ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE AND BUSINESS PRACTICES: BEING A PAPER PRESENTED ON THURSDAY OTH JUNE, 2005 AT THE A NUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF ABEOKUTA CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, MINES AND AGRICULTURE HELD AT NUT HALL KUTO ABEOKUTA BY: YUSUF O. ALI ESQ: SAN

PREAMBLE

"Corruption brings a nation and people no good. Rather, it kills innovation and creativity, compromises public morality, contaminates individual and collective dignity, distorts national plans, and erodes commitment to land work and the dignity of labour." President Olusegun Obasanjo in his democracy day broadcast on **29th May, 2005.**

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is one of the economic crimes that are particularly subversive of the economic life of a developing society like Nigeria. Its commonest and meanest form is bribery, the taking of money or other valuable things as a condition or inducement for the performance of an official act in favour of a person or for forbearing an action.

Corruption may be manifested in many clearly visible ways: an expensive and extravagant life style; lavish ostentatious display of wealth; bulging bank accounts; large personal donations at private functions; ownership of private jet or fleet of expensive cars, palatial buildings and so on.[1]

[1] Ben nwabueze. Constitutional Democracy in African Vol. 3.334

It is pertinent to point out here that cases of corruption may be difficult to prove by conclusive evidence. This, however, does not derogate from the fact that the forms it takes are well-known, e.g the percentage on contracts (and most times it is the entire money allocated for a project that is taken out and shared without any thing to show for it); the rake -off on land, business, supplies and so on purchased on behalf of government at seriously inflated and alarming prices, just to mention but a few such cases.

The most buccaneering form of corruption is the diversion into private pockets of payments or money receipts due to the country or worse still, embezzlement of money direct from the government treasury or bank.

Corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria alone, it is a world wide malaise. It is a notorious fact of life that corruption is deeply rooted in many societies. Although in the case of the mature Western democracies, it is usually more of a mere aberration rather than the norm and it is usually confined to the fringes of the system. Conversely, corruption, in most African and third world countries, of which Nigeria is perhaps the most notorious example, has its incidence as all pervading. This means that it runs right through the entire body-politic from top to bottom, from the managers of government, the heads of ministries or departments down to the clerks and messengers. It has penetrated every relationship, pervaded every dealing and permeated every activity of government! Corruption has broken loose of all legal barriers and restraints to become simply a buccaneering plunder brazenly perpetrated. The magnitude of its cancerous effect in monetary terms, is simply colossal, running into billions extending as it does over the entire area of public expenditure, representing revenue that would otherwise have been used for the benefit of the nation.

As **Karl Maier**[2] puts it, despite the transition from military to civilian, democratic rule in May 1999, "corruption (remains) still the fastest way to getting anything done in Nigeria.

[2] in his book. This house Has Fallen: Midnight in Nigeria (2000) quoted by Ben Nwabueze Op Cit.338

HISTORICAL GENESIS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

In indigenous Africa, of which continent Nigeria is the lion, the trait of generosity apparent in wide circulation of gifts, amongst kinsmen is a common feature. In the peculiar case of Nigeria, the 'Kola Concept was particularly common. The level or measure of acceptance a guest enjoys from his host is normally determinable by the number and size of the kolanuts presented by way of gift to that guest. In a nutshell, our indigenous tradition is one that is big on free exchange of gifts to signify acceptance and cordiality. However, many a times such gestures may be extended as inducement, for instance, to an 'Oba' or 'Obi' or 'Emir' to exercise a discretion in the giver's favour. But such situations were more of an aberration than the norm. Thus, corruption in this era was in its infancy.

According to some writers, a view which I strongly subscribe to, corruption became deeply embedded became a norm in the Nigerian society because of the historical accident of colonialism.

Colonialism has been regarded as "the iniquitous system that distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions and corrupts men, both colonizers and the colonised."[3]

The right of the European colenizers to rule in Nigeria had no moral basis in our tradition, convention or myth. It was grounded purely on conquest by force of arms, or cession obtained by undue influence and corruption. This is why it is strongly believed that one of the greatest legacy the imperialists transferred to Nigeria at Independence was corruption since the imperialists could not have transferred a better title than they themselves possessed.

It has been asserted, and rightly so, that most Nigerians are so unused to waiting in line to do or attain things by merit because colonialism thought them all about usurpation of advantage and opportunities, independent of personal merit and this was how the seed of corruption had been germinating. The white man that they respected so much was an illegitimately privileged person and was able to benefit from plentiful undemanding labour and servants and could easily obtain administrative positions.

