

Corruption and Its Implications for Development and Good Governance: A Perspective from Post-Colonial Africa

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Abstract: One of the many impediments to a specific region, country and/or continents political, social and economic growth prospects is corruption, the aim of this paper is to unearth the drivers and consequences of corruption in post-colonial Africa. Corruption is a global phenomenon; however when observing global corruption statistics and/or trends, it seems to be more prominent in underdeveloped continents such as Africa. Corruption in Africa is purely driven by low levels of economic growth, bad governance structures weak constitutions political instability, high levels of poverty coupled with high and ever-increasing levels of unemployment. We argue that post the colonial era, there has been a rise of corruption activities within the continent where individuals including some African heads of states have looted the continent of its resources meant for the general populace. In this sense, corruption takes resources meant for the poor, limits foreign direct investments (FDI) and has severe effects on a continent that is already the least developed in the world.

Keywords: *Corruption, Africa, Heads of States, Development, Good Governance.*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to ponder the drivers and consequences of corruption in post-colonial Africa. Uwak and Udofia (2016) posit that corruption and in whichever way you look at it has enormous negative implications for the growth of any region, country and/or continent. From an economic point of view, corruption pertains to investments on projects that rather than benefiting society, will rather enrich certain individuals and their allies. On the other hand, from a political perspective, it involves corrupt political elites who use their political positions for their own personal satisfaction. Also, from a social standpoint, corruption has massive consequences on the social system which ultimately leads to the general populace losing or not having faith and/or trust in the political system. Despite a plethora of institutional, legal and other relevant measures that have been formulated and implemented, corruption persists in both developed and developing countries (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015). As a result of this, over the last two to three decades, many studies have been taken pertaining to corruption both from an Afrocentric and Eurocentric perspective. According to Awojobi (2014), the post-colonial era ushered in a period where African countries could now realign themselves in global politics. Basically, the re-emergence of African states from their colonial masters steered in a period where they would introduce their own economic growth and developmental models moving forward. Bojang (2017) contends that several economic and political reforms have been undergone by African states post the colonial era. However, they have been lacking in stimulating the continents economic growth prospects thus far.

Africa as a result of its rich mineral and natural resources is one of the richest continents in the world, yet the least developed. It is in this vein that corruption has been witnessed as one of the major role players when viewing Africa's current lack of development and economic growth post-independence. This trajectory stems from the fact that some African states are still propelled with low levels of economic growth, bad governance structures, weak constitutions, political misrule, dictatorship rule, high levels of poverty together with unemployment which makes them more vulnerable to partake in corruption activities (Myint, 2000; Azeez, 2018). As a result of these elements, some African states are left demobilized and economically decapitated, living the general populace under severe poverty. Corruption in Africa takes place from high-level political graft which accounts for millions of dollars to low-level bribes like bribing for a speeding ticket (Henson, 2009). Jain (2001) opines that the increased attention paid to corruption is mainly because development requires good governance which in most cases has been hindered by corrupt activities in Africa. According to Lawal (2007), this makes corruption in Africa an epidemic development issue, in his view, most African states cannot endure the cost(s) of corruption activities which further has significant effects on the current and future development of the continent. For African states to be more integrated into the global economy and

allow for more FDI for their economic growth, diluting the number of continental corruption tendencies is of utmost importance.

It is within this context that this paper explores the effects of corruption on Africa's development and economic growth endeavours post the colonial era. The following section aims to conceptualize the term corruption from a broader perspective. The subsequent section unpacks the rise of corruption in Africa post-independence by reviewing current literature pertaining to corruption. The paper further explains the effects and drivers of corruption in Africa hereby also observing Cressey's Fraud Triangle Model as a means to offer a more nuanced explanation into what drives individuals to partake in corruption activities. The latter parts of the paper look at the implications corruption has on Africa's current and future development, while the last section draws on the informed general conclusion from the arguments in the paper while offering some recommendations.

