

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE
PERSPECTIVES AND GOOD PRACTICES

Jointly organised by the
Faculty of Business, Economic and Policy Studies
Universiti and Brunei Darussalam
And the
Civil Service Institute
Prime Minister's Department
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
28 – 29 September 2002

ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOOD GOVERNANCE

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I. FUNDAMENTALS OF ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. From an African or developing country's stand point, ethics or code of conduct and accountability need not be synonymous with western-style democracy. However, there can be no escaping from the fact that both concepts as well as the institutions that define and uphold them, depend on prevailing laws and conventions in each country. To a very large extent also, the general attitude of the citizens towards both concepts be it in the public and private sectors seems to reflect their respective cultural, moral and philosophical values and, not to mention the historical experiences of the people concerned.

2. **Ethics** is about values or moral codes that ultimately lead to action(s). More pointedly, they represent a set of principles by which human behaviour can be measured. It is possible even at this early stage of the analysis, to be categorical about the negative effects on society regarding permitting unethical behaviour, let alone forsaking accountability as part and parcel of good governance. Generally speaking, disregarding accepted social norms is to court danger that results in some individuals seeking or pursuing self interest(s) and self glorification at the expense of others. **Accountability** related to public administrators or officials is about holding them responsible individually and/or collectively for their actions or lack of it. **Governance** implies the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in managing a nation's affairs and not merely about ownership. "Good governance" demands of its institutions and the leadership to perform optimally to the satisfaction of stakeholders that includes the electorate.

3. Interpretation of these concepts need not be too varied neither should it be wide ranging and complex in spite of the many points of view that are often encountered. Where there is a tendency of narrow interpretation of terminologies is because certain organized societies fail to take cognisance of the period in question or they use misleading reference yardsticks or due to their failure not to recognise the danger of comparing the non-comparables. These kinds of considerations make it necessary to exercise caution when it comes to selecting parameters in the analysis. This sort of approach considerably helps to focus the analysis away from issues that are either peripheral or not quite relevant. It is also important to bear in mind the fact that several lengthy treaties on the subject of governance have already generated heated debates among sociologists, philosophers, political scientists and the like minded.

4. It is in this regard that La Rue Tome Hosmer (Ethics and Management: 1987) places emphasis on the role of ethics in administration as yet another important benchmark used in determining what "is right" and "proper" and "just" in any decision and action affecting other people. The analysis has so far alluded to accountability tending to be associated with the notion of responsibility to other people or for whatever is in one's legitimate custody. Modern democratic governments without exception are expected to be accountable to the people (i.e. the electorate) through the legislature and all other institutions set up to monitor these trends. The evolution of democratic government makes it inescapable for tenure of office to become increasingly dependent on how long the incumbent continues to have the confidence of the stakeholders or the electorate as the case may be. There can be no better yardstick for measuring their performance than the application of ethical behaviour, let alone the readiness to account for individual and/or collective actions than against the code of ethics and application of accountability.

5. Governance comprises complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations including mediating their differences. The indispensability of accountability and ethics in sustaining good governance is no longer a question of debate. Partly against that kind of background, the General Assembly of the United Nations decided on 28 January 1997, to adopt resolution 51/59 re-affirming the need to correct the situation since some of the observed trends of unethical behaviour and lack of accountability and transparency were already **“endangering the stability and security of societies, undermining the values of democracy and morality and jeopardising social, economic and political development”**. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in “Discussion Paper 2:1997” states that governance embraces all good and bad methods that societies use to distribute power and manage public resources and try to solve problems.

6. Perhaps the discussion of these issues in the context of problems facing most modern democracies ought to take as point of departure, trends that evolved during the Meiji Restoration in Japan and those associated with the British Northcote-Trevelyan Reforms of 1854. It is noteworthy that those British public service reforms have won considerable acclaim as being the first milestone in the evolution of the professionalism that characterizes Whitehall. Similarly for the Japanese 1870s’ bureaucratic reforms that provided a basis for the consolidation of a well-trained public service of good standing and a tradition that endowed the system with a strong sense to duty. It is important therefore not to fail to mention that at the material time, those trends were evolving neither in Japan nor in Britain were the two countries practicing any semblance of fundamental democratic systems. This apart, neither of them adhered in theory and in practice to the principle of separation of powers. In other words, the separation of functional responsibilities between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary did not exist in a way of being enshrined in their constitutions. A criterion made cardinal in today’s democracies and also used as an important benchmark in distinguishing democratic governments from non-democratic systems of governance.

