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2022 INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY (IACD) REPORT

National Theme: “Promoting Integrity and Accountability for increased Citizens’ Participation in the Fight Against Corruption”.

International Theme: “**Uniting the World Against Corruption**”



Date: December 5-9, 2022



*Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin
Executive Chairperson
Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission*



***MR. NEIL SCOTT
UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR
IN LIBERIA***



Dr. Khwima Nthara
World Bank Country manager to Liberia
2022 International Anti-Corruption Day Guest Speaker



*Stephen N. Rodriques
Resident Representative
UNDP, Liberia*

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Background

Corruption continues to have a disproportionate impact on the poor and most vulnerable, increasing the cost of living, and impeding access to health, education, justice, electricity, and other basic social services, thereby deepening inequality. It reduces private sector investments as it increases risks for investors, with consequent effects on growth and jobs. It distorts public spending decisions and weakens the quality of public sector investment programs of the Government of Liberia. It erodes public trust in governments, undermining their legitimacy and posing a threat to peace and stability.

Corruption attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law, and creating a bureaucratic stalemate that stunts Economic development by discouraging and or impeding foreign direct investment, and consequently small businesses within the country often find it difficult, if not impossible, to overcome required “start-up costs” because of corruption.

Today, the world faces some of its greatest challenges in many generations, challenges that threaten prosperity and stability for people across the globe. Corruption, conflict, and instability continue unabated. Poverty and inequity continue to permeate every space of our world, undermining the rule of law and worsening the environmental crisis and the cost of living globally. These actions for the most part continue to impede and or undermine global initiatives, such as the targets set out by the Sustainable Development Goals, which is a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for the people and the planet, now and in the future. Contextually, this global instrument offers a way to help protect our environment, create jobs, achieve gender equality, and secure wider access to essential services such as health care and education.

Therefore, preventing corruption is crucial if the targets foreseen in the Sustainable Development Goals are to be met, thus, the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) sought to highlight the important link between anti-corruption and peace, security, and development. At its core is the notion that tackling this crime is the right and responsibility of everyone, and that only through cooperation and the participation of every person and institution can we overcome the negative impact of corruption. States, government officials, civil servants, law enforcement officers, media representatives, the private sector, civil society, academia, the public, and youth alike all have a role to play in this global campaign. The 2022 IACD also marked the start of the twentieth anniversary of UNCAC, and the its commemoration echoes a clarion call for global and genuine collaboration in the fight against corruption, as reflected by the theme of this year’s International Anti-Corruption Day, “UNCAC at 20: Uniting the World Against Corruption”.

In 2003, the world came together to adopt a landmark agreement, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Since the coming into force of the convention in December of 2005, 188 state parties have committed to the Convention’s anti-corruption

obligations, showing near-universal recognition of the importance of good governance, accountability, and political commitment.

Following the adoption of the convention against corruption by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003, it designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness against corruption and to highlight the role of the UNCAC, as well as state parties in combating and preventing corruption.

Introduction

The 2022 International-Anti Corruption Day celebration was organized by the Education and Prevention Division of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission under the supervision, of the Program Manager, in close consultation with the Oversight Commissioner for the Education & Prevention Division and the Executive Director; with technical input from constituent members of the National Integrity Forum. It is noteworthy to indicate that the cooperation and support of the staff of the Division and our collaborating and development partners were outstanding.

Activities for the Observance of IACD 2022

The 2022 IACD framework brought together a host of Integrity institutions and Civil Society Organizations, including the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC), General Auditing Commission(GAC), and the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), among others.

Activities marking the commemoration of the 2022 IACD got underway on 5th December through the 9th; under the global theme " UNCAC at 20: Uniting the World Against Corruption; and the National Theme " Promoting Integrity and Accountability for Increased Citizens' Participation in the Fight Against Corruption. Both themes are in sync and accentuate the place of "public participation and unity" of all stakeholders in the fight against corruption.