Conceptual Clarifications: On the clarification of corruption, various definitions exist; therefore, setting a precise definition of corruption has been a difficult task in academic literature as it tends to mean different things to different people (Eyo, 2017). To Jain (2001) corruption refers to the act whereby the power of public office is applied for personal gain. In essence, it entails the unauthorized utilization of power or influence by someone in the public or private sector by means to enrich himself and/or herself at the expense of the general populace. Myint (2000) defines corruption as the usage of status or rank by an individual in office for his or her personal gain. Some examples of these corrupt behaviours may include the appropriation of public assets and property for personal use, cronyism, nepotism, embezzlement, bribery and extortion. Basically, corruption means the mistreatment or exploitation of one's position or authority (Clark, 2017). Nevertheless, as noted by Tanzi (1998) this abuse of public power can involve other third parties, in this case, close friends, family members or even colleagues. However, Azeez (2018) contends that corruption can further be broken down into other broad forms such as petty corruption, grand corruption and looting. Corruption activities that take place usually fall under these three broad forms.

Petty Corruption: Pertains to small amounts of gifts or capital been exchanged by two or more parties who themselves are relatively minor individuals in a particular organization where this type of corruption in undertaken. It is more common in areas where the monthly income for civil servants does not meet their basic monthly needs.

Grand Corruption: In most cases is undertaken by high ranking government officials or businessman. These corrupt activities could include kick-backs which are rewarded to government officials to award tender contracts, embezzlement of public funds and political patronage. In this form of corruption, the corrupt individual(s) is more focused on his/her personal wealth and may use some of this wealth to assist his/her close allies who assist him/her to stay in power (Uneca, 2016).

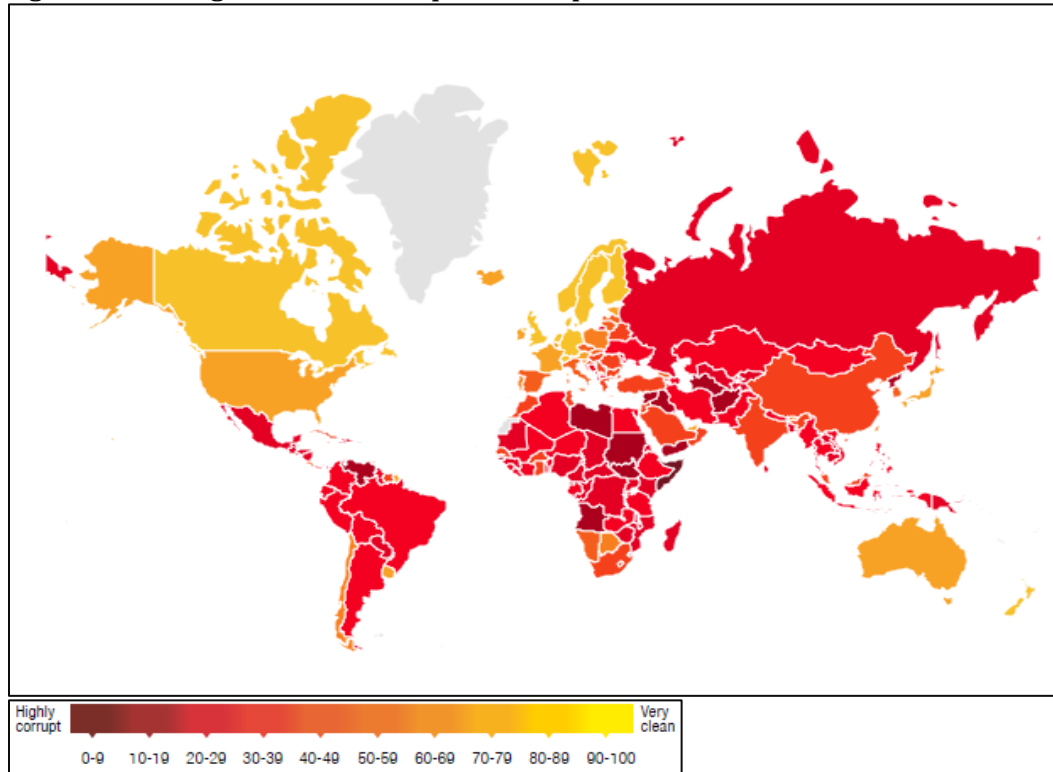
Looting: This involves huge figures of money and could bring with it macroeconomic repercussions. This type of corruption is normally undertaken by influential political representatives and other actors in the public and private sector.