7 In a majority of poor economies, poverty compounds the situation, especially where the environment allows a few intellectuals and the majority of the people to be trapped by circumstances beyond their control. Many a times under that kind of environment, ethics and accountability, let alone governance issues tend to be relegated to the periphery, especially where the primary concern is survival by whatever means possible. Situations of this kind at times also create temptations to set aside ethics and accountability. Over and above, such situations become very difficult to reverse in later times. However, this does not in any way imply that poverty is a result of lack of ethics and accountability. To the contrary, there is more than ample evidence in many poor societies upholding high ethical standards.

8. Needless to say, where better ethical behaviour and accountability are thrown to the wind, the environment tends to become a breeding ground for all sorts of bad conduct by public officials and the rest of society. It also provides an opportunity sooner rather than later, for even those in the private sector to take undue advantage, ultimately resulting in anarchy and general exploitation. It therefore becomes much easier for rampant abuse and misuse of public office, escalating corruption, nepotism and total disregard by public servants of the fact that they are sustained from public resources and not vice versa. Services that should normally be rendered free in the course of duty are then only provided after some consideration to official functionaries.

9. Analysing these concepts takes account of the impact brought to bear by endogenous and exogenous factors. Contextualizing the phenomenon in the light of advancement in communication technology is necessary since it is one such factor, among many others that has exerted the greatest influence in the way ethics and accountability respond to the changed circumstances, given the new global village dimension. After all, it is no longer possible for any single society or country "to be an island to the exclusion of others". In other words, what happens to neighbouring states/countries, no matter, how remote and insignificant, tends ultimately, to have repercussions not easy to avoid. Examples in this regard include some of the repercussions from the Far East financial crisis, the near collapse of Barings Company and the fall of Sumitomo with tremendous losses to several other economics, to mention but a few. These are examples of bad ethical behaviour and lack of accountability. Individually and collectively, they underline the significance of upholding corporate governance where ethics and accountability are not compromised and high integrity is demanded at both the public and private sector levels.

10. Section three focuses on Africa's dilemma by tracing some of the causes to colonial legacy. The section also highlights some of the experiences in several African countries since the attainment of political independence. This is in order to lay the foundation for what follows in the next section where emphasis is on the evils of corruption. The concluding section attempts to give hope by emphasising that the pursuit of these principles assures better prospects for good governance.

II. THE WIND OF DEMOCRATIC CHANGE, ITS IMPACT ON ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

11. The wind of democratic change in most societies and not only in Africa is partly a result of enlightened populace coupled with the fact that ethics and accountability complement one another. Fundamental to the wind of democratic change aside from the impact brought to bear by these principles is their crucial role as important support pillars of governance. Ethics in bureaucracy as earlier stated is the basis for accountability, given the fact that the latter refers to the obligation required of any subordinate to be answerable to his/her supervisor in carrying out assigned and expected discretionary powers. The same principle makes it mandatory for leadership to live up to high standards of behaviour and strict observance of accepted ethical code. It is standard practice for democratically written constitutions to have enshrined provision that require national presidents or heads of government and of certain institutions to swear to uphold the letter and spirit of their respective constitutions.

12. Empirical evidence shows why certain methods used to quicken the pace of the wind of change by political stalwarts during the struggle for political independence by the likes of Nkrumah did not help the cause of sustaining ethics and accountability in the public service. Blind total pre-occupation with the attainment of political kingdom and not sparing a thought about the significance of ethical code of conduct and accountability was a big mistake. The other freedoms failed to take place in the wake of political independence because of the failure to appreciate the pivotal role of ethics and accountability. Economic development in many African countries in spite of all the efforts made through economic planning and attempted economic restructuring has not achieved the envisaged goals. Some of the causes, at least in certain African countries include incessant or frequent military coups that in some of them nearly became a permanent feature of their landscape. The same can be said regarding economic diversity, social unrest, and rapid decay of the very institutions that should have been at the forefront in capacity building and inculcating ethical behaviour and accountability, let alone avoidance of corruption. It is important at this point of the analysis to reiterate that the crisis of governance weighed against ethics and accountability should not be used as an alibi or constitute an apology for some of the difficulties faced by African public services in sustaining good governance.