Fundamentally, the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) sought to highlight the crucial link between Anti-corruption and Peace, Security, and Development. And at its core, it emphasized the idea that tackling Corruption requires all hands on deck; and that through cooperation and the participation of every person and institution we can overcome the negative impact/effects of corruption. States, government officials, civil servants, law enforcement officers, media representatives, the private sector, civil society, academia, the public, and youth alike all have a role to play in this worldwide effort to combat the menace of corruption.

Against this backdrop, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, (LACC) developed a National framework that sought to enhance a broad-based inclusion and participation of major stakeholders, including pedestrians, commuters, and the Media as well as Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Institutions of Learning. The two major aspects of the framework

included a pre-commemoration Anti-Corruption Public Engagement Campaign that encapsulated a Two-day Anti-Corruption Street Blast, Radio Talk Show appearances, Inter-University Anti -Corruption Debate, Inter High-School Anti -Corruption Sports Olympics in two sporting disciplines-Kickball and Football and the MAIN EVENT, which began with a parade followed by an In-door Program to climax the commemoration.

The Pre-December 9 Anti-Corruption Public Engagement Campaign

The Pre-December 9 Anti-Corruption Public Engagement Campaign was a huge success and included the below activities:

I. Anti-Corruption Street Blast.

The Anti-Corruption Street Blast was a two-day public engagement campaign that raised massive awareness on Liberia's role and commitment as a state party to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), and the role of the LACC as Liberia's lead Anti-graft institution. The campaign also called on Liberians from different persuasions to join the LACC in the fight against corruption. The campaign was pillowed by the eye-catching display of huge Anti-Corruption Banners, the distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, including flyers and bumper stickers; amplified by a well-composed and exquisite Anti-Corruption Song and voice massaging echoing during the two-day Anti-Corruption Street Blast.

II. Inter-University Anti-Corruption Debate

The Inter-University Anti-Corruption Debate was held at the University of Liberia Auditorium on Capitol Hill between the University of Liberia-based All-Star and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion University. The panel of judges was headed by one of Liberia's finest quizzers and debaters in the person of Atty. Phil Tarpeh Dixon. He was ably assisted by two of Liberia's Attorneys- At-Law in persons of Mariah Yeakula and Windor Dorko Taplah. The debate elicited the views of university students (debaters) on the passage of the bill granting the LACC Direct Prosecutorial power in the absence of a Specialized Anti-Corruption Court. The debate was founded around two academic pillars, with the University of Liberia All-star seeking to unpack the effectiveness of the LACC with the passage of the bill that grants the LACC Direct Prosecutorial Power in the absence of a Specialized Court. During their arguments, the University of Liberia All-star argued that the LACC does not need a Specialized Court to effectively carry out its prosecutorial mandate. They further posited that the Act establishing the LACC renders the LACC effective and the granting of the Prosecutorial Power as prayed for by the LACC only gives the LACC additional impetus in the fight against corruption.

The African Methodist Zion Episcopal University, on the other hand, argued that the effectiveness of the LACC is largely impeded in the absence of a Specialized Anti-Corruption Court. They argued that the creation of a Specialized Anti-Corruption Court will

bolster the LACC's fight against corruption and will go a long way in enhancing its efficacy. After electrifying three rounds of argument, the panel of judges unanimously voted the African Episcopal Methodist Zion University as the winner of the 2022 IACD Inter-University Debate.