2. A Review of Literature

Corruption Trends in Africa Post-Independence: In 1957, during his opening address to the newly independent state of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah mentioned corruption as a pivotal disease that was to contribute to Africa's downfall (Nkrumah, 1961). About three years later, a period where Tanganyika (now Tanzania) was about to gain its independence, Julius Nyerere argued that Tanganyika, which was hampered by both diseases and poverty risked adding another enemy, that of corruption (Nyerere, 1966). To him, corruption was an enemy to the welfare of the general populace, several decades later it seems as if the worst fears of both Nyerere and Nkrumah are being witnessed. According to Sugden and Tomlinson (2017), post the colonial era, corruption has been a widespread enigma in Africa, no region or state in the continent has not had its fair share of corrupt practices and as a result, the continent is widely considered amongst the most corrupt in the world. Corruption in Africa has been propelled by greed, the decline in morals and ethics, self-enrichment, poverty, ethnic loyalties, unemployment and socio-economic conditions. In this vein, the weak

governance in Africa may be traced back to colonialism; here, many institutions were established to strengthen political influences instead of creating an environment of accountability. From a global perspective, over the last few decades, attention paid to corruption has grown tremendously (refer to figure 1) as often measured by various governance indicators and other organizations such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the World Bank and Transparency International (Hope, 2017). From an economic and development perspective, corruption hinders much needed continental economic development and further grants, Africa, a poor image globally.

Figure 1: Showing the Global Corruption Perception Index for 2017



Source: Transparency International (2017).

By drawing insights from the above figure, one would rightfully observe that Africa is one of the worst corrupt continents globally with South Sudan and Somalia ranked as the most corrupt countries in the world with a score¹ of 12 and 9 respectively in the latest 2017 Transparency International Corruption index. Also, Sub-Saharan Africa was one of three worst performing regions with a score of 32, others being Eastern Europe and Central Asia with a score of 34. Mungiu-Pippidi (2015) argues that in developed states that possess robust governance structures, corruption watchdogs and the rule of law, when there are signs of corruption activities, these (in most cases) are thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators are brought to book. However, in developing and third world (Africa) states where weak institutions and corruption watchdogs are not as robust², corruption tends to be a widespread spectacle. As a result, this is predominantly witnessed in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. It is in this vein that states with high corruption trends also possess or are confronted with low levels of economic growth, fewer investment opportunities, poverty, low FDI and poor infrastructure (Otusanya, 2011; Hope, 2017).

¹ Here a scale of 0 to 100 is used to measure how corrupt a specific region or country is, where 0 represents a highly corrupt country and 100 a least corrupt country.

² Some of these states in Africa include but are not limited to Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Libya, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and Angola.

Implications of Corruption on Africa's Current and Future Development: The consequences of corruption are normally drawn from triad spheres which encompass of political, economic and social driven motives (Lawal, 2007). From a political perspective, corruption may trigger political instability and brain drain. In this case, unrests may occur driven by individuals who have had enough of corruption activities as this may limit the speed of service delivery and divert resources intended for economic development to corrupt individuals. When viewing it from a social perspective, corruption grants individuals the platform to loot the State for personal gain and/or self-enrichment. Nevertheless, and without controversy, some African heads of states have also utilized their political positions to amass much wealth for themselves from their state coffers.

Former and current state presidents of various African countries including Jose Eduardo dos Santos, El Hadj Omar Bongo (the late), Mobutu Sese Seko (the late) and Sani Abacha (the late) just to name a few have looted the resources of their respective states in recent years (Rotberg, 2017). In Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the late Mobutu Sese Soko's fortune was projected to be US\$ 4 billion in 1984, most of it stashed in offshore bank accounts. In 1997, a year where he was forced out of power, it was estimated that his wealth was about US\$ 8 billion (Hope, 2000). Another former African head of state Yahya Abdul-Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh, who was in power from 1994 until 2017, has also been accused of looting millions of dollars from Gambia's treasury department for his personal gain. The associated capital estimated to be at least US\$ 50 million (McAllister and Farge, 2017). Engebretsen (2017) posit that after almost forty decades in power, former Angolan president and the Peoples Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) leader Jose Eduardo dos Santos and his family were leading players in the country's economy. He used the oil wealth of Angola to enrich himself and his family, some government and military officials, while poverty was rife in his country. His son was linked to corruption allegations which found that he transferred US\$500 million from Angola's central bank to the United Kingdom (UK). All of these were purchased with the money that was looted from his country.