[3] Ibid. Vol 2.358

So it is this system of inequity, injustice arising from domination. exploitation unfair discrimination that Nigerians inherited at Independence that baptized the issue of corruption and/or official corruption in Nigeria.

The elites who took over the mantle of "rulership" after departure of the colonial overlords, conceived themselves as inheritors not only of the Whiteman's arbitrary powers but also of his relation to the state and the people.

They therefore regarded the state as their personal estate to which they can dip hands at will to satisfy their whims and desires. Hence the unbridled corruption rampant amongst public office-holders in Nigeria and indeed most of the other African Countries so much so that Karl Maier commented thus: "the state in Africa is the bastard child of imperialism.[4]

THE BATTLE AGAINST CORRUPTION; THE JOURNEY SO FAR

You will agree with me that the battle against corruption in this country did not start with this administration. There is no gainsaying the fact that, hitherto successive regimes civilian and military had in their own peculiar ways shown discordant uncoordinated hatred for corruption. To demonstrate this fact a few examples would suffice. There was the introduction of War Against Indiscipline-WAI by Buhari/Idiagbon regime while Abacha initiated WAIC-War Against Indiscipline and Corruption.

In the light of the above we shall take a look at the level of corruption and efforts made by the aforesaid regimes to curb the menace over the years.

During the time of General Gowon 1967-1975, there appeared to be no official position taken publicly against corruption even though it was evident that it was very ven though it ma prevalent in the country:

[4] Op Cit P.33

However, individual crusading efforts were embarked upon. Of note in this strain was the Daboh/Tarka issue in which Mr. Godwin Daboh swore to an affidavit in which he alleged that late J.S. Tarka, a commissioner in the Federal Executive was corrupt.

wanted to use the allegation to get at him, Tarka eventually left the Even though General Gowon declared that the enemies of his regime generated. Late **Dr. Tai Solarin** at the time also mounted a vociferous government on account of the controversy that the accusation campaign against corruption, which culminated in his acerbic article in the **Nigerian Tribune** titled: "The beginning of the End." which earned him indefinite detention.

The General Murtala Muhammad regime did real battle with corruption. The word "indiscipline" wore a new definition in Nigeria's lexicon. The mass purge, summary dismissal and sack with immediate effect were carried out to sanitize the public service and the various sacred cows and demigods of the Gowon era were swept away. In the annals of the public service, Nigerians became wary before accepting even ordinary gifts in the performance of official duties. It is still a matter of conjecture whether if General Murtala Muhammed had not been assassinated six months into his regime, the war would have been sustained. The battle became half hearted after the assassination of General Murtala and same was not pursued with stoic determination as before.

In the second republic, the civilian government launched the Ethical Revolution. The effectiveness or lack of same was apparent to all and sundry because the main plank of the 31st December, 1983 coup was the allegation of massive corruption leveled against that regime. Nigerians seemed to agree with the assertion then.

The Buhari/Idiagbon regime launched the War Against Indiscipline (WAI). This regime asserted to be an offshoot of the Murtala/Obasanjo regime. To their eternal credit, like during the time of General Murtala Muhammed, Nigerians took the matter seriously. unlike before corruption was not put on display.

In a delicate power play that has all the handwriting of Maceaveli, a palace coup upstaged the unassuming duo of Buhari/Idiagbon and in came General Babangida. As with anything Nigerian, the War Against Indiscipline was supplanted by MAMSER. This programme would be remembered more for its numerous nebulous slogans and empty exhortations.

The best way to demonstrate the Banbangida administration and its ineffectual corruption crusade is to refer to two publications on corruption during his tenure.

The African Concord of 1st April, 1991 after the Babangida regime had set aside all the findings of the panel that indicted 10 of the 12 Military Governors of General Gowon era and restored all their seized assets and ranks in the Military, carried the following banner headline:

"So long Murtala."

The same Magazine on 19th April, 1993 in its cover story carried this piece on one of the departments of the Federal Government.

"Fraud, Mismanagement, and Favouritism turn the National Provident Fund into an Octopus of corruption."

The contribution of the Abacha regime to the battle against corruption is the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC). The effectiveness of the battle is epitomized by the collar of shame thrown on the neck of the country by the Transparency International vote for three years, 1995 to 1997 in which Nigeria came first as the most corrupt country in the world.

