

EXPLORING VIABLE RESPONSES TO CORRUPTION IN LIBERIA

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Introduction

Corruption in Liberia remains a barrier to efficient resource management, continues to negatively affect economic growth and private sector development, and contributes to poverty and inequality. Liberia is ranked very low on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index with a score of 28/100, ranking 137 out of 180 countries.¹ Recent reports from the General Auditing Commission of Liberia demonstrate large-scale misuse of public funds.²

There is also a lack of accountability and transparency concerning the expenditure of public funds in Liberia which increases public distrust and apathy towards State institutions. This, in turn, weakens the social compact between the State and citizens and hampers efforts to generate the collective and concerted actions needed to tackle critical development challenges.

Recent proposed legislative reforms provide a potential watershed opportunity for strengthening the legal architecture and national response to corruption in Liberia. The Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), with technical support from UNDP, has spearheaded the revision of key legislations intended to introduce structural reforms. These legislations seek to:

- a) provide the LACC with prosecutorial powers, such that it will no longer need to refer cases to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) for prosecution;
- b) protect whistleblowers and establish a witness protection program; and,
- c) establish a Criminal Court F to try corruption cases.

These legislations have been submitted to parliament. When enacted and if rigorously implemented, they should ensure a more effective response in the fight against corruption. Securing prosecutorial autonomy for the LACC will, for instance, reduce delays encountered in exercising the power to prosecute. It will also foster the independence of the LACC which will no longer require prosecutorial approval from the Ministry of Justice.

While these reforms are important, they remain insufficient by themselves to tackle corruption in Liberia given the scope and complexity of the challenges. Moreover, while laws and policies

provide blueprints for action, strong advocacy and citizen engagement are required to strengthen political will and ensure a robust and comprehensive response to corruption.

In August 2021, UNDP Liberia hosted a national Development Dialogue with national and regional stakeholders to explore the issues of corruption, accountability, and transparency in Liberia, and to identify critical points of entry to tackle these challenges.

Methodology

This paper relies on expert conversation during the Development Dialogue, organized by UNDP Liberia,³ to identify the underlying factors that fuel corruption in Liberia and identify a range of responses. The juxtaposition of perspectives and evidence from participants, the discussions that ensued and reliance on relevant literature where necessary, enabled a wider contextual analysis of the landscape, responses, and solutions to tackling corruption in Liberia.



Grand Bassa County Service Center, Liberia
Photo: UNDP Liberia

Identifying Factors that Fuel Corruption in Liberia

To define the remedies to tackling corruption, a diagnosis of the causal factors is critical. Although not exhaustive, three key underlying factors fueling corruption are identifiable.

Liberia (IW-L); Cllr. Frances Johnson Allison – Legal Practitioner (and former Chair of LACC); Francis Ben Kaifala – Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone; Nadine Rugwe – Team Leader – Transformational Governance, UNDP Rwanda. The conversation was open to the public and widely advertised within Liberia and across the Africa region.

¹ Transparency International *Corruption Perceptions Index 2020* available at <https://www.transparency.org/country/LBR> last accessed on 29 October 2021.

² *Audit Reports – General Auditing Commission (gac.gov.lr)*

³ The Panel comprised W. Lawrence Yealue, Chair, Accountability Lab (moderator); Cllr. Kanio Gabala – Acting Chair, Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC); Harold Marvin Aidoo – Executive Director, Integrity Watch

Political factors

A compromised political landscape

The problem of corruption is woven into Liberian history and goes to the core of the foundation of the nation State.⁴ A historical excursion into events leading up to the declaration of independence in 1847 reveals a country founded on cronyism, favoritism, and nepotism. The concentration of power within a small and privileged alliance created a political system based on a web of patronage and personalism.⁵ Liberia has been through prolonged periods characterized by a lack of political pluralism and political competition and a lack of meaningful public political participation. The absence of a real possibility for the alternation of power created a system grounded on complacency and lack of accountability which permeated both the political elite and the public service.⁶ This hegemony of power continued for well over 100 years, resulting in a faulty, deep-rooted value system touching on all branches of the State and all sectors of society and social institutions. Conflict and civil war further weakened institutions, ravaged the economy and livelihoods, and solidified elite capture of resources. The immediate post-conflict phase was a mirror of the compromises and political appeasements that preceded it and led to a further entrenchment of corruption.⁷

Post-conflict political compromises resulted, *inter alia*, in the sacrifice of fiscal control and accountability at the altar of peacebuilding. Advocates for accountability lost grounds vis-à-vis proponents in favor of advancing human security, maintaining the power balance among contending factions, and appeasing former combatants. The perception that tackling corruption formed a threat to peace and reconciliation spawned so-called “sacred cows” who were untouchable.⁸ This trend continues in wider conglomerations of party affiliation, and other political and social alliances such as ethnic and regional affiliation. This severely undermines Liberia’s normative values, with the attendant lack of implementation and adherence to fiscal discipline and the norms and behavioral codes that should govern as well as ensure a disciplined and credible public service sector.