In Gabon, the late El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba was accused of channelling money to a French political party in support for Nicolas Sarkozy who was president of France from 2007 to 2012. He (Bongo) is known to have owned more about 33 properties valued at £125 million in France including a luxury collection of vehicles, all of these were purchased with the money that was looted from his country. He used Gabon's 2.5 billion barrel of oil to enrich himself, family and his Bateke tribe thus becoming one of Africa's richest heads of state³ (The Telegraph, 2009). Yet again, Former Nigerian Minister of Aviation Miss Stella Oduah-Ogiewwonyi utilized the Ministry's finances to purchase cars that were bulletproof for her own private use. Whereas former Minister of Petroleum resources Mrs Diezani Alison-Madueke has had charges brought against her for corruption under Goodluck Jonathan's Presidency (Uwak and Udofia, 2016). According to Bojang (2017), in a period from 2010 to 2015, millions of US\$ in oil revenue went missing via money laundering and bribery when Madueke was Minister. Basically, in a period spanning five decades (1960 to 2010) almost US\$ 500 million plus has been lost due to corruption in Nigeria. For instance, in Nigeria, bodies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) were established to arrest and prosecute corrupt individuals; however, these have produced little results.

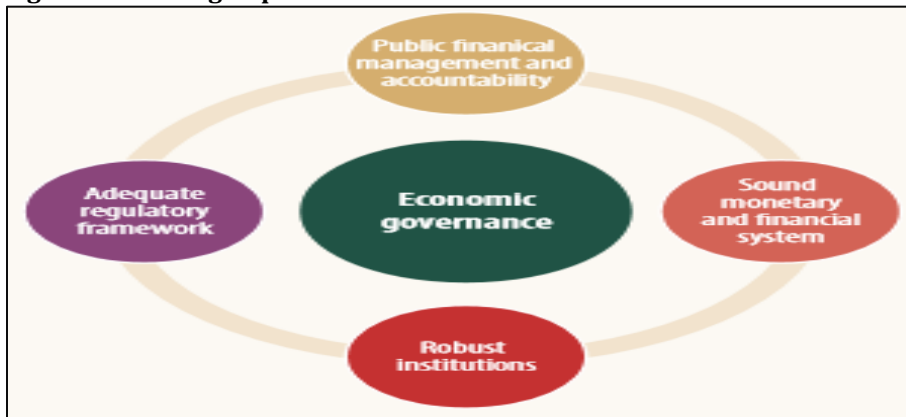
This at times can be drawn from the fact that, depending on the rank/position and/or political leadership you occupy, if found guilty of any wrongdoing, these offences are swept under the carpet or end up getting a lesser sentence in comparison to the crime committed (Uwak and Udofia, 2016). In this sense, a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in (2016) alluded that in 2030, corruption might cost Nigeria up to 30 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This (looting of state coffers) shows that some African leaders and ministers have been exploiting states institutions to not only enrich themselves but also their close allies. As a result, this has often hindered stability as it often leads to military interventions which at times results in the government (both democratically elected and authoritarian regimes) being overthrown as was the case

³ Bojang (2017) asserts that former and current dictatorship(s) or long-term in office of some African heads of states has also immensely contributed to the high rose of corruption in Africa. Some of these long tenures in power include but are not limited to Egypt's Hosni Mubarak (31 years), Libya's Muammar Gaddafi (42 years), Gabon's Omar Bongo Odimba (42 years), Togo's Gnassingbe Eyadema (38 years), Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe (30 years), the DRC's Joseph Kabila (2001 - to date) and Cameroon's Paul Biya (1982 - to date).

with Mobuto Sese Soko, Yahya Abdul-Aziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh and Robert Mugabe (Hope, 2000; Uneke, 2010; McAllister and Farge, 2017). As Henson (2009) avers, continentally, there is a notion that high ranking public official (heads of states) seek to continue staying in office through re-election because this further grants them power and access to state resources and further grants them immunity from prosecution.

Corruption Weakens Public Administration and Sabotages Good Governance: Lack of good governance in Africa entails weak institutions, poor implementation mechanisms, inadequate regulatory and legal frameworks, these further stimulate corruption activities (Uneca, 2016), and this sentiment is further echoed by Khan (2006), who entails that corruption is closely linked to poor governance. Drawing from the above, there is a need for good governance mechanisms (see figure 2) in Africa which embraces political representativeness, strong economic management and institutional effectiveness. For African states to improve their economic development, they will require robust performance in all these areas.

