

**FORUM FOR THE FUTURE**  
**Report on**  
**Youth conference on Corruption**

**Introduction**

From 4-6 September 2006, the Forum for the Future (FFF) in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), organized the first ever non-partisan conference for Windhoek youth drawn from different organizations and institutions (churches, students, political parties and arts). The actual planning of the conference was spearheaded by a youth committee of eight members representing some of these organizations and institutions, while FFF played a supportive role in the background.

The event was held at the Jan Lighthart Training Centre in Khomasdal and had the following aims and objectives:

- To introduce to the youth the Namibian Anti-Corruption Act No. 8 of 2003, particularly the section dealing with the establishment and functions of the Anti-Corruption Commission;
- For the youth to understand clearly the definition and meaning of corruption and its negative impact on the country and its citizens;
- For the youth to know the institutions and watchdog agencies where to report cases of corruption in the community;
- For the youth to know the principles of good governance;
- To strengthen the overall capacity of organized youth groups as an important component of civil society to assist government and other stakeholders in the campaign against corruption; and
- To assist organized youth groups to come closer to one another and coordinate their efforts when addressing national issues like corruption.

**Conference proceedings**

The conference was opened by Samson Ndeikwila, FFF coordinator, who explained the reasons behind convening such an event where the youth would discuss among themselves as fellow Namibians above the barriers of color and ethnic origin, language, religious belief and political allegiance. The FES resident representative, Mr Hubert Schillinger, delivered a brief and inspiring opening statement highlighting the importance of the event as the reason for his organization to sponsor it. Members of the organizing committee took turns in chairing the sessions.

The nature and content of the conference, as well as the unique composition of its participants, attracted the interests of the agencies involved in combating the scourge of corruption in Namibia. As such, the following persons addressed the conference:

- Mr Paulus Kalomho Noa, Director of the Anti-Corruption Commission
- Adv John Walters, the Ombudsman
- Hon Johan de Waal, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts
- Mr Jeff Kauaria, Deputy Director in the Office of the Auditor General, and
- Ms Susanne Dietl, an Intern with the FES

Inspector Willem Olivier of the Commercial Crime Unit of the Namibian Police sent his speech that was read during the conference.

After each presentation there was a frank and lively interfacing between the speakers and the participants. However, in-depth discussions on each presentation took place in the small working groups. The conference was concluded on a positive note with the adoption of the *Conference Statement* in which the participants have pledged their full support to President Hifikepunye Pohamba for his clear and firm public stand against corruption. They have also pledged to assist the agencies at the centre of fighting corruption by exposing corrupt practices wherever they might detect them in society. Moreover, the participants have all agreed that they would ensure that a joint conference of this nature would be an annual event.

### **Impact of the conference**

All the speakers gave a positive impression on the participants who left feeling that corruption could be rooted out if sufficient information about its destructive effects is properly disseminated all over the country. However, the best yardstick for measuring the impact of the conference on the participants is the Conference Statement in which they expressed that the event has given them a new and deeper understanding of the scourge of corruption as the major cause of poverty and underdevelopment in the country. Guided by this fresh understanding, the participants have put forward specific recommendations to make the anti-corruption campaign in Namibia a success. Among these recommendations is the emphasis that the Anti-Corruption Commission should become completely independent of any outside influence to be able to carry out its work efficiently. Another emphasis is that Namibia should invest sufficient resources in the capacity building of all the statutory agencies entrusted with rooting out corruption in the country.

All the conference delegates would report back to their respective organizations and institutions. This would certainly mean that the message about the scourge of corruption would reach many young people in Windhoek and beyond.

The conference has attracted the attention of the media and was well covered both electronically and in print. It was broadcast over the radio in the local languages and this means that the message has reached all the corners of the country.