iii. Inter-High School Anti-Corruption Mini Sports Olympics

The Inter-High School Anti-Corruption Mini Sports Olympics was held at the Voker Mission Soccer Pitch in Paynesville on December 8, 2022. The Olympics brought together four high schools in Paynesville City. They included the Mount Zion Christian Academy, Christian Missionary Fellowship International (CMFI), Paynesville Community School, and Nathan E. Gibson High School. The LACC used the Olympics to increase its Anti-Corruption messaging platform. During the event, the LACC Community Relations Officer in the person of Mr. Alfred D. Karnley granted an interview to the Mt. Zion Christian Academy Press Club which was aired on the Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS) School Press Club program. The interview centered around the LACC's establishment, its mandate, and functions as the lead Anti-graft institution in the country. During the interview, Mr. Karnley also placed a spotlight on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and outlined Liberia's responsibility as a state party to the convention. Mr. Karnley highlighted the activities earmarked for the commemoration of the 2022 IACD. The LACC Community Relations Officer further posited that all of the activities earmarked were tailored towards raising massive awareness against corruption. In closing, Mr. Karnley stressed that the commemoration of the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) was indicative of Liberia's commitment as a state party to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

MAIN EVENT

The implementation of Phase Two of activities marking the observance of the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day, named and styled the Main Event, began with a parade that started at the S.K.D. Boulevard. The parade brought together a cross-section of participants, including students, school administrators, Civil Society Organisations, as well as Integrity Institutions.



***Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin
Executive Chairperson
Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission***

The Executive Chairperson of Liberia’s lead Anti-Graft Institution began his anti-corruption day message by noting that the 2022 IACD was the second in succession under his watch as Executive Chairperson of the LACC. He indicated that seventeen (17) months ago at an induction ceremony, he made a solemn pledge to endeavor to work tirelessly in ensuring that incidents of corruption are drastically reduced and to create an atmosphere that would ensure accountability for state resources. He mentioned that he still stands by this commitment. He went on to make a clarion call to all Liberians to join forces in strengthening every sector of society as a way of declaring a massive war against corruption. He further asserted that corruption is a dangerous recipe that impedes and undermines the growth and development of any nation, and as such, corruption should not be entertained, encouraged, practiced, and maintained at any level of our political governance.

Chairperson Martin pointed out that the commission has encountered and continues to encounter a barrage of challenges since he took over as chairperson of the commission. He noted that these challenges are deliberate strategies employed by detractors to upset the commission's goal and weaken its fight against corruption. The LACC boss stressed that under his leadership as chairperson, the future of Liberia, free of corruption remains paramount. He added that the commission under his watch envisages a Liberia where all Liberians will have access to basic social services, irrespective of political affiliations and

creed. The chairperson of the LACC called on all stakeholders to join forces and create a national movement to tackle corruption at all levels of society.

The Executive Chairperson of the LACC used the platform to inform the audience that the LACC is at a critical crossroad in its quest for Institutional and Judicial Independence. He disclosed that following the passage of an "Act to Amend and Restate the Act Establishing the LACC", he filed an "IN RE: Constitutionality Petition before the full bench of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia challenging sections 16.1 and 16.2 as contained to Amend and Restate the Act Establishing the LACC. He intimated that he is anxiously awaiting full closure to the matter to allow the LACC to recalibrate and resume its full statutory responsibilities as required by law. He called on all state and non-state actors to join forces in upholding the dignity of the Rule of Law, which according to him, is the foundation for stability and security for any democratic nation. He urged all stakeholders to continue to champion the true tenets of democracy as the world unites against corruption.

Cllr. Martin, in an unequivocal, tone intimated that the LACC is deeply concerned about the slow pace of prosecution of corruption cases around the country. This, he said, is impeding the work of the commission, and undermining its effectiveness as the lead anti-graft institution in the country. He used the platform to call on the National Legislature to enact and pass new laws for the establishment of a specialized Anti-Corruption Court. Cllr Martin believes that the establishment of the court will add impetus to the fight against corruption by accelerating the prosecution of corrupt public officials and private citizens held liable for corruption.