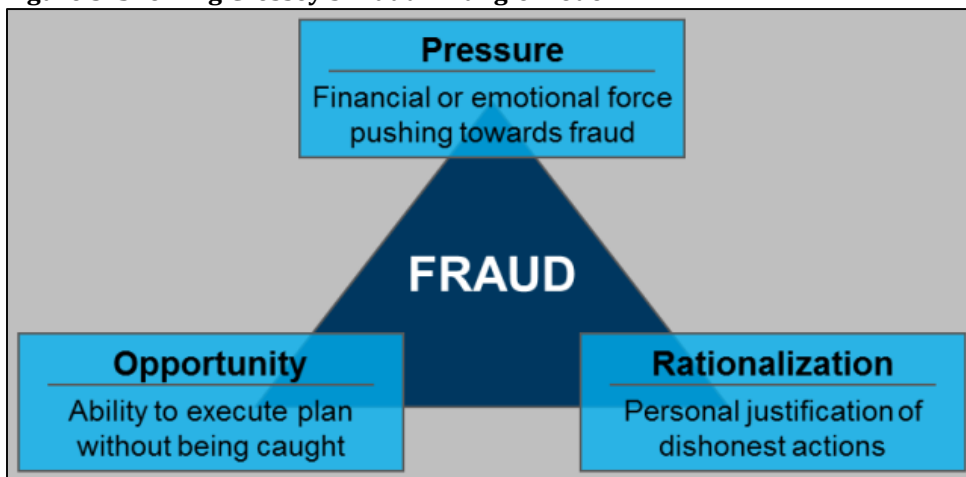
Figure 2: Showing Important Dimensions for Good Economic Governance



Source: See Uneca (2016).

Fraud Triangle Model: As a means to offer a better understanding of what drives individuals to commit corruption practices, the study draws insights from Donald Cressey's (refer to figure 3) Fraud Triangulation Model. This model illustrates the dynamics that cause someone to perpetrate in fraudulent activities. It comprises three drivers which include pressure, opportunity and rationalization commonly referred to as the "Fraud Triangle"

Figure 3: Showing Cressey's Fraud Triangle Model



Source: See Cressey (1953).

Pressure: The element of pressure posits that individuals become involved in corruption as a result of pressure. This may comprise of occupational goals, unforeseen medical expenses, addiction problems, financial constraints, gambling, peer pressure, lavish lifestyle(s), greed and loans. Also, unrealistic goals may also stimulate employees to partake in this form of corruption (Abdullahi, Mansor and Nuhu, 2015).

Opportunity: To Cressey (1953); Lister (2007); Kassem and Higson (2012) opportunity is a process in which a person uses to commit fraudulent practices, often driven by the notion that s/he won't get caught. It is normally formed by poor administration oversight(s), weak internal controls and/or misuse of power. As a result of this, failure to implement and monitor sufficient procedures to identify fraudulent activities may also increase the prospect for fraud to arise. However, this driver is easy to control as organizations could implement measures to better manage these fraudulent activities.

Rationalization: Rationalization is where the perpetrator has justification and some excuses for becoming involved in conducting a crime (Rae and Subramaniam, 2008). If the individual cannot have a reason for participating in corruption, it is not likely that s/he may be involved in crime. For instance, some of the reasons may include "some people did it why not me too", "I was borrowing the money", moreover, "I was entitled to the money because my employer is not paying me enough to sustain myself and family" or "I had to steal to provide for my family" (Abdullahi, Mansor and Nuhu, 2015). It is very difficult to notice such individuals because it is not possible to read someone's mindset. In this driver, most of the individuals partaking in fraudulent activities don't see themselves as offenders' rather normal, honest individuals who are just victims of adverse circumstances.

3. Methodology

This paper adopted a qualitative methodology by relying on secondary sources to collect the required data on the drivers and consequences of corruption in Africa post the colonial era. The researchers exploited relevant published works from books, journals, newspapers, published and unpublished articles such as dissertations and thesis together with credible and reliable online sources of applicable organizations dealing with and/or monitoring corruption trends in Africa post the colonial era. All data retrieved was subjected to comprehensive qualitative analysis through the use of content analysis. To Neuendorf (2002) content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarises message content, it (content analysis) refers to the analysis of books, brochures, written documents, transcript, news reports, conference reports and visual media. As a result, it makes use of acute reflection and analysis of secondary data collection.