The revelations of in-depth loot of the treasury by Abacha after the death of the maximum ruler in 1998 have now shown to all and sundry that the General was sitting atop the most corrupt regime in the whole of Africa. The amount he alone looted has set new records in the annals of corruption in government.

The issue of corruption in the Abacha days became so prevalent and all pervading that the Nigerian Tribune carried a two pronged editorial on the topic in its editions of 22nd and 23'd September, 1997 respectively.

One could rightly say with a measure of confidence that unlike the days of old, corrupt practices left the confines of the dark alleys to the openness of the market places in Nigeria, during the dark days of Abacha.

The demand and giving of bribes was no more a secret matter. it is was done routinely in the open

The Obasanjo administration appreciated the gargantuan nature of the problem of corruption in the body politic. It took the bulls by the horns by proposing an all embracing Anti-Corruption Bill to the National Assembly.

Thank goodness, the Bill was eventually passed by the National Assembly in June 2000 and same was assented to by the President on 13th June, 2000 thus the Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Act 2000 was born. For ease of reference we simply refer to the Act as the Anti-corruption Act.

BUSINESS AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

As pointed out earlier, corruption in Nigeria is all pervading in its scope and extent.

Corruption has moved from official, to business, and private sectors. The situation is so bad that the spirit of personal involvement and dedication which characterized employment in the private sector is slowly ebbing away. So is the tradition of personalized accountability.

Now, corruption is business as usual in business practices. In fact, the issue of 'settlement' before official duties are performed is almost a business jargon.

Business men are now so much used to the 10% on all official contracts they bid for and win. The language is in Dollar or Naira signs and to sneak of ethics of business is almost like mixing French with German.

THE ANTI-CORRUPTION ACT

The nature and the pervading incidence of corruption, its magnitude and tragic consequences which are concomitant of the absence of an ethic of public probity and accountability have created a necessity to look for new sanctioning devices. consequence, the Obasanjo administration promulgated the all embracing Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Act, 2000. The 71 section Act reveals a clear departure from the past half hearted battle against the cankerworm of corruption in our country. Though the Act specifically deal with official corruption, its scope can also extend to business and businessmen with regard to some specific provisions under the Act. These shall be examined briefly. The sections of the anti corruption Act that deal with those offences span sections 8 to 26 and we shall discuss them in turn.

ACCEPTING GRATIFICATION OR GIFT

It is an offence under the Anti Corruption Act for any person to request for, receive or obtain any property or benefit of any kind for himself or for any other person or even agrees or attempts to receive or obtain any property or benefit of any kind for himself or for any other person for the purpose of anything already done or anything to be afterwards done or omitted to be done or for any favour or disfavour already shown or to be afterwards shown to any person by himself in the discharge of his official duties or in relation to any matter connected with the functions, affairs or business of a government department, or corporate body or other organization or institution in which he is serving as an official. Any person that contravenes this provision is guilty of an offence of "Official Corruption" and is liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years. It must be emphasized that, the mere fact that the accused person did not subsequently do, make or show the act, omission, favour or disfavour in question shall not be a Also the accused person cannot hide under the pretext that he never intend to do, make or show the act, omission, favour or disfavour to escape liability.

CORRUPT OFFERS PUBLIC OFFICERS AND CORRUPT DEMAND BY PERSON

It is also an offence under the Act to give, confer or procure any property or benefit of any kind to, on or for a public officer or to, on or for any other person; or promise or offer to give, confer, procure or attempt to procure any property or benefit of any kind to, on or for a public officer or any other person, on account of any such act, omission, favour or disfavour to be done or shown by the public officer. All these amount to an offence of official corruption and anybody indicted shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for seven (7) years.

This section is designed to guide against giving or accepting gift or gratification through a third party or an agent for the benefit of a public officer so as to discharge his normal official duties, whether concerning award of contract, licence permit, employment or anything whatsoever from a Government department, public body or other organization or institution in which that public officer is serving as such in favour of the offer or of the gift. It does not matter whether the gift or promise or any benefit was on account of such a past, or future act, omission, favour or disfavour

benefited or about to be enjoyed by the act of the public officer in the ordinary course of performing his normal duties officer.

We wish to state that section 10 of the Act which deal with corrupt demand by persons with the provisions of section 8(1) of the Act.

Therefore, it is our view that section 10 is a repetition of section 8(1) except for the insertion of the words "On conviction" contained in section 10(iv) of the Act.