13. Suffice to say, ethics provide a basis for accountability, and vice versa. The latter reinforces the former by ensuring that public officials are held responsible for their actions or inactions. This is particularly the case where modern society gives greater opportunity to enlightened citizenry to keep the public officials on their toes. Over and above, many of them have since realised though later rather than earlier, that ethics and accountability constitute part of society's non-material resource for economic and political development. It is encouraging at the same time to note that more and more societies are doing everything possible to positively exploit this trend. It is therefore not surprising in the light of the above that Africa's cooperating development partners show a much keener interest than before in addressing and helping to remove governance weaknesses in the recipient economies.

14. Illustrative examples include the way the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Development Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD/World Bank) individually and collectively, view seriously these issues and solutions thereof. There is no longer any debate about "the responsibility for governance issues lying first and foremost, with the national authorities". In other words, they acknowledge the sovereignty of recipients of their assistance, be it materially, financially and morally. To the above, they expect the respective sovereign governments in doing so to act in accordance with their traditions, customs and culture bearing in mind that such actions do not compromise ethical norms and accountability.

15. Admittedly, the wind of Africa's political and economic change has been influenced by several exogenous developments. Putting traditional and cultural aspects aside, the influence of colonial legacy continues to be significant, given some of the styles adopted or left behind by the different colonizing powers. This can be seen from some of the differences in the style of public administration between say, the French-speaking as opposed to both the Lusophone and the English-speaking countries. Granted some of the differences are not very substantial but rather superficial. And it is the cronies of colonialism that have tended to be more "catholic than the pope" in insisting that these be not modified. These same tendencies were replicated by the way the African countries responded differently at the height of the "cold war battle" when the western market economies and the eastern socialist block countries competed for influence in Africa and other developing countries.

16. It is important therefore not to lose sight of some of the causes of the dimensions of what constitutes new challenges and pressures. Those most likely to be faced by professionals, civil, public and private powers as they grapple with the ethical dilemma are many and varied. Some belong to the realm of perceived tensions between traditional public service values and the required values of good governance. These must be contrasted with reconciling greater managerial flexibility without undermining essential standards of accountability. Within the same confines of the wind of change, capacity building in the form of training and retaining public servants is intended to enable them to cope with complex ethical issues in service delivery. Nurturing better ethical behaviour and accountability, by the public service towards enhancing democratization of polity and a citizenry capable of demanding higher ethical performance from public officials requires more than passing legislation. However, these actions can only be sustained where ethics and accountability are part and parcel of the entire fabric of society.

17. Each sector of society is expected to play an effective role if ethics and accountability are to sustain the wind of democratic change. Basically because their respective contributions are a total sum of efforts that lead to greater good for the nation as a whole. To attain these goals requires that all sectors are manned by people with necessary competence and experience. Individuals and institutions capable and willing to uphold ethical and accountability principles are often endowed with integrity, honestly in a transparent manner. Over and above, they refrain from decisions and actions calculated to benefit themselves at the expense of the nation at large. The system then makes it mandatory for them to act in conformity and consistent with the principles of accountability to their superiors and the electorate.

18. Questions begging for answers in the light of the above relate to the possibility of establishing the extent to which some of these trends have taken root? Perhaps an observation with greater impact is a result of adherence to the code of ethics and accountability. Partly heightened by what has transpired through economic globalisation. Thus enterprises irrespective of size are forced to respond to greater market fragmentation, shorter product market, faster redesign and production that is consumer specific. This kind of flexibility is not easy for the public sector, given its bureaucratic inertia and the built-in rigidities of the normal budget procedures.

