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**CORRUPTION PREVENTION MEASURES TO IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY: AFRICAN OMBUDS RESEARCH CENTRE TRAINING: 21 JULY 2026 WINDHOEK NAMIBIA**

It is a privilege to address this distinguished gathering on the importance of ***Corruption Prevention Measures To Improve Service Delivery*** because it sits at the heart of good governance, public trust, and institutional accountability.

**As the saying goes "*Prevention is better than cure*" and it is in that context that I would like to make my remarks.**

As professional institutions, more often than not, we are among the first to hear the voices of citizens when government systems fail. We receive complaints about service delivery delays, maladministration, abuse of power, unfair treatment and procurement irregularities.

While such complaints may appear administrative in nature, they frequently point to deeper governance weaknesses and corruption risks.

The challenge before us is therefore not only how to investigate corruption and maladministration after they occur, but to prevent it.

**Corruption is a Service Delivery Problem**

Corruption is often viewed as a criminal justice issue, which it is. But more importantly, it is a service delivery matter. Whenever a procurement contract is manipulated, a school or hospital remains an unfinished project. When a public official improperly awards a license, an economic opportunity is denied to *bona fide* deserving applicant(s). When public funds are misappropriated, essential services such as healthcare, water, housing, and education remain but only an idea, leaving most citizens destitute.

The ultimate victims of corruption ladies and gentlemen are not public institutions, but rather the victims are the most vulnerable of society, such as our grandparents, orphans and vulnerable children.

For this reason, corruption prevention should not be viewed merely as a compliance exercise. It should be viewed as an indispensable mechanism for improving the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of public services. It should be regarded as the first response to a social evil that undermines the national development agendas in our countries.

Corruption as we know now tears into the very fiber of societies and undermine our hard-earned democracies. It is therefore important that we prevent it at all costs rather than attempting to cure it.

The importance of Corruption Prevention is recognized by the Global Community for example,

The **United Nations Convention against Corruption** dedicates an entire chapter, to corruption preventive measures. It requires States to establish anti-corruption bodies, strengthen public sector integrity, promote transparency in public procurement, adopt codes of conduct, improve public financial management, and encourage citizen participation in governance. The Convention furthermore recognizes that effective anti-corruption efforts require preventative systems and not just investigations and prosecutions.

Whilst national governments must establish a blended approach which include the prevention and combatting of corruption, the latter must be seen a last resort and invoking it must cause the culprits facing the full wrath of the law irrespective of their social standing.

From a continental view, the **African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption** promotes accountability, transparency, ethical leadership, public participation, and strong oversight institutions as essential tools for preventing corruption.

Whilst at a regional level, the **SADC Protocol Against Corruption** calls on member states to establish mechanisms for preventing, detecting, and combating corruption while strengthening cooperation among institutions responsible for governance and accountability.

Together, these instruments recognize a simple but powerful truth:

**Preventing Corruption is more effective, less costly, and more sustainable than combatting and enforcing it.**

### Namibia's Domestic Anti-Corruption Framework

In Namibia, the **Anti-Corruption Act** established the Anti-Corruption Commission as an independent institution mandated not only to investigate corruption but also to prevent it through education, awareness, institutional reviews, and integrity promotion. The Act expressly recognizes corruption prevention as a fundamental element of the national anti-corruption framework reflecting international best practices.

A successful anti-corruption strategy is not measured solely by the number of arrests or prosecutions but rather by the extent to which corruption opportunities are reduced and public services are improved with the economic realities that tangibly change the lives of ordinary citizens.

### Linking Corruption Prevention and Anti-Money Laundering

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is impossible to discuss corruption prevention without also addressing **money laundering and other associated predicate offenses**. Corruption and money laundering are intrinsically connected because corruption generates illicit proceeds and money laundering conceals such proceeds.

Every corrupt transaction generates a financial benefit, whether it is a bribe, kickback, fraudulent procurement payment, or abuse of public office, the beneficiary must eventually find a way to disguise and benefit from the illicit gains. This is where anti-money laundering measures become critically important as part of the prevention of corruption framework.