Hon Justice Mustapha Akanbi (RTD) the chairman of the Commission while fielding questions from press men at a press briefing in Abuja on Thursday September 6, 2001 re-echoed the stringency of the anti-corruption Act especially as it relates to offering and accepting of gratification. The chairman asserted that:-

> "Gift is an offence under the Anti-corruption Act. If you accept gifts for discharging your official duty, you may think it is the African way of hospitality. But I tell you, that it is not. It is corruption and both the giver and the receiver will be treated as offenders."

FRAUDULENT ACQUISITION AND RECEIPT OF PROPERTY

The anti-corruption Act forbid any employee in the public service from acquiring or holding either directly or indirectly a private interest in any contract, agreement or investment emanating from or connected with the department or office in which he is employed or which is made on account of the public service, such a public officer is guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for seven years.

However, such a public servant can only acquire such interest in any contract, agreement or investment afore-mentioned, only if he is a member of a registered joint stock company consisting of more than twenty persons.

It is also an offence for anybody to receive anything which has been obtained by means of an act that amounts to a felony or misdemeanour or by means of any act done at a which is an offence under the laws in force in the place where it was done, knowing the same to have been so obtained, is guilty of a felony. In other words, this section of the Act

prohibits receiving a property or anything whether stolen or converted or items are acquired illegally outside the country and the receiver knows acquired through any other unlawful means, even if such property or that they are obtained in that manner, it makes the erring person guilty of felony. Therefore such a person that receive the thing or property so three years on conviction. But if the thing so obtained as described obtained by an act constituting a felony, will be liable to imprisonment for above was a postal matter, or any chattel, money or valuable security contained therein, in which case the offender shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for (7) seven years.

DELIBERATE FRUSTRATION OF INVESTIGATION AND MAKING FALSE STATEMENT OR RETURN

Any person who with intent to defraud or conceal a crime or frustrate the Anti-corruption Commission in its investigation of any suspected crime of corruption under this Act or under any other law by destroying altering. mutilating or falsifying any book; documents, valuable securities, accounts, computer system etc which belong to or is in the possession of his employer shall be liable on conviction to seven years imprisonment. Also the person is equally liable for the same offence if he makes or is privy to making any false entry in any such book, document, account or electronic record or omits or is privy to omitting any materials particulars from any such book, document, account or electronic record.

It is also an offence under the Anti-corruption Act if any officer charged with the receipt, custody, use or management of any part of the public revenue or property deliberately furnish any false statement or return in respect of any money or property received by him or entrusted to his care, or any balance of money or property in his possession or under his control such officer is guilty of an offence, and shall on conviction be liable to seven years imprisonment.

BRIBERY OF PUBLIC OFFICER AND USING OFFICE OR POSITION FOR GRATIFICATION

Any person who offers to any public officer, or being a public officer solicits, counsels or accepts any gratification as an inducement or a reward for:-

a) Voting or abstaining from voting at any meeting of the public body in favour or against any measure, resolution or question submitted to the public body;
b) Performing or abstaining from performing or aiding in procuring. expediting delaying, hindering or preventing the performance of any official act;
c) Aiding in procuring or preventing the passing of any vote or the granting of any contract, award, recognition or advantage in favour of any person; or
d) Showing or forbearing to show any favour or disfavour in his capacity as such officers shall, notwithstanding that the officer did not have the power, right or opportunity so to do, or that the inducement or reward was not in relation to the affairs of the public body, be guilty of an offence and shall on conviction be liable to five (5) years imprisonment with hard labour.

The nitty-gritty of the above provisions is that, no public officers shall solicit or accept any gratification as an inducement or a reward for voting or failure to vote at any meeting at the public body, in favour or against any resolution or question for determination placed before such public body. Or whether such gratification is offered to facilitate or prevent the performance of his official duties in connection with the granting of any contract, award or showing favour or forbearance to show any favour constitute an offence under the Act.

It's worthy of note that, the coercive force of law will still be used against such erring officer notwithstanding that the said officer lacks the power, right or opportunity to carry out the act for which he has received gratification. The rational behind the foregoing paragraph is that, it is an offence itself for taking bribe, and it is immaterial whether or not the taker has the ability or power to carry out the act which is the basis of the gratification. What is more, both the giver and receiver of gratification are liable under the Act to five years imprisonment with hard labour.

In the same vein, no public officer should use his office or position to obtain gratification or confer any corrupt or unfair advantage upon himself or his relative and associates or any other public officer. Any public officer guilty of this offence shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for five (5) years without option of fine.