The LACC chairperson used the occasion to highlight gains made by the LACC under his watch as Executive Chairperson. He posited that under his able leadership, the LACC has investigated and forwarded more cases to the Justice Ministry in 2022, than any other year since the establishment of the LACC more than a decade ago. He further noted that the commission under his watch has restituted and placed into National Coffers, more monies than any other administration in the history of the commission. Cllr. Martin used the platform to disclose that under his watch the commission has conducted five Institutional Corruption Risk assessments. He named the Liberian Immigration Service, the Liberia National Police, The Liberia Electricity Corporation, The WASH Commission, and The National Identification Registry as the assessed institutions. He stressed that the commission will endeavor to continue its risk assessment exercise at four public institutions, including the Liberia Telecommunication Authority, National Road Fund, Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, and Ministry of Commerce and industry.

Regarding decentralization of the commission, the LACC chairperson informed the audience that the commission has initiated a nationwide anti-corruption campaign across the country. The anti-corruption awareness campaign is intended to raise massive awareness as a way of eliciting citizens' buy-in and support in the fight against corruption. The chairperson of the LACC disclosed that the commission has visited several counties, including Bassa, Bong,

Margibi, and Nimba Counties. He further disclosed that the commission has established Anti-Corruption County Coalitions in the aforementioned counties as a way of enhancing, and sustaining the decentralization drive and continued citizens' support and participation in the fight against corruption at the community and county levels.

Speaking on the Asset Declaration regime, Cllr. Martin pointed out that the LACC is deeply concerned about the reluctant attitude shown by public officials towards their declaration of assets before assuming office and while leaving office. He called on public officials who have not declared their assets to do so in keeping with law.

On the sub-regional front, Cllr. Martin informed the audience that the LACC has deepened its cooperation with its sub-regional counterparts, including Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The LACC chairperson disclosed that Nigeria and Sierra Leone have been collaborating with Liberia in the area of training for the Enforcement and the Education and Prevention Divisions of the LACC, respectively. Cllr. Martin further stated that in his capacity as Vice President of the Regional Anti-Corruption Body of West Africa, he will continue to exert every effort in soliciting more collaboration and support from all member institutions.

The LACC chairperson went to say that consensus has been reached for increased cooperation in enhancing borderless Anti-Corruption engagements at the regional level. According to Cllr. Martin, this borderless Anti-Corruption arrangement will bolster sub-regional Anti-Corruption information dissemination regime which will help member states track and or arrest and send to their country of origin, individuals fleeing prosecution for acts of corruption.

In closing, Cllr. Martin thanked the team from the Ministry of Finance Development Planning and the government in general for the support and urged the government, in particular, to increase budgetary support to the LACC as the LACC intensifies its fight against corruption. He also thanked development partners for their continued support of the LACC. He reckoned, in particular, the support from the United Nations through the UNDP and specifically its funding support for the commemoration of this year's IACD. He also praised the Chinese and Swedish Embassies for their unwavering support to the commission. He thanked the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) and the National Integrity Forum, a conglomerate of integrity institutions, particularly the Technical and Steering Committees for their continuous contribution to the success story of the LACC.

Keynote Address



Dr. Khwima Nthara
Keynote Speaker

World Bank Country Manager for Liberia

Dr. Khwima Nthara expressed delight in being a part of the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day celebration. However, Dr. Nthara was quick to point out that corruption remains the world's biggest problems. He informed the audience that the World Bank Group considers corruption a major challenge to its twin goals: (i). Ending extreme poverty by 2030 (ii). Boosting shared prosperity for the poorest 40 percent of people in developing countries.

Dr. Nthara further indicated that one of the reasons why the World Bank considers corruption a major challenge is because of its adverse impact on development, economies, and people's livelihoods. Dr. Nthara disclosed that in monetary terms, the total cost of corruption globally is estimated at 3.6 trillion dollars on an annual basis. According to him, this is in sharp contrast to the total cost of natural disasters in 2021 which stood at 258 billion dollars.

The World Bank Country Manager for Liberia asserted that the fight against corruption needs to be Multi-faceted due to the complex nature of corruption. He added that with the massive technological advancements, corruption is fast becoming even more sophisticated. He stressed that for any country to succeed in its fight against corruption, it must first

premise its energy on political will at the highest level. He noted that the failure of governing authority to demonstrate political will and commitment to lead by example makes it difficult for institutions and citizens alike to commit themselves to the fight against corruption.