19. It is somehow difficult for society to totally eliminate unethical behaviour and lack of accountability. This is not to imply that it is impossible to minimise both in the medium and long run. Generally speaking, in most unethical cases, money and material gratification are a major factor. One problem among many regarding eliminating unethical behaviour has to do with conflict between private interests and the public good. It is also because it is basically a social-cultural dimension trend. Furthermore, much depends on the levels of social development and the cultural dynamics of each society. Coupled with this is the question of magnitudes between and among societies. Africa's recent history particularly during the late 1980s to early 1990s suggests that countries like the Sudan, Ghana, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Bourkina Faso or Nigeria saw their economies collapse and their social climate became prone to increasing breakdown because they neglected better ethical behaviour and accountability.

20. Perhaps in the same vein, virulent economies grappling with scarcity of essential materials and goods become the order of the day. The same applies when the political-economy is not characterized by market forces but by a sharp distinction between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Such environments sink societies deeper and deeper in problems, if at the same time they have to deal with grinding poverty coupled with a callous and distant government that adopts an attitude of not caring about ethics and accountability. More often than not, public servants of low ethical behaviour quickly rise to the top and become the new "haves". Worse of all is that these "new halves" then strive to live and exhibit their newly acquired status through conspicuous consumption of luxury goods they normally would not afford from their normal earnings. The many cases of corruption coming up in the Zambian courts, especially the revelation by the Mwanawasa regime clearly make clear what happens when ethical behaviour and accountability lose credibility.

III. DILEMMA WITH ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

21. Ethical norms need not be formally written at all times. Quite a number are implicitly recognized and enforced by convention. Generally speaking, ethical codes as earlier pointed out reflect accepted values and aspirations of society for leaders, administrators and management to follow and comply with. One of the many problems with this approach has to do with elements of value judgment that cannot be avoided, especially in countries with strong and long traditions. This vexing problem can be pertinent when it comes to determining whether a "gift" should be or not considered part and parcel of "seed" for corruption? Similarly, is the aspect of accountability that demands that it be broad-based, participatory by a greater majority empowered to take an active, well-informed and meaningful part in public affairs both at local and national levels.

22. It is necessary to reiterate that both ethics and accountability play a significant role in governance and they have done so since the beginning of organised societies. It is noteworthy that in most African countries, at least on paper if their respective constitutions are to be believed that they have taken the trouble to enshrine in them the principle of separation of powers. The separation of powers is intended to add to ways and means of ensuring that various ethics and accountability monitoring mechanisms work transparently.

23. The fact that some of them are rendered less effective is due in part to inadequate funding, being manned by persons with less moral fibre and at times also an overbearing executive. At this point in time, mention has to be made of certain traditional forms of government in Africa, especially at the village level. Their continued survival is a sign in itself that they have proved their worth. These should be reviewed to establish how best they can be modified and blended in conformity with new requirements. The absence and lack of adherence to better ethical behaviour and accountability as earlier mentioned, can be a major source of greedy, arrogance, plundering of national resources without care, high rates of corruption and out right selfishness by certain public administrators that put a nation's prospects in great danger.

23. Ethics and accountability are like hand and glove. It is also unrealistic to expect one of these to perform without the other in issues relating to enhancing good governance. The polemics of determining which between them came before the other, let alone has more influence, is a luxury this analysis can ill afford. The dilemma at least in Africa, is coming to terms with the influence of certain traditions and cultures. In the past and before colonialism had firmly established itself in Africa, some kingdoms like in Ethiopia under Emperor Menelik II had in fact introduced a modicum of modern government structures. They appointed regional administrators who were directly accountable to the emperor. Indeed, this is a traverse of modern structures of democracy that demand accountability from every one as the rule and not as an exception. The upshot of it all was that such traditions and customs prevailed for centuries and needed time to change. At times it might take several generations to blend the old and the new. It has been said in certain quarters that history is a great teacher for those who care to learn from it. The British colonial administration to its credit took advantage of traditional structures when they introduced a system of "indirect rule" and relying more on the African traditional rulers than on themselves when it came to dealing with the subject "natives".