SPECIAL PENALTY FOR OFFERING & RECEIVING GRATIFICATION

Apart from various penalty imposed by the Anti-corruption Act for the various offences discussed earlier, any public officer or other persons found guilty of soliciting offering or receiving gratification shall forfeit the said gratification and thereafter pay a fine which should not be less than five times the sum of value of the gratification, the subject matter of the offence. This is desirable if the gratification is capable of being valued or is of a pecuniary nature or Ten Thousand Naira, whichever is the higher.

BRIBERY IN RELATION TO AUCTION AND FOR RENDERING ASSISTANCE

Furthermore, it is an offence to offer any advantage to any other person as an inducement or reward so that he can refrain from bidding at any auction conducted by or on behalf of any public body. In like manner, any person who solicits or accepts any advantage as an inducement to or reward for or otherwise on account of his refraining or having refrained from bidding at any auction conducted by or on behalf of any public body shall be guilty of an offence.

Any person found guilty of this offence shall be liable to a fine of the current price of the property and imprisonment for three (3) years.

Also, offering of an advantage to a public servant as an inducement or reward to influence him to render assistance or influence him in the course of promotion, execution or procuring of any contract with. a public body, whether for supplying of any material or providing of any service or in a bid to effect payment of the price, consideration or otherwise provided for in any such contract constitute an offence under the anti-corruption Act and on conviction the culprit shall be liable to 7 years imprisonment or a fine of one million Naira.

Any public officer who in the course of his official duties, inflates price of any good or service over and above the prevailing or current market price or professional standards risk 7 years imprisonment and a fine of One Million Naira. We hope that this sub section of the Act that prescribed 7 years imprisonment and a fine of One Million Naira is realistic. This is in the sense that a public officer that is guilty of the offence under this sub-section may not be able to afford

the stated sum be an alternative to the term of imprisonment. We believe that "and" used will be construed as "or" so that the sum will be an alternative to the imprisonment.

AWARD OF CONTRACT WITHOUT BUDGET PROVISION

Any public officer who in the course of his official duties awards or signs any contract without budget provisions, approval and necessary cash backing has committed an offence under the Act and on conviction shall be liable to three (3) years imprisonment and a fine of One Hundred Thousand Naira. Also, it is an offence under the Act to transfer or spend any sum allocated for a particular project or service on another project or service. Any public officer found guilty of this offence shall be liable to one (1) year imprisonment or a fine of Fifty Thousand Naira.

DUTY OF PUBLIC OFFICER OR ANY OTHER PERSON TO REPORT BRIBERY TRANSACTIONS

It is incumbent on any public officer to whom any gratification is given, promised or offered contrary to any provision of this Act to report such gift, promise or offer coupled with the name of the person who made the overture. The report should be made at the nearest office of the Anti-corruption commission or police station. In like manner, any person from who any form of gratification has been solicited or obtained, or from whom an attempt has been made to obtain such gratification contrary to the provisions of this Act must report such request or attempt to obtain such gratification with the name if known or the full description of the person to the nearest officer of the Commission or police officer.

It constitutes an offence punishable under the Act if any person without reasonable excuse or justifiable reason(s) fails to report such transactions of offer of promise or request and obtaining of gratification as discussed above. Such person shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding One Hundred Thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two year or to both fine and imprisonment.

RECEIVING, DEALING OR CONCEALING ANY PROPERTY THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE OFFENCE UNDER THE ACT

It is an offence under the Act if anybody whether within or outside Nigeria, whether directly or indirectly, whether for himself or on behalf of any other person, enters into, causes to be entered

into, any dealing connected with any property, or otherwise uses or causes to be used, or holds, receives or conceals any property or any part thereof which was the subject matter of the offence under various sections of this Act discussed earlier. Any person guilty of the offence, under this section shall on conviction be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five (5) years Also, making statement which is false or intended to mislead or which is untrue or which not consistent with any other statement previously made by such person making it to any person having authority or power under any law to receive such statement is an offence under the Act. In the same vein, any person who makes or causes any other person to make to an officer of the Commission or to any public officer, in the course of exercise by such public officer of the duties of his office, knowing it to be false or intended to mislead has committed an offence as well. And any person on conviction for the said offences shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two (2) years or a fine not exceeding One Hundred Thousand Naira or to both fine and imprisonment.

FALL OUT OF CORRUPTION IN BUSINESS

The consequence of the unabated persistence of corruption in Nigeria is that Nigeria is patently not a developing nation. It is under developing and economically, the people are far worse off now than they were thirty years ago.

