

1. Introduction

Namibia signed the United Convention Against Corruption on 9 December 2003 and it was ratified by Parliament on 27 April 2004. As a key body in the fight against corruption, as per the mandate provided under the Anti-Corruption Act, 2003 (Act No. 8 of 2003), the main functions of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) are to investigate allegations of corrupt practices as defined in Chapter 4 of the Act as well as to prevent corruption and to educate the public through the exchange of information on the social and economic damage caused by corruption.

2. Observations on the implementation of the article 13, 1 (c)

2.1 Awareness-Raising Programmes

In order to have a corruption-free society, the ACC has over the years undertaken initiatives aimed at educating and regularly raising awareness on the evils and dangers of corruption. In reaching the public, the ACC executed a number of public education programmes to reinforce efforts and enhance positive reputation of the country.

Of note is the Zero Tolerance for Corruption Campaign launched in March 2006. Central to the campaign was the provision of information on dangers of corruption, and further reiterate the importance of ethics, integrity, accountability and transparency in society.

The public education and corruption prevention officers at the ACC also conducted tailor-made corruption awareness workshops and outreach programmes for the communities and stakeholders at all levels of society (rural, urban, youth, religious fraternity, farmers, schools, etc).

Anti-Corruption Save our Nation Choir Competition was coordinated during the 2006/2007 financial year to create nationwide awareness on corruption and mobilise society to speak out against corruption and report the occurrences thereof. The song remains instrumental in carrying forth the message in all regions of Namibia.

In its continuous endeavour, media remains a key vehicle to reach the public. Information is shared across all media platforms including broadcast radio and television, social media and multimedia/ visual aids such as billboards and adverts.

Between 2006 and the 2013/ 2014 financial year, accounted numbers of public members reached stood at 32044. During the 2014/2015 financial year, 11864 people were sensitised on corruption compared to 3205 sensitized during the 2015/2016 financial year.

In addition, 1986 people were sensitised on corruption during the 2016/2017 financial year compared to 1964 sensitized during the 2017/2018 financial year. These included both public and private sector officials, youth, civil society organisations and members of the public.

The figure above indicates a drastic reduction in the number of people reached through public awareness over the last four years. Furthermore, seven, one, and six Integrity Management/Risk Assessment Workshops were conducted during 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, respectively.

Since 2006 up-to-date, the ACC has reached more than 50 000 people at various levels of society through awareness interventions.

2.2 Ethics and Integrity Training

The ACC conducts Ethics and Integrity training. The target audience for the training are mainly the public sector, private sector, civil society organisations, media, youth and more broadly the general public. The training and awareness sessions are conducted through workshops, seminars, forums, conferences, e-learning and meetings. The workshops are conducted in accordance with the guiding manuals for conducting ethics and integrity training developed by the Commission.

2.3 Research Programmes to Increase Knowledge in Society

The Commission has undertaken Corruption Perception Surveys between 2011 and 2013, as well as 2016. The survey's findings assist the Commission to make effective decisions as well as prioritise and guide Anti-Corruption programmes. The objective of the surveys was to measure perceptions of corruption in Namibia and assess where interventions are needed in the fight against corruption. Data was collected through questionnaire and interviews from all 14 Regions of Namibia, respondents were Namibian citizens who were 21 years of age or older, both male and females. The questionnaire was translated in seven different languages (Afrikaans, Damara>Nama, Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Rukavango, Setswana and Silozi) apart from the official language, English. The latest National Corruption Perception Survey was conducted in 2016 (National Corruption Perception Survey Report 2016).

2.4 Educational modules introduced in Primary and Secondary Schools

The Commission introduced Anti-Corruption themes in Primary and Secondary Schools through the Anti-Corruption Education Manual for Teachers, rolled out in 2014. The Manual topics are integrated in the civic life skills subject in Namibian schools. The topics are such as My Country, My Pride; Behavioural Change; State Finances and Property; Jobs and Unemployment; Silent Corruption; Citizenship; and fighting Corruption.