24. Africa is a continent of great diversity even though its governments have many common goals; including attempting to nurture their respective public services to appropriately tackle problems of economic growth and development. Somehow some of the exhortations made during the struggle for political independence while they played a significant role in mobilizing the masses to that end; have in the aftermath created certain problems in the changed environment where ethics and accountability have become essential ingredients. The fact that there are not many old colonial militant groups left, does not subtract the significance of the legacies perpetuating themselves.

25. At the material time, freedom fighters rallied behind such slogans as "seek ye first political kingdom, and everything shall be added unto thee." With hindsight, such exhortations and especially that they did not stress the importance of ethics and accountability may have contributed to what later negatively transpired in many of the African economies. For some unknown reason, other exhortations like those by Mao Tse Tung about "power coming from the barrel of a gun" did not to strike the same note of relevance. Neither is the spate of military takeovers, in a great number of African countries nor the turbulent political and economic development to be attributed to them. At least one African military government of the Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo tried to turn the tables by realising the importance of and re-introducing observance of ethics and accountability. They also were able to keep the promise of handing over power to an elected civilian government within the stipulated time. In so doing, they confirmed the worthy of ethics and accountability.

26. It is possible in the light of the above to appreciate many of the challenges faced in this area by most developing countries. Granted, most problems can be solved in the long run, especially where the solutions are coupled with the benchmarks of ethics and accountability. There is a solution to every problem in the long run, except that J. M. Keynes made a pessimistic observation flout with danger since in “most people know that they may not live long enough to experience the results in the long run”. What then are some of the challenges that most African countries face and which militate against adherence to ethics and accountability? The list is long and include the heightened struggle against poverty, coping with the balance of trade deficits, collapse of commodity prices, at times coupled with draught as is the case in Zambia and other Southern African countries (2001/2002 season), coping with external debt burden, population growth continuing to be higher than the rate of productivity, escalation of corruption both by public and private sectors. There is no doubt that some of these developments combine to make Africa’s overall economic development to lag behind other developing countries within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Group of 77 (G77).

27. This kind of environment creates a dilemma in sustaining good governance and can be ameliorated by adherence to and observance of ethics and accountability, especially where mechanisms to sustain governance are also in place. The most common include such institutions as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the Office of the Auditor General, Human Rights Commission to mention but a few of them. Creation of each of these mechanisms is premised on the understanding that the state needs to be neutral in arbitrating social relations and conflicts.

IV. ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY: VANGUARD FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

28. A country’s international standing is easily compromised and weakened by corruption. The same goes for the credibility of its democratic institutions when they are susceptible to compromise that does not enhance the general welfare. One major cause is certainly corruption that results from disregard of ethical codes, accountability and transparency. In a nutshell, the presence of corruption is admission that something has gone extremely wrong in the management of the affairs of the state. Generally speaking, corruption is an evil that spreads fear among citizens by making them its victims. On the other hand, corruption comforts those that use it as a means to acquire illegitimate wealth and unbridled exercise of authority to which they are not entitled to. Corruption is a social scourge that qualifies to be listed as a national disaster. Like all national disasters, it requires greater effort if it is to be contained and eliminated since failure to do so is like giving it a licence to throttle the political, social and economic fabric of society.

29. There is a line of thought in certain quarters that presumes that absence of integrity in governments of most developing countries is a direct result of corruption in high places. Perhaps this point of view is due to the fact that more attention than need be, is given to the conduct of public servants, politicians and the leadership and much less to actions of the private sector and other players in the same arena. Not least of all, the so called development partners have not attracted the same degree of resentment of their behaviours. This is in spite of revelations by writers like Hancock about the “Lords of Poverty” (Hancock: 1989) or Robinson’s details on the machinations of “the Laundrymen” (Robinson: 1994). These are chilling accounts of how the so called benefactors have contributed to the pressures in the recipient economies.

They also show that corruption is not exclusively a preserve of developing countries. Countries caught up in high corruption discover whether it be sooner or later, how marginal reforms of setting up investigative wings like the ones earlier cited, are incapable of correcting the situation, especially where there is a lack of strong political will and serious commitment to the cause. It is even much harder for regimes with excessive rigidities, weak accountability systems and inflexible bureaucracy prone to political favouritism.