The first consequence of corruption is that the conduct of business is more expensive. Corrupt motive have often led to inefficiency in the disbursement and management of public funds and public affairs generally. It has sometimes meant that money that would have been used in development along lines beneficial to the public is wasted on unprofitable, politically motivated enterprises or diverted into private coffers. This impedes development, with a bouncer-back effect on business which can only flourish in a booming economy.

An example can be given of power supply in Nigeria. The unreliability of NEPA has led to business men operating at higher costs since they have to privately generate electricity if their business so require. Also is the case of Refineries, the Transportation System, Water Supply etc. These projects have been poorly funded so much so that the atmosphere is not conducive enough for viable business at reasonable costs.

As a corollary to the earlier point is the fact that corruption drives away foreign investors and investments. This is because corruption has a tragic effect on the attitudes and mentality of the people. It creates a widespread feeling of frustration, of disgust, of uncertainty and cynism, it in the state and patriotism. With this background, no sensible foreign causes immorality which has in turn undermine enthusiasm for, and faith investor will be willingly to invest his earnings in a country in whom its citizen have lost faith.

There can be no certainty in a country where almost anything is possible once money can change hands.

In addition to all these, corruption also leads to inefficient execution of contracts, official or otherwise and relegates merit in business transactions. Getting a good contract no longer depends on how effectively you can deliver and how well but whom you know and the size of your pocket. Therefore mediocrity is often employed to execute the most sensitive contracts since there is a blatant disregard for merit. The overal consideration is the percentage on contract and nobody cares whether the project gets executed or not.

The situation is so bad that a writer opined thus:

> "Inefficiency is inherent in a situation where government and its services are regarded as an alien undertaking or even nobody's business, as something in which the citizen has no personal stake and for whose failure he has no personal responsibility."

The resume of the above is that the enterprise whether it is strictly governmental in nature or one of a commercial nature, is viewed as a "service not meant to be operated on efficient commercial lines with a view to profit."

Finally on this point, corruption serves as a channel for inducing inflation. Suppliers now decide on a pricing base which is, in fact, two to three times of the actual price, even before the building up of any allowance for kick-back. This practice has now resulted in the "Nigerian price" for everything. The result being that we pay four to ten times for goods and services relative to the amount paid for same by other African and third world countries, even though we know that

developing societies usually pay more for such goods and services than the developed countries pay for them.

Moreover, we get second hand or obsolete machinery for the exorbitant prices which we pay. The result is that very often, projects executed at such criminally high cost function only for a short period of time before they cease to function. And of course, the situation is worsened by the complexed mentality Nigerians have that exorbitant prices necessarily translate into quality!.

THE WAY FORWARD

President Obasanjo on 29th May, 1999 made a solemn pledge at his inauguration to rid the country of corruption, which he rightly described as "the greatest single bane of our society today," and to "stamp out malfeasance wherever it might lurk." Conversely, the continued and undiminished incidence of corruption in the country, manifesting in utter lack of respect and disdain for accountability, must rank as perhaps one of the greatest examples of promise and hope betrayed disgrace, if nothing else, that some public officials that had hitherto appeared to be untouchable are facing now is enough encouragement. The EFCC and the ICC are making some waves. Posterity and time will prove whether some people are just being made as scapegoats or whether the preys are even better than their hunters.

It is our humble submission that in addition to the on-going concerted efforts, the following could still be done to enhance the battle against corruption:

1. Nigeria should adopt the Chinese example for punishment of corruption in official capacity. The penalty is execution. This may appear so drastic but we are all agreed that the situation in Nigeria require drastic suggestions and measures.
2. There should be put in place a standard/code of conduct for Business men. Everything should not just be left to the whims and caprices of any business man.
3. Also, contracts of any kind should contain forfeiture clauses. This will be to the effect that any business man or organization that engages in corruption in any form stand the certain consequence of losing the contract. This has been working in developed countries were standard and merit are the only basis of business relationships.

4. Finally, people who induce officers in any capacity through bribery in the exercise of their duty should be blacklisted. This would serve to deter others and if nothing else, it would serve to curb the buccaneering aspect of corruption from being a norm to an aberration.
5. There is the urgent need for the various tiers of government to modify and simply the way they do business. The less cumbersome the procedure the less the corruption. Many unscrupulous public servants take advantage of the rigmarole way government does its business to perpetuate corruption by extorting money from desperate Nigerians that want to enjoy any service offered by government.