### **Has the conference achieved the desired objectives?**

The conference has had six main objectives and all of them were achieved as follows:

- The Anti-Corruption Act No. 8 of 2003 and the functions of the Anti-Corruption Commission were ably introduced to the participants by Mr Paulus Kalomho Noa, Director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, in his keynote address to the conference. This presentation was followed by an interesting panel discussion during which the participants bombarded the speaker with many direct and poignant questions and comments.
- All the six presentations clearly explained to the participants what corruption is all about and how it can destroy a country. Fortunately, all the explanations were summed up in Susanne Dietl's paper about the *seven deadly sins* that have led

to the failures of many anti-corruption commissions in different parts of the world.

- All the five leading institutions and watchdog agencies in the forefront of fighting corruption in Namibia presented papers to the conference through which they also introduced their functions to the participants. These are the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Auditor General, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and the Commercial Crime Unit of the Namibian Police. Through such an encounter, definitely the youth now know where to report cases of corruption in the community.
- All the presentations have highlighted the principles of good governance. Specifically, Mr Jeff Kauaria's paper has underlined *accountability and transparency* as hallmarks for good governance.
- Most of the participants are leaders in their groups and, in their Conference Statement, they have stated that the conference has helped to open their eyes to seeing clearly what corruption is in its different forms. They have pledged their full support to President Pohamba in the campaign against corruption and that they would assist the government and its watchdog agencies in the fight against corruption in Namibia.
- No partisan politics or sectarian tendencies surfaced during the conference. This is a clear indication that the conference has succeeded in drawing the youth from different organizations and institutions closer to one another. Moreover, the youth have resolved unanimously to hold such a conference annually.

### **Conclusion**

All the participants were satisfied that they were brought together in this way to deliberate on the burning national issue of corruption. They found the conference very informative and educative and have resolved that they would need such type of a conference annually and on a broader basis.

11 September 2006, Windhoek

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### **Annexe: Conference Statement**

# **YOUTH CONFERENCE ON CORRUPTION**

## **Conference Statement**

We, the youth of Windhoek from different organizations and institutions, gathered at the Rössing Foundation Centre, from 4-6 September 2006, under the theme "Youth Participation in the Anti-Corruption Campaign in Namibia". The conference, sponsored by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, was organized by the Forum for the Future.

The conference was addressed by:

- Mr Paulus Noa, Director of the Anti-Corruption Commission
- Adv John Walters, the Ombudsman
- Mr Jeff Kauaria, Deputy Director, Office of the Auditor General
- Hon Johan de Waal, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and
- Ms Susanne Dietl, Intern with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

An input was also received from Inspector Willem Olivier of the Commercial Crime Unit of the Namibian Police.

More than ever before, we have realized that corruption in its different forms is the main cause of poverty and underdevelopment in our country. It promotes the culture of mismanagement, poor service delivery and self-enrichment in public offices. Corruption breeds resentment and mistrust among the citizens towards government and thereby undermines government legitimacy and the rule of law. Corruption scares away investors and encourages unemployment as a result.

We pledge our full support to President Hifikepunye Pohamba for his firm public stand against corruption, mismanagement and wastage of public resources in our country. We commend the work and good intentions of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Auditor General, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and the Commercial Crime Unit of the Namibian Police in combating corruption. We shall assist these agencies in exposing corrupt practices in our society.

To make the anti-corruption campaign more effective, we recommend the following:

1. That the Anti-Corruption Commission becomes a totally independent and properly funded body;
2. That enough resources should be invested in the capacity building of all the statutory agencies created with the purpose of combating corruption in our country;

3. That, on their part, statutory agencies created with the purpose of combating corruption in our country should work closely together among themselves;
4. That "corruption" becomes a school subject to be incorporated in the Life Skills curriculum;
5. That protection of whistle blowers be strengthened;
6. That an "Anti-Corruption Week" be declared to inform and educate the Namibian public about the corrosive effects of corruption on the moral fabric of society.

We have agreed that this type of conference shall be an annual event. We urge fellow Namibian youth in other parts of the country to transcend the walls of division and create joint platforms through which they participate in the anti-corruption campaign in our country.

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Adopted at Windhoek on this 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2006.

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