Lack of political will

Political will represents an indispensable ingredient in securing meaningful results in the fight against corruption. Without robust and visible support from the country’s leadership, structural and legislative reforms will remain stalled, and the financial and other resources needed to drive change will remain difficult to secure. In countries with high levels of corruption, weak political will, defined at times as the lack of “demonstration of a credible intent by political leaders to attack the perceived causes or effects of corruption at a systemic level – translating policy pronouncements and rhetoric into sustainable actions”⁹ is a commonly manifested

trait. In Liberia, decades of chronic and systemic corruption have corroded the political will that is required at top leadership levels to dislodge a system that has become normalized and entrenched.

The manner in which national budgetary resources are currently allocated provides an illustration of the issue. While Liberia has established integrity institutions to promote transparency and accountability, these institutions are not sufficiently funded to perform their functions, depicting inadequate prioritization and lack of political will. This has rendered these institutions ineffective, gravely impacting their ability to produce results with a knock-on effect on public trust.¹⁰

Lack of political will also manifests in the form of political interference or a perception of its presence. Thus, failure to follow up on recommendations of the General Auditing Commission over the years and to bring charges against corrupt officials and hold them criminally liable has produced a public perception of selective justice and ineffective response.

Legal factors

Weak legal framework and enforcement

Legal rules are crafted to produce meaningful change for societies, prohibit unacceptable conduct and ensure appropriate consequences for their violation. The relevance of laws require acceptance by the public and enforcement by authorities to the most uniform extent possible. Perceptions of unfairness in the application of the laws not only undermines institutional legitimacy, it impedes the political legitimacy of the State. Laws should address cultural issues and impact social change. To achieve this, relevant legal provisions are required to dispense with legal gaps that form weaknesses and are a recipe for inefficiency. While several third wave constitutional dispensations¹¹ or post-conflict reforms have resulted in the creation of specialized bodies dedicated to fighting corruption, the attendant legal frameworks usually provide for weak institutions that are subject to executive authority. In Liberia for instance, primary gaps in the legal structure regarding the fight against corruption include the lack of autonomy of the LACC and the absence of measures for the protection of whistleblowers and witnesses.

The LACC investigates and refers cases to the Ministry of Justice which has the authority to prosecute. While the LACC may initiate prosecution after 14 days if the Ministry does not do so, the failure of the latter to prosecute sends a signal to the former regarding the government’s stance, resulting in political interference by implication. Fortunately, a bill has been drafted and submitted to the national legislature, removing this legal impediment, and granting the LACC authority to prosecute.¹² This will grant the

⁴ Harold Marvin Aidoo, UNDP Liberia Development Dialogue, 18 August 2021.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The True Whig Party governed Liberia from 1878 until 1980. Though opposition parties were not outlawed, Liberia was a de facto one-party state.

⁷ Liberia has two protracted civil wars during the periods 1989-1996 and 1999-2003. The wars were fought by multiple factions and resulted in the death of over 250,000 persons.

⁸ Kanio Gabala and Frances John Allison, UNDP Liberia Development Dialogue, 18 August 2021.

⁹ SJ Kpundeh, “Corruption and Corruption Control”, 2004.

¹⁰ These institutions require funds to recruit and retain bright minds and experienced staff, conduct investigations and implement communication strategies. To the contrary, these institutions have not been effective due to lack of adequate resources.

¹¹ Samuel Huntington describes three waves of democratisation in history as represented by periods of democratic transitions. The third wave spanning 1974 to the 1990s. This period witnessed the constitutional change in several countries especially following the fall of the Soviet Union which saw the introduction of political pluralism and new governance structures. (See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, 1991).

¹² Act Restating An Act to Establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission.