Dr. Nthara went on to commend the three branches of the Liberian Government for their collaborative efforts in initiating reforms in the Anti-Corruption space. He highlighted the recent amendment of the Anti-Corruption Law that grants the LACC Prosecutorial Power. According to him, this signals the government's seriousness in the fight against corruption.

Notwithstanding, Dr. Nthara called on the government to complement the steps it has taken to grant the LACC direct Prosecutorial power by ensuring that the LACC and all its apparatuses are fully resourced to do their job. He stressed the need for the appointment of qualified and competent individuals and the provision of adequate budgetary support as a way of strengthening the fight against corruption.

Additionally, Dr. Nthara also stressed that citizens have a crucial role to play in the fight against corruption. He indicated that given the high cost of corruption, especially on ordinary people, the entire citizenry must get involved in the fight against corruption at all levels. Dr. Nthara further stated that corruption is fast becoming a culture and a way of life and fighting it requires a holistic change of mindset and attitudes. He indicated that the transformation of society begins with the country's young generation, most especially students.

Dr. Nthara called on schools, religious and social institutions, including families to begin the process of inculcating values of integrity in our young people at all levels. He urged school authorities to include anti-corruption lessons in their curriculum, especially at the lower elementary level as a way of increasing anti-corruption engagement among the youthful population and strengthening the fight against corruption.

In closing, Dr. Nthara reemphasized that corruption is costly and that it impacts the poor disproportionately. He maintained that the fight against corruption requires concerted efforts with the involvement of political actors and or leaders taking the lead followed by the citizens on the other hand.

Special Statement By UN Resident Coordinator



***MR. NEIL SCOTT
UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR
IN LIBERIA***

Mr. Neil Scott delivering special remarks at IACD 2022 recognized the work of the LACC, Cllr. Martin, commissioners and staff of the Commission. He also recognized students who have been involved the weeklong anti-corruption activities.

The UN Envoy highlighted the significant roles of students in the development of Liberia. He referred to the students as eye-witnesses and guarantors of the future of Liberia, and urged them to use the knowledge gained during the 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day program to promote the development of Liberia.

He further pointed out that no country is immune from corruption, noting it is against this backdrop that the UN, IMF, World Bank, among others, have placed the fight against corruption high on their agenda. He asserted that many treaties have been signed referencing the UNCAC Convention, the 2007 World Bank Anti-Corruption Strategy, among others, all geared toward the fight against corruption.

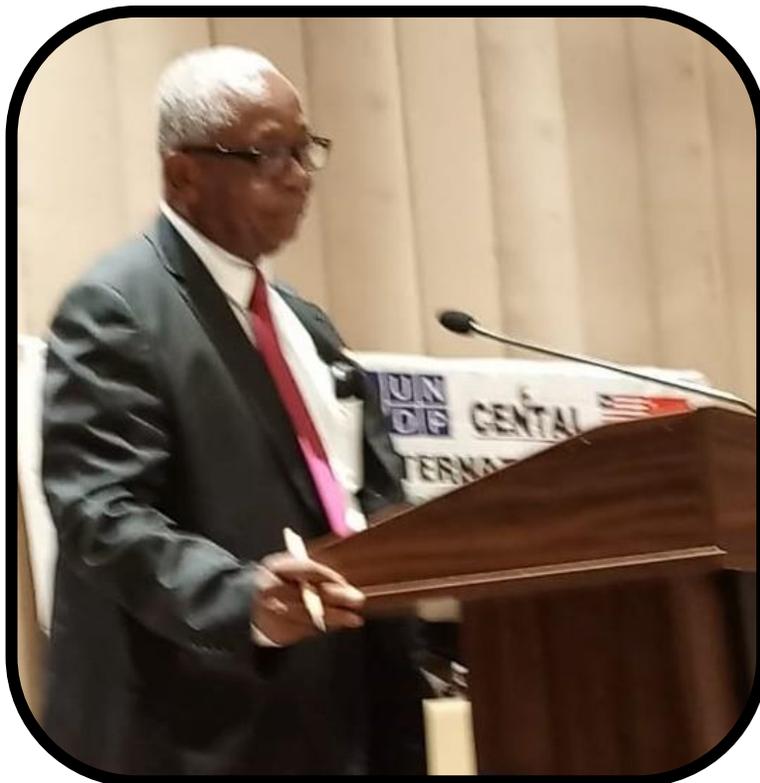
Mr. Scott noted that corruption undermines good governance, peace, prosperity, economic progress, the future of the youth of Liberia. Moreover, corruption undermines good education, good healthcare, erodes trust in governments and undermines the social contract.