30. Corruption manifests itself in different ways. More often than not, it sows its own seeds which to the unsuspecting recipients seem totally innocent. Corruption feeds on environments it creates and those created by others. More often than not, its recipients become even more vulnerable because it offers the only viable alternative to their survival. In situations where the share of the economic cake or pie is not large enough to go round, a large number of people will willingly be satisfied with poverty and become easy prey to corrupt practices. This in part, explains how certain enterprises in the private sector succeed in bribing certain public officials with kickbacks in order to get preferential treatment in obtaining or securing projects. Up to this point in time, no analysis has been undertaken to determine how much or large a bribe has to be for some a public servant to call it a day. Similarly for the one that entice others with bribes (Chileshe: 1992 pp 299-300).

31. A considerable number of writing and debate on the subject has taken place and the end is not in sight yet. Some African writers of courage have jumped into this fray to document some of these incidences. Not least of these is the Nigerian Chinua Achebe who says of his country that **"Keeping an average Nigerian from being corrupt is like keeping a goat from eating yam"** (Achebe: 1983, p.38). His other countryman, Dele Olowu focused on **"Ethical Violation in Nigeria's Public Services: Patterns, Explanations and Remedies"**. The moral of the story is that by 1987, according to Olowu, corruption "(had) become a household name in Nigerian society from the highest levels of the political and business elites to the ordinary person in the village. Its manifestations (included) the inflation of government contracts in return for kick-backs; frauds and falsification of accounts in the public service...taking bribes and perversion of justice among the police, the judiciary and other organs of administering justice and other hideous crimes against the state in the business and industrial sectors...in collusion with multinational companies such as over-invoicing of goods, foreign exchange swindling, hoarding and smuggling. At the village level, corruption (manifested) itself in such forms as adulteration of market goods or denting of measures to reduce their contents with a view to giving advantage to the seller".

32. Several similar stories on a country by country not only in Africa but also in the developed industrial and other developing countries can be recounted, if not even worse than is the case above. These involve the pervasion of justice by the various benches, police officers detaining innocent persons with the primary aim of getting away with a bribe even in the presence of their senior supervisors. Actions that discourage others from perpetrating the scourge of corruption can only take place where culprits are brought to book and appropriate deterrent punishment meted out for flouting ethical codes, accountability and transparency. Illustrative incidences of correcting the situation are many. The ones cited in Nigeria under Olusegun Obasanjo's reign (Obasanjo: 1990, p.19) are by no means isolated but represented of some of the efforts in this area.

33. What is important is that Nigeria was attempting to reverse its bad international and national image by ensuring that ethics and accountability mechanisms were not only established but also delivered the services without fear and favour. It was in the light of the above Obasanjo refused to oblige a request from his personal physician who took advantage of their close working relation to seek a high posting for one of his relatives. To have done otherwise would have been an abuse of presidential privileged position or office. Obasanjo's other notable action was to fire the country's chief justice. The Nigerian judiciary had to all intents and purposes, lost confidence and credibility in the eyes of the nation because of the

impunity with which it had forsaken good ethical behaviour and accountability in preference for self-glorification. Matters reached a horrifying state to an extent that what Achebe and Olowu wrote about was like a tip of an iceberg. It was therefore not surprising that the Chief Justice against all logic and expected high integrity of the office, let alone contrary to judiciary ethical codes, without declaring his interest in the matter sat on a land tribunal that arbitrated a case in which his own brother was a likely beneficiary.

34. As soon as this information was brought to the attention of the President, it was decided to him retired as Chief Justice. This was necessary action in order to send a clear message to all and sundry, about the high price which those who flouted ethics and accountability have to pay. The moral of that episode demonstrated further how the then Chief Justice had failed the country and the entire judiciary by not acknowledging that the judiciary was the last hope against anarchy and lawlessness within any nation. The Chief Justice's down fall demonstrated the extent and level or degree corrupt people can get in underestimating the significance, others attach to the code of ethics in a profession that prides itself of being "learned" rather than "educated" as soon as a wig is bestowed upon the individual. A similar incidence but not on the same scale happened in 2002 in Zambia when the country's then Chief Justice who had asked to retire was forced to resign forthwith due mounting pressure from the Zambian population for alleged impropriety in a financial scandal.