4. Results and Discussion

This paper has argued that corruption has over the years played a big influence on hindering Africa's development and economic growth prospects and without a doubt, the general populace has been severely affected by this. So what remedy may African leaders and other third-party role players introduce as frameworks to both reduce and address this enemy? Notwithstanding corruption policies that have been introduced by African leaders, regional economic communities (RECs), civil society, corruption has remained persistent in Africa (Uneke, 2010).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Corruption in Africa: What Direction Moving Forward: This paper has explored the drivers and consequences of corruption and good governance in Africa post the colonial era. It has argued that post-colonialism, Africa has witnessed widespread corruption tendencies often measured by various corruption watchdogs. This (corruption) has brought with it vast development implications to a continent that is already viewed as the least developed and corrupt in the world. What has often made the situation worse is the fact that some former and current African heads of states have decided to use their political powers to further impede on the development and economic growth of the continent by looting their state coffers. Such has been drawn from the fact that post the colonial era African states have continued to possess weak anti-corruption fighting agencies coupled with poor policy formulation and implementation. It is evident that by

viewing current corruption trends, addressing corruption will continue to pose a challenge in Africa. Apart from those that are present, there needs to other continental and universal corruption fighting strategies. Presently a legally binding global anti-corruption instrument is that of the United Nations (UN's) Convention against Corruption which entered into force in 2005. Basically, it compels states to fight and manage corruption, enhance global cooperation, retrieve stolen assets and enhance information sharing for both the public and private sectors. As a result, it is themed into four areas which are asset recovery, prevention, international cooperation and criminalization (United Nations, 2011). Therefore, if African heads of states are to successfully address the corruption scourge and revamp their economies, development-oriented leadership is a prerequisite. This pertains to each country implementing adopted national policies and anti-corruption strategies in order to achieve competent and effective public service delivery together with effective economic growth mechanisms. Also, most African states possess unproductive organizations and weak institutions that are failing to implement and monitor transparency and accountability in the public sector. There is a need to implement robust government institutions together with state-owned and independent oversight bodies (corruption watchdogs).

These initiatives can be achieved by strengthening existing institutes that track regional and continental corruption trends but (if possible) these may further be aided by the creation of new anti-corruption institutes that strongly investigate and prosecute corrupt public officials or heads of states that are found guilty in associating themselves in corrupt activities. This sentiment is further echoed by Salim (2000); Anassi (2004) and Kedir (2016), who all contend that African states should implement anti-corruption strategies that ought to monitor incidents of corruption, improve their competence, be accountable and further strengthening existing institutions. Also, these anti-corruption strategies must be achievable, realistic and constantly implemented while also being country-specific, as what may work in another country may not solely work or be implemented in another state. Also (these strategies) should include openness, communication and accountability to African citizens and be complemented with robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Hope (2017) in his analysis opines that developing and implementing well-monitored policies and strategies should be in the form of participatory process which should (if possible) involve engagements and discussions with all relevant stakeholders.

These could include but not limited to the media, civil society and both the public and private sectors. This (participatory process) will grant these stakeholders the platform to also contribute in sharing their ideas in the war against corruption, hence, coming up with a nuanced mechanism on how to further tackle corruption both in the short and long run, nevertheless, these strategies will be in need of political will from African heads of states (Hope 2017). Goto and Ogunnubi (2014) in their published article entitled *Corruption and Development in Africa: Critical Reflections from Post-Apartheid South Africa* contend that the measures to tackle the high rate of corruption should be of high importance to all African states, irrespective of a country's level of development. African states should perhaps also utilize the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)⁴ to evaluate whether resources meant for the public are being utilized efficiently, this mechanism provides a robust framework for Africa states to deliver on its structural transformation plan geared towards agenda 2063 (Uneca, 2016).

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⁴ Established in 2003 by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) heads of states and government implementation committee (HSGIC), the APRM mechanism is a performance monitoring instrument for African states. It aims to foster political, economic and corporate governance values, continental economic integration, economic growth and sustainable development among African countries (The African Union, nd).

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