The UN Resident Coordinator also made a passionate plea to the Government of Liberia and its partners to make sure that corruption is stopped or combated. He stressed that government needs to ensure that laws are implemented and adhered to. He urged the government to demonstrate political will in the fight against corruption, and pleaded with the Legislature to enact anti-corruption legislations submitted by LACC to establish a Specialized Anti-Corruption Court to enable the commission expedite the prosecution of corruption cases.

Further, the head of the UN Mission to Liberia also recommended that the government should ensure that Integrity Institutions are fully funded as a way of guaranteeing their effectiveness, operational independence and financial autonomy. He stressed that staffing the LACC with competent professionals and tools is crucial to its continued existence as well as the quest for a decentralized operation of the Commission.

In closing, he said there should be no sacred cows in the fight against corruption. He called on the public to resist and to report corruption anywhere it happens, whether public, private sectors, in schools, hospitals, traffic checkpoints etc.

Special Statement By GOL



Cllr. Nyenati Tuan
Deputy Minister for Codification/ Solicitor General

As proxy of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Nyenati Tuan, Deputy Minister for Codification at the Ministry of Justice, started his remarks with the definition of corruption referring to it as taking something that does not belong to you, and thus, depriving the person and or persons that thing was intended for. He emphasized that corruption affects the poor and marginalized the society even more.

The Justice Ministry Official used a self-coined acronym “GAC” which he defined as (**Go After Criminals**) to encourage the LACC in its fight against corruption, and pledged the Ministry of Justice fullest support to the LACC in the fight against corruption.

He pointed out that students are ambassadors in Liberia’s fight against corruption. He urged them to keep all government officials’ feet to the fire by holding them accountable for their stewardship in government. Moreover, he encouraged the students to start the fight against corruption at home by ensuring transparency and accountability in all domestic interactions at any given time.

He concluded by ensuring that the students made a solemn pledge, “I promise to avoid corruption in my life”.

REMARKS

Internal Audit Agency



*Mr. David Kemeh, Director
Internal Audit Agency (IAA)*

The head of the Internal Audit Agency, David Kemeh, pledged the IAA's support to the fight against corruption and indicated that the fight against corruption in Liberia is enhanced through a robust accountability mechanism. Mr. Kemeh also pointed out that IAA hopes to be present in all government ministries and agencies and assured the audience that in the event where weaknesses and or irregularities are identified, solutions will be developed to help address and or mitigate said weaknesses and or irregularities in the system.

He noted that through collaborative efforts and support from the public, the government, heads of entities and partners, corruption can be minimized to an appreciable level so that resources can be equitably deployed to enhance the livelihood of the ordinary people.

In closing, he reaffirmed the IAA's commitment to the fight against corruption and assured the audience that the IAA will endeavor to put in place all appropriate policy framework intended to make corruption a no-go zone in our country and intimated that the NEW IAA will be more robust in the coming years.