In Namibia, the objectives of the **Anti-Corruption Act** complement the country's anti-money laundering framework under the **Financial Intelligence Act**. While the Anti-Corruption Commission seeks to prevent and investigate corruption, anti-money laundering systems seek to identify, disrupt, and trace the proceeds of crimes such as corruption.

When financial systems become more transparent, opportunities for corrupt actors to hide illicit proceeds become significantly more limited.

Therefore, corruption prevention and anti-money laundering prevention should be viewed as mutually reinforcing components of a broader integrity framework.

**Unexplained Wealth as a Preventive Tool (POCA)**

An increasingly important concept in the global fight and prevention of corruption is **unexplained wealth**.

Unexplained wealth refers to a situation where an individual's assets, expenditure, or lifestyle significantly exceed what can reasonably be justified through known lawful sources of income.

Put simply, the question becomes:

**"How was this wealth acquired?"**

For Ombud institutions, unexplained wealth should be viewed as an important red flag. Where complaints, investigations, declarations of interests, procurement records, or other information reveal a substantial disparity between legitimate income and accumulated assets, this may warrant referral for closer scrutiny by Law Enforcement Agencies.

The significance of unexplained wealth is that it shifts attention from the corrupt act alone to the benefits derived from corruption. After all, if corrupt individuals cannot safely enjoy the proceeds of their crimes, the incentive to engage in corruption is significantly reduced.

**Corruption Risk Assessments**

Another effective prevention measure is Corruption Risk Assessments. It is noteworthy that in Namibia under the National Risk Assessment, Corruption and Bribery ranks as some of the top predicate offenses.

In this regard Corruption Risk Assessments involves identifying vulnerable processes before losses occur. Particular attention should be given to inter alia:

- Procurement.
- Recruitment and promotions.
- Licensing and permits (especially the extractive industries) amongst others.

**Moreover, citizen participation and whistleblowing strengthen corruption prevention measures. In this regard we find that the** UN and AU Conventions all recognize the importance of public participation in combating corruption. Citizens are frequently the first to observe misconduct. Effective prevention therefore requires:

- Anonymous reporting channels.
- Secure whistleblowing mechanisms.
- Accessible complaints systems and
- Public awareness initiatives.

Citizens should be empowered to report wrongdoing without fear of retaliation, because when citizens participate in accountability processes, institutions become stronger and corruption risks are reduced.

Finally, distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, no legal framework, no investigation, and no technology can substitute for ethical leadership.

If any delegate here is interested there is a digital news letter called the **AI African Dream** and about a day ago it released episode 42, titled **How can AI Help Africa Fight Corruption.** It confirms much of what we spoke about in the morning session that Corruption leaves behind a digital footprint in every tender, invoice, payment manifesto and AI can play a role in real time monitoring and predictive analytics in bidding patterns, repeated awards and repeated payments which will alert investigators and decision makers long before public funds have disappeared. This will allow governments to focus on high risk projects (triage) in real time and focus their investigations where it matters most.

In preventing Corruption, Public institutions should actively promote:

- Codes of conduct.
- Integrity training.
- Conflict-of-interest management.
- Financial and other relevant disclosure measures and

- Accountability mechanisms.

Leadership determines organisational culture. Where leaders demonstrate integrity, transparency and accountability, these values tend to permeate the institution.

**Conclusion**

Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion the Namibian AC framework provided by the Anti-Corruption Act, together with the standards established by international and regional instruments, all point in the same direction: it requires stronger institutions, greater transparency, financial integrity, public participation, and accountability.

As Ombud institutions, you occupy a unique position within this integrity ecosystem.

You hear the voices of citizens, identify governance weaknesses, uncover systemic risks, and help shape reforms that prevent future harm.

In the spirit of an all-inclusive government approach, we must use every complaint as a source of intelligence, every investigation as an opportunity for reform, every digital record as a tool for prevention, and every recommendation as a pathway to better governance.

Because when corruption is prevented, public resources are protected.

When public resources are protected, service delivery improves and when service delivery improves, public trust grows and in turn, democracy, accountability and the rule of law is strengthened.

I leave you with this personal believe – Being Brave was never meant to be easy.

**Thank you for your kind attention.**