One of the objectives of the Manual is to equip learners with a better understanding of what constitute corruption and groom them to become Anti-Corruption ambassadors in future. Moreover, they will also become responsible citizens to promote good governance in Namibia (Anti-corruption Education Manual for Teachers).

In addition, the ACC also developed and distributed 50 000 in 2009/10 FY, booklets, for grades 8 to 10 learners aimed to educate the young populace about the detrimental effects of corruption and importance of working together to root out corruption. In the interim, furtherance to monitoring and evaluation interventions, the efforts are also complimented by school visits, through which the Commission hopes to instil a culture of honesty among the school going youth. Moreover debating championship and public dialogue.

2.5 Educational Courses or Modules

The Namibia Institute for Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) offers training to public service officials at all levels of development programmes in Namibia. NIPAM integrated modules of integrity and ethics in Foundation, Supervisory, Middle Management, Senior Management and Executive Development Programmes (Evaluation Report of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2019).

The ACC and the University of Namibia and Finland, have also been working on the proposed introduction of an ethics and anti-corruption course in higher education.

3. Challenges

Despite successes in executing public awareness interventions, the ACC also faced some challenges. One critical aspect was the public expenditure review, which resulted in budget cuts, impacting public outreach activities. The numbers of public members and stakeholders reached has therefore dropped drastically. Not only that, but intervention types have also minimised.

Another challenge has been the lack of collaboration by some entities or institutions. However, the ACC remains committed to exploring ways to address this challenge, particularly through collaboration and strategic leadership approaches.

The ACC is also progressively amplifying social media to reach the masses, and likewise in educating them on the dangers of corruption. The Directorate has also started compiling reports in addition to the workshop reports to assess knowledge and understating of the participants at the end of the workshops.

4. Strategic approach and the way forward

The fight against corruption cannot be left to one institution, hence the need to join hands in rooting out corruption from our society. In response to Article 5 of the UNCAC, the Commission developed its first National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2019. Article five of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) calls for State Parties to develop and implement effective, coordinate anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability.

In August 2016, Cabinet approved the country's first National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2019, which ended in March 2020. In the first Strategy, public education efforts were a key highlight of the Strategy. Moreover, the findings of the first Strategy evaluation shows that 93% of its actions were implemented (Evaluation Report of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2019).

After the first Strategy time frame came to an end, the second National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 was developed. At its meeting on 9th March 2021 by Decision No.3rd/01.03.21/012, Cabinet took note and appreciated the progress made in implementing the anti-corruption activities, and therefore decided that consultative meetings for the development of a second revised National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan be held, which culminated into inter-agency and cross-sectors implementation of the anti-corruption programmes for the period (2021-2025). Strategy is also further in line with SADC adopted Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP:2020-2030) and national development agenda blueprints, which envisages key outcome of consolidated democracy and inclusive governance in the region under Peace, Security and Good Governance Strategic Pillar of SADC, thus, Namibia is not an exception.

The Strategy brings stakeholders in all spheres in the fight against corruption, moreover, it will raise awareness and increase knowledge of corruption in society under Strategic Objectives four, six and eight. The Strategy encourages the youth to prevent corruption and promote a culture of integrity through its Strategic Objective 8: Engagement and participation of youth in Anti-Corruption programmes (National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025).

In accordance with the annual activity plan, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Dr Saara-Kuugongelwa-Amadhila on 16 March 2022 launched the Strategy. An induction training for Strategy structures (Parliamentary Committee, Steering Committee, Clusters, Regional Forums and implementing institutions) was conducted to mark the implementation and roll-out of the Strategy.

The National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 95 actions informed by the eight Strategic Objectives. The 95 actions will be implemented by 44 institutions inclusive of civil society organisation, non-governmental organisation as well as public and private sectors.

5. Conclusion

One of the Namibian Government's priorities towards economic recovery and inclusive growth is the implementation of anti-corruption policies in all institutions to ensure effective governance.

The fight against corruption is therefore obligatory if Namibia is to prosper by strengthening of integrity systems and continuity in terms of collaboration and input by citizens on various levels.