National Integrity Forum



***Mr.. Foday G. Kiazolu
Deputy Auditor General for Administration
General Auditing Commission***

Mr. Foday G. Kiazolu, the Deputy Auditor General for Administration at the General Auditing Commission spoke on behalf of the National Integrity Forum (NIF). The NIF is a conglomerate of integrity institutions, private sector and civil society organizations in Liberia. Mr. Kiazolu began his IACD remarks with the definition of NIF; he said NIF is a consortium of civil society organizations, private sector and Integrity Institutions working together to fight all forms of corruption in Liberia and to institute a culture of fiscal discipline in the governance of Liberia's resources.

He asserted that the NIF has collaborated with the LACC over the years as one of its constituent members to enhance the fight against corruption and institute a culture of honesty and discipline across Liberia.

In closing, Mr. Kiazolu said the NIF stands ready to collaborate further with the LACC to curb corruption and to make Liberia a better place for all Liberians. He assured the audience that the fight against corruption is not only for the LACC alone but all NIF members and Liberians in general.

British Embassy



Ambassador Kate Thomson
British Ambassador

The Charge' Affairs of the British Embassy accredited near Monrovia began her IACD remarks by thanking the participants who had gathered in their mass to commemorate the 2022 IACD. The British diplomat encouraged the participants, especially students, to join the ten percent (10%) of good people in Liberia to stand up against corruption. Ambassador Kate Thomson identified corruption as a problem in every country, including Great Britain. According to her, power corrupts and human beings are weak and those in power, especially political power are faced with the temptation of corruption every day.

However, the acclaimed British envoy used her position as head of the Cashbook of the British Embassy as an example to discourage students that stealing to falsify transaction is wrong. She further indicated that while most developing countries, especially those in Africa, are losing billions and trillions of dollars to corruption because of the inadequacy and or deficiency in their systems, others are making advances and acquiring millions due to their zero tolerance stance on corruption.

Swedish Embassy



Amb. Urban Sjoström
Swedish Ambassador

The Swedish Ambassador accredited near Monrovia thanked the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and collaborating integrity institutions and Civil Society Organizations for a well-reorganized International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD).

Ambassador Urban Sjostrom deplored poor budgetary support to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and other integrity institutions.

However, he lauded the government of Liberia for granting direct prosecutorial power to the LACC which he indicated is crucial to enhancing Liberia's fight against corruption.

Ambassador Sjostrom used the platform to call on the Liberian Government to increase funding to the LACC to enhance its capacity and bolster its independence. Ambassador Sjostrom also called on the government to demonstrate profound political will in the fight against corruption. He urged the government and other relevant state actors to pass on additional legislation including the establishment of the Specialize Anti-Corruption Court to further strengthen the LACC in its endeavor to deter corruption.

In closing, Ambassador Sjostrom pledged the Swedish Government's commitment to supporting the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC).

CENTAL



*Atty. Bendu Kpoto
CENTAL
Makes Remark on behalf of Civil Society Organizations*

The Legal Officer of CENTAL, Atty. Bendu Kpoto spoke on behalf of the Executive Director of CENTAL, Anderson D. Miamen who would have loved to attend the 2022 IACD program but could not make it due to international engagement in the United States of America.

Atty. Kpoto, using the local theme for this year's International Anti-Corruption Day Program; "Promoting Integrity and Accountability for increased Citizens' Participation in the Fight Against Corruption" *and the International theme*; "Uniting the World Against Corruption", believes that if we must win the war against corruption, we must transition from making speeches to taking concrete actions intended to deter acts of corruption. She expressed her disappointment over the failure of relevant state actors to take concrete steps geared towards moving away from making verbal public pronouncements to taking concrete actions geared towards implementing programs and policies aimed at minimizing/mitigating corruption.

However, Atty. Kpoto expressed her appreciation for the collaboration existing between LACC and CENTAL. She further informed the public that LACC in collaboration with CENTAL and two other CSOs is implementing an Anti-Corruption Innovation Project with support from UNDP that seeks to incorporate the use of technology in the fight against corruption. She pointed out that in few weeks, public awareness on the new initiative that is intended to reduce human interactions in reporting corruption will get started.