35. Needless to say, ethics and accountability are perhaps the best preventative medicines and a vanguard in the fight against corruption and all other anti-social evils. Suffice to say, **corruption is far from being a way of life in developing countries, at least not in a greater part of Africa and, not even among the poverty-stricken communities.** Corruption had never been a major issue in Zambia, at least in the first decade of post independence. It began to rare its ugly head when the economy began to show signs of collapse due to mismanagement of resources. Note should however be taken of the fact that Africa has more honourable men and women than the few that have given the continent a bad name.

36. No longer are acts of bribery going unnoticed in the country. These events tend to have a snowballing effect nation wide. For instance one junior minister in the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development had enough courage to expose a Japanese investor who tried to bribe him with a gift of a laptop computer over a contract he wanted directed in his favour. The Daily Mail of Zambia (Monday, 12 August 2002) reported about the police nabbing a local businessman who offered US\$1000 to an official of Mopani Copper Mines on the Copperbelt as an inducement to win a tender. During this same period, Zambians rose to the occasion by successfully forcing successively resignations of several high profile public figures in its society. As earlier stated, the list included the country's Chief Justice who tendered his resignation as soon as it became public knowledge that he and his family had secretly received funds from an account to which they were not entitled. Next to fall was the then Minister of Foreign Affairs who resigned due to pressure brought to bear by the populace, in spite of the fact that earlier, a judicial review tribunal presided over by the country's Deputy Chief Justice had on a point of technicality, not found him guilty of impropriety. To the contrary, in the eyes of the people they were more than convinced that in the light of evidence submitted, he was certainly guilty or at worst guilty of the highest order of negligence to step down.

37. Another incidence took place during Zambia's Consultative Group (CG) meeting with the Donor community in July 2002 in Livingstone. The person in question was at the material time a Member of the Zambian Parliament and belonged to the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). It was not as if he was not duly nominated by Mr. Speaker of the National Assembly to form part of the parliamentary delegation to the CG. To the contrary and as things turned out, the Zambian civil society exerted pressure for the

individual's expulsion, citing the Deputy Chief Justice's Judicial Review Tribunal recommendation for the individual in question to be prosecuted for his part in the unexplained misuse of funds from the House of Parliament. Civil society made it clear that it would not attend the meeting if the individual was allowed to participate. It was not until he was hurriedly withdrawn that business of the meeting resumed.

38. These few examples do in the case of Zambia, show sufficiently how the country and the new political dispensation ushered in with the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1991, following the end of the one-party rule have put to use, ethics and accountability. If nothing else, the events give practical semblance not only of the existence but also the usefulness and value of ethics and accountability in propelling good governance. Revelation of the evils of corruption and especially when coupled with deterrent punishment based on upholding ethics and accountability act to re-assure a better future. In other words, holders of public office would tend to act responsibly and in accordance with the accepted code of ethics, accountability and transparency. To this end also, available resources would be put to their intended use and not otherwise.

39. The Institute of Southern African Development (ISAD) added its voice to this debate by stressing that corrupt practices in the private sector were on the increase. It identified various forms of corruption practiced by private sector firms and professional associations in their business dealings, both among themselves and with government institutions. It concluded by pointing out that such practices inhibit some among them, from accessing business resources and ultimately leads to inequitable distribution. From its point of view also, such negative trends can be prevented and possibly reversed by developing an anti-corruption code of ethics and accountability that is transparent. To be effective the strategy has to be formulated and adopted by the private sector, the professionals and trade associations as well as complied with by their members.