LACC its much required autonomy and lay the responsibility for ensuring accountability at its doorstep. This legislative move forms part of a package of reforms that signals Liberia's intention to scale up its fight against corruption in theory. Other legislations submitted to the national legislature as part of the current wave of reforms relate to the protection of whistleblowers and witnesses,¹³ the declaration of assets by public officers¹⁴ and the establishment of a specialized anti-corruption court.¹⁵ If properly and effectively implemented and supported by political will, these legislations will help curb unethical and undesirable conduct by some public servants, and ensure greater compliance with the Financial Disclosure and Assets Declaration Framework.¹⁶

Cultural factors

The prioritization of ethnic affiliation

Liberia has more than 15 ethnic groups and is geographically divided into 15 counties. Due to strong communal bonds and the collective nature of African cultures and practices, Liberia's ethnic groups have sturdy kinship ties that produce a sense of loyalty to others within the group. Ethnic solidarity mostly surpasses national aspirations, especially where ethnic groups feel excluded from the government of the day and do not benefit from basic services in their regions. Loyalty, therefore, lies with the village and the group rather than the State, and social relations are collectivized rather than individualized.¹⁷ Within this context, charges against an individual are often viewed by his or her community as an indictment of the whole community, and thus it is not unusual to see a backlash in Liberia from the regions or ethnic groups whose members have been accused of corruption.

Gross inequalities and community expectations

The issue of ethnic identity is compounded by gross inequalities that permeate communities. For instance, high levels of illiteracy and lack of awareness exposes communities to easy manipulation in support of their corrupt kinsmen and women. Further, chronic poverty and lack of opportunities often result in elite exploitation of communities and the perpetuation of a culture of dependency. The educated and more privileged members of communities are expected to take their communities out of poverty. Generation-long periods of poverty and deprivation put pressure on first generations of families who attain public office, to secure as much wealth as they can, for themselves and their families. Legitimate expectations exist especially where the community made collective sacrifices to raise funds to "send their son or daughter to school." Extended family relationships and obligations create financial pressure on the more privileged, cementing a system of black tax wherein the first-in-the-family graduate or professional who is "financially successful" has financial obligations to assist members of the family. Community benevolence has over time become a normative value. This has perpetrated a "big man" syndrome based on the verticality of donations and receipt of money and benefits without questioning the source of unexplainable wealth. Consequently, when a community member suddenly becomes benevolent to their community, clearly

expending funds beyond their means, they are not questioned. To the contrary, any attempt to hold such persons to account receives objection from the community. This form of community support of corruption is problematic especially as those in governance need votes and are aware that loss of community or regional support potentially results in loss of votes during elections.

On the other hand, society tends to frown at people who have worked for government with integrity and retire with little material wealth to display. This faulty value system places pressure on people to engage in corruption.

Responses to Tackling Corruption

Tackling corruption requires a multi-pronged approach. In this regard, it is vital to invest in laws, policies and institutions that will generate sustained improvement; create pathways that give citizens a voice and provide the relevant platforms that enable them to engage and participate in governance; provide opportunities for government and civil society to work together to change behavior and monitor progress, including making use of platforms and architecture that exist to strengthen engagement; use technology to ensure prudent management and tracking of resources; and require standardized financial management systems to enhance accountability, transparency, efficiency and adherence to the principles of public finance. This requires concerted efforts and a tripartite partnership of national stakeholders, civil society and the international community maintaining a citizen-centered approach.

Elements of a multi-pronged approach

Relevant and required political will

Political will denotes that the entire government structure, the various branches of government - the executive, legislature, and judiciary - must take ownership of the fight against corruption. Therefore, the government machinery must throw their weight behind the fight against corruption. Thus, the executive should ensure meaningful investment in integrity institutions by ensuring that sufficient financial allocations are directed towards preventive and responsive measures. The legislature must ensure that budgetary allocations regarding integrity institutions are passed. Further, legislations aimed at institutional strengthening must be passed expeditiously and without being watered down. The judiciary must be fearless and sufficiently independent in determining corruption cases.¹⁸ This requires the assignment of corruption cases to competent judges with proven reputations to ensure public trust in the process. The judiciary must ensure that cases are heard within a reasonable time and that judicial processes are fair and free from interference and corruption. Sentences must be sufficiently punitive to deter would-be offenders and must not be perceived as a slap on the wrist for the rich and powerful. Over and above political will, the fight against corruption requires presidential will. The president needs to want

¹³ Whistle Blower Act of 2021 and Witness Protection Act of 2021.

¹⁴ Act for the amendment of Part X of the Code of Conduct of 2014.

¹⁵ Act Restating An Act to Establish the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission.

