Legislative Instruments;

38. Considered the presentations from the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission, Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime, Botswana and the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone and urged CHRAJ and other relevant institutions to adopt their best practices;

39. Recommended that collaboration between stakeholders on corruption in the public and private sector needs to be improved for the more effective eradication of corruption and abuse of office;

40. Called for the de-politicisation of corruption and crime issues;

41. Concluded that the political will is crucial to the successful implementation of the NACAP and the enforcement of the Code of Conduct and the Guidelines on Conflict of Interests.

Finally, expressed gratitude to DANIDA for the sponsorship of the Conference.

DATED 14TH OCTOBER 2011, AT THE SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTEGRITY, HELD IN ACCRA AT THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.