In closing, Atty. Kpoto revealed some of the major flagship programs CENTAL is carrying out. She named the Advocacy and Legal Advice Center that supports witnesses and victims of corruption, Integrity Clubs in universities and high schools and Local Government and Citizen's Engagement focusing on the county social development funds, among others.

Lesson Learned

The 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day celebration was a massive accomplishment from the inception of the implementation phases to its concluding phase. Notwithstanding, it is worth noting that the road leading to the finish line was extremely complicated. There were innumerable issues that the division endured from the onset of the event to the end.

The first of these was the complications we endured in securing payments for vehicles and canopy rentals to enhance activities earmarked for the Anti-Corruption Street Blast. It took a couple of days to finalize negotiations for payments. The division also had a serious issue with the supply of T-Shirts during the Main Event. The LACC was overwhelmed by the massive turnout on December 9, which somewhat complicated the distribution of T-shirts during the parade and the in-door program.

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of the daunting challenges we experienced during the planning and implementation phases of activities marking the observance of the IACD 2022; the observance of IACD 2022 in its entirety was a resounding success.

The quest of the commission to engender a space to enhance awareness and espouse Anti-Corruption Education was affirmed by the decision to initiate an Anti-Corruption Street

Blast, Debate, and a Mini Sports Olympics, as a way of enhancing Anti-Corruption massaging and invoking citizens' participation. The commission also invited cross-section of citizens. Including students, teachers, and school administrators as well as stakeholders from various Integrity Institutions and government sectors.

The LACC Anti-Corruption debate fostered anti-corruption awareness among students of the participating institutions on the mandate of the LACC with specific emphasis on its Prosecutorial Power and its bill at the legislature on a Specialized Anti-Corruption Court and other anti-corruption legislations. Essentially, the debate widened the advocacy space and enlisted the support of academia as indispensable stakeholder in the fight against corruption in Liberia.

The mini sports Olympics accorded the Commission the opportunity to increase anti-corruption education awareness in the student community. The Commission has over the years operated Students Integrity Club (SICs) in selected schools, and this Olympics provided a space to expand anti-corruption outreach to more students in the municipality of Paynesville.

The Anti-Corruption Street Blast was a new innovation in the program implementation of the Commission. The combination of anti-corruption messages with musical lyrics to lure the attention of the public to anti-corruption message resonated so well with the public, especially ordinary Liberians.

The distribution of stickers with anti-corruption messages among pedestrians, marketers, wheel barrel boys, taxi and bus drivers, students, police officers, soldiers among others, was very captivating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above challenges and the need to improve program implementation strategy of the Division, as well as collaborate more effectively with other integrity institutions and the student's community, we wish to proffer the following recommendations:

1. That the LACC includes in its annual budget, a line item that reflects the International Anti- Corruption Day IACD as a priority EVENT.
2. That the planning process leading up to the observance of the IACD begins three months to December.
3. That the LACC revisit its collaboration with other Public Integrity Institutions as a way of building a stronger partnership that will seek to create an IACD pull fund to subsidize the annual observance of the Day in Liberia.
4. That funding and other logistics needed to celebrate the IACD be released in time to avoid any problem that has the potential to undermine the smooth implementation of the IACD

Pictorial From the observance of the 2021 International Anti-Corruption Program



Executive Chairperson Leads the Parade



**Mr. Moses V. Kowo
Executive Director, LACC
Gives overview of IACD**



**Student Ebel Kromah, Mt. Zion Christian Academy
Reads the 2022 Presidential Proclamation on IACD**



**Student Faith King, James N. Davies S.D.A
Reads UN Secretary General
2022 Anti-Corruption Message**



**Audience of 2022 IACD
Celebration**



**Debate Champions, AME Zion University
Celebration - 25 -**

The 2022 International Anti-Corruption Day Program was sponsored by:

- *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*
- *Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)*
- *Chinese Embassy in Liberia*
- *Government of Liberia*
- *Swedish Embassy in Monrovia*