40. Developments in Zambia since the January 2001 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections are perhaps a good reference point for what can happen when ethics and accountability are used as benchmarks. Zambia's politicians and citizens have by their actions given a lead to others in the region in the area of good governance. For instance a majority of citizens, religious groups, some professional associations came together under a new umbrella called the "Oasis Forum" and peacefully stood shoulder to shoulder to derail an attempt by an incumbent national president to obtain an extension of tenure to three terms of office, contrary to the constitution. The same desire of wishing to uphold adherence to ethical codes and accountability in Zambia subsequently led to the removal by parliament, of immunity from prosecution of the former and second Republican President. It is noteworthy that citizens of neighbouring Malawi took a leaf from the Zambian success story. Malawians in turn, used the floor of their parliament to stop their incumbent president who had succeeded Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda from changing the constitution to achieve his ambition of extending his rule for a third term of office. These events are indicative of how applying the principle of ethics and accountability, it is possible to sensitise the nation at large and, for them to stand up in defence of an established constitution.

41. There are several lessons to be drawn from what is highlighted above. First and foremost, ethics and accountability are not exclusively for public officials and the leadership. Granted leadership in the broadest sense of the word must be exemplary and adherence to ethics and accountability is important. In point of fact, a leader although not a saint has spiritual, moral and cultural responsibility which he/she must be seen to be substantially discharging. This to say the least is an indispensable role that ethics and accountability play in sustaining good governance. There is more than ample evidence that those leaders who believe in these principles are prevented from being a danger to society and themselves. They are also less likely to abuse their office for short-term personal gains and/or on behalf of a selected few favoured individuals and institutions.

IV. PROSPECTS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

42. Political independence in Africa ushered in an era of high expectations. The same development also put into sharp focus the issue of ethics and accountability as an integral strategy for good governance. Over and above, they combined to infuse a new phenomenon that manifested itself in the expansion of the role of the state directed towards sustained development. Perhaps by coincidence rather than by design, the period provided a fertile ground for political scientists to stake the future of new democracies with rapid industrialisation and economic modernization. For instance, S. M. Lipset advocated the view of "the more well to do a nation was, the greater the chances that it would sustain democratic ideals and institutions" (Political Man: 1960). He cited as a main characteristic difference "the average wealth, degree of industrialization and urbanization, and the level of education (being) much higher for the...democratic countries than for the non-democratic ones". He took as illustrative cases what transpired at the time in certain stable democracies like Ireland and Belgium on the one hand, contrasting them with unstable democracies like Spain, France and Portugal on the other hand, he thought were in the same league with unstable dictatorships of Colombia, Chile and Costa Rica.

43. To this should be added resolution 51/59 on tackling corruption the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted in January 1987 and which specifically requested its Secretary General to assist Member States in designing strategies to prevent and control corruption. One of the objectives was to facilitate a reduction in corruption and enhance prospects for sustainable human development on the basis of upholding better ethical behaviour and accountability. The Organization was aware that corruption would not wither away just because reform governments took power or because economic growth appeared to be vigorous. Achievement of such goals tends to be difficult where officials are left with certain discretionary authority and the possibilities of emergence of corruption tendencies through the offer of incentives used to select interests, relative to others. But this is a better course than to sit idly by and let the situation to deteriorate further.

44. The bottom line is to be able to reconcile a number of conflicting factors and trends without losing sight of delivery of a greater good for all. This ought to take place against what is implied by the growth and size of the public service, increased demand for improved services and accountability of the public servants to the public. Somehow, pressures and moves to increase responsiveness and accountability require observance of better ethical behaviour. Consequently, adequate steps need taking in order to overcome many of the weaknesses that militate against adherence to better ethical behaviour and accountability.

45. It is unfortunate that in Africa, Asia and Latin America, systems resort to removal of government(s) by military coup d'états. A more consistent way with the principle of good governance happened in the United States of America when former President Bill Clinton was brought before Congress to answer for alleged unethical misdemeanours. Within Africa, Zambia has set a precedent which only time will tell if removal of immunity of a former president for alleged impropriety is the ultimate acid test of ethics and accountability in the context of good governance. These few examples somehow have attempted to show the extent to which adherence to ethics and accountability enables civil society not to be taken for a ride in perpetuity. Over and above, when the system is armed with these principles leadership will be conscious that it can be cheered for upholding ethics and accountability and equally jeered if it fails to deliver accordingly.

NOTES

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