¹⁶ Since the introduction of Asset Declaration regime in Liberia, a hundred percent compliance rate has not been achieved. Disciplinary action against officials who fail to submit their asset disclosure forms has also never been instituted.

¹⁷ Harold Marvin Aidoo, UNDP Liberia Development Dialogue, 18 August 2021.

¹⁸ Robert I Rotberg, *The Corruption Cure: How Citizens and Leaders Can Combat Graft*, 2017.

corruption to be tackled and must be the face of the fight against corruption. Presidential ownership that supports national policies in the fight against corruption should be accompanied by regular public pronouncements.¹⁹ Further, integrity institutions need to be courageous to lead within their mandate and take on the big issues including high profile personalities regardless of their influence and clout.

Confronting and utilizing cultural values

Cultural values emanate from age-old and time-honored practices that are deeply ingrained in communities and are, therefore, difficult to change. Most Liberians, rural and urbanised, are guided by traditional cultural dictates. Cultures and perceptions of communities need to be well understood with a view towards securing an inside-out and bottom-up solution. Change needs to come from within communities. Strong partnership among development actors can produce meaningful results in addressing cultural issues. For instance, in Rwanda, by supporting the gacaca²⁰ process, Government and UNDP enabled communities to draw on their cultural history and their own traditional values to tackle impunity for acts committed during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Experiences from the gacaca approach provided learning experiences and were built upon by Government and UNDP in supporting the wider justice system. By involving the communities in the processes, an opportunity was also provided to ascertain, empirically, how the traditional system investigates, prosecutes, and enforces, relying on values and culture. Similarly, local knowledge can be key in identifying the core causes of corruption, and understanding culture and local values can aid in changing mindsets and behavior. A useful point of departure that promotes change internally is supporting communities to self-analyze their customs and encouraging them to identify areas they think should change. Communities can be initially consulted in sections and focus groups to allow structured discussions with follow-up dialogues. The consultation groups should include traditional leaders, youths, and women, as well as marginalized constituents.²¹

A citizen-centered approach

A just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met is fundamental to the realization of the SDGs. The government, private enterprise and citizens have a solemn responsibility to ensure that these goals are met. Citizens must be placed at the center of the fight against corruption. In Liberia, the fight against corruption is often viewed as a government responsibility. However, citizens should not be mere onlookers. Therefore, an open and inclusive approach that involves collaboration among various sectors of the society including civil society, women, and youth is critical.

A citizen-centered response to corruption requires rallying public buy-in and support. The public must be sufficiently educated about the ills of corruption, the forms it takes, and its impact on development. Public awareness should ensure that the populace is aware of institutional and political decisions that foster

corruption. In addition, channels for reporting corruption safely and measures to curb impunity must be strengthened.

To rally public support and trust, public information and transparency are important. For instance, Sierra Leone's Anti-Corruption Commission takes a step-by-step approach in informing the public of the various stages of investigation of corruption cases. Thus, the public is provided with reasons for arrests, the nature of the evidence (if this does not jeopardize the investigations) and the outcome of investigations. Efforts are made to ensure that the public sees a logical conclusion of cases within a reasonable time both in terms of investigation and prosecution. The use of social media, which has a wide following particularly among the youth, and personal engagement through country tours have also served as useful modalities of connecting the Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission with the public. Sierra Leone provides an example of expanding the reach of integrity institutions. Their presence must be felt on the ground and in remote areas. This will promote participatory democracy and shore up public ownership.



Sunrise on Tubman Boulevard, Monrovia, Liberia
Photo: UNDP Liberia
Photographer: John Dennis

In addition, civil society and the media must play the complementary role of identifying, exposing, and reporting corruption. The media must take on a stance of exposing corruption in the public and private sectors, asking the critical questions, validating information, and following leads to their logical conclusion. This requires the government guaranteeing press freedom. Empirical evidence reportedly suggests that “greater freedom of press in a country” reduces bribery by 13 percent.²² Media freedom can be strengthened by establishing networks for civil society to monitor the media through developed standards and indicators, and advocacy for a more conducive regulatory framework. It is also important to refine the public demand for news through public education. In this regard, public awareness should be galvanized to ensure an appreciation and

¹⁹ Francis Ben Kaifala, UNDP Liberia Development Dialogue, 18 August 2021.

²⁰ Gacaca is a traditional justice delivery mechanism, under the tree, with community members as witnesses and judges.

²¹ See, UNDP, *