

African Politics and Policy

Newsletter
n.9, December 2015

Editorial

Transparency International, the world's leading organization in the fight against corruption, released a report entitled: People and Corruption : Africa Survey 2015. The data were collected in collaboration with Afrobarometer by surveying 43143 people from 28 African countries.

The data indicate that corruption is still believed to be pervasive in the continent. Bribes were paid by roughly 75 million public service users. This amounts to 22 per cent of the public service users. The incidence of bribery is quite low in some cases (Mauritius, Botswana, Cape Verde, Lesotho), is roughly around the average in other (Zimbabwe, Tanzania) and it is extremely high in others (Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Sierra Leone) where the incidence of bribery is from nearly twice to more than three times the continental average.

Even more worrisome than the fact that corruption is pervasive, is that corruption is believed to be increasing by a majority of respondents. In fact, 58 per cent of the respondents indicated that corruption had increased in the previous 12 months. While in some cases only a relatively small percentage of respondents believed that corruption had increased (28 % in Burkina Faso), in other cases the percentage of respondents indicating that corruption had increased was dramatically high. South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria are the three worst performing countries in this category.

These findings are particularly worrisome because a large body of work has extensively documented that corruption has economic, political and developmental costs.

To sustain economic growth, create the conditions for development and for poverty reduction, Africa needs to make more progress in curbing corruption. This is the key lesson from 2015 and the most important item on African leaders' agenda for 2016.

Riccardo Pelizzo

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IN THE NEWS

From 1960 onwards Lake Chad has lost 90 per cent of its water. Members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) plan to tackle this emergency by diverting water from the Congo River Basin to the Chad River Basin. The cost of the project is estimated to be of about 14.5 million

Burkina Faso

After Compaore's 27-year rule and a short lived coup, Burkina Faso held a presidential elections which is believed to put an end to the recent turmoil. The National Electoral Commission stated that Roch Marc Christian Kabore, former prime minister and former president of the National Assembly, won the elections by receiving 55.3 per cent of the vote.

Oversight Effectiveness in Africa

By Abel Kinyondo, Riccardo Pelizzo and Aminu Umar

The effectiveness of the oversight activities performed by a legislature should be assessed on the basis of how well a parliament performs the coercive, negotiational, informative, legitimacy and linkage functions of oversight. The analysis conducted with data from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia provides an interesting picture of how well legislative oversight is performed in some African countries.

In this regard, our analysis of the data suggests three basic conclusions. The first is that some parliaments are more effective overseers than other. For instance by engaging in oversight activities, the South African parliament is frequently able to alter the course of government action and to extract better information, is the most effective in constraining executive power and hold it accountable, is highly legitimate and highly attuned to society. Because of its success in performing the coercive, informative, cultural, legitimizing and linkage function the South African parliament should be considered the most effective overseer in our sample.

The second conclusion is that, except for South Africa where all the good things go together, a parliament's ability to perform one of the functions associated with oversight does not provide any indication of its ability to perform any of the other functions associated with oversight. For instance, while the parliament of Ghana enjoys a considerable level of legitimacy and performs exceptionally well the linkage function, it is the least effective in performing the informative function.

Furthermore, while the Parliament of Tanzania performs exceptionally well in terms of the legitimizing function, it is not equally successful in performing the coercive, the informative and the linkage function, while it is the worst performer in our sample with regard to the cultural function. Finally, while Zambia is the best performing parliament in terms of the informative function, it is the worst performing in terms of its ability to perform the linkage function. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that when we correlate parliaments' performance in each of these respects, none of the correlation coefficients is statistically significant.

The third conclusion is that precisely because a parliament's ability to perform one of the functions associated with oversight provides no indication of whether and how well it performs any of the other functions associated with it, it is clear that any metrics that overlooks the multidimensional nature of oversight does not provide an accurate assessment of how effective a parliament's oversight performance actually is.



Togolese Organisme de Re- ceipts

For some time Togo seems rooted in repeated crises. Despite the new breath that the government seems to blow into the country's economy through several reforms, the situation remains the same. Indeed with the economic reforms and the creation of the Togolese Organisme of Receipts (OTR), the Government intended to revitalize the economic sector while putting an end to corruption and fraud that plague this area and stop the development of the country. A very good initiative at the base. For many investors and economic actors have continually complaining about this scourge. The OTR therefore seemed a good prerogative and an effective way to reach a solution. However, it is the means of actions and the actions of the OTR continue to displease the people to whom it seems prejudicial

Indeed since taking office, taxes have continued to increase. Tax charges and new residential taxes which come to add to pre-existing property taxes. The advent of new taxes puts pressure on households which are already struggling to get by. Apart from that many more complaints are made to the OTR. Note that one of the OTR assignments is to facilitate economic exchanges and the establishment or creation of new businesses in Togo. However It would seem that the last have difficulty assuring this function.

Thus the facilitation of the exchanges and the approach is of nothing effective. So many questions remain regarding the role, the effectiveness and the failures of OTR. Let us hope that in little time these questions find finally answers.

Romualda Stormy



A note on the Pope's trip

At the end of his African trip, Pope Francis declared that AIDS is one, but not the most serious, of the problems that Africa has to deal with. In Pope Francis' view Africa's main problems are access to drinkable water, food scarcity and exploitation.

While there is no doubt that these problems are indeed problematic, perhaps some attention should be paid to the fact that they are in large measure or to a large extent the result of the lack of political development, the low level of institutionalization, and the absence of good governance in several African nations.

The food crises experienced by African countries in the course of the year were the result of political destabilization, civil wars, factional and/or ethnic conflict.

The design and the implementation of effective policies to tackle food scarcity or access to drinkable water require political stability, rule of law, good regulatory frameworks, accountability, institutional capacity, capable and professionalized bureaucracies, and good leadership.

If these conditions are not met, proper policies cannot be designed and implemented and problems can be solved.

Investments

China's President, Xi Jinping, and Zimbabwe's President. Robert Mugabe, are expected to sign investment deals in the area of communication, civil aviation, transports and infrastructures. Chinese investments are expected to stimulate the economy and create the conditions for sustained growth over the next few years.

Malawi's President highlighted several investment opportunities for foreign investors in the course of his visit to the United Kingdom.

Rwanda has plans to extend affordable credit to business to stimulate growth.

Ebola

While no cases of Ebola had been recorded in the September 20 to November 15 period, three new cases of Ebola were reported in Liberia in the week ending on November 22. After the new cases were reported in Liberia, Rwanda decided to reinstate Ebola checks. No cases have been reported in the November 1 to November 22 period in Guinea which is expected to be declared Ebola-free.



Job Openings

Exciting opportunity at SOAS to take part in an ERC-funded project that aims to develop a multi-lingual approach to literary history, comparing the cases of North India, the Maghreb, and the Horn of Africa at three historical “moments” .

<http://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/AML357/postdoctoral-fellow-in-the-literature-of-the-horn-of-africa/>

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APP Newsletter

ISSUE 09 December 2015

African Politics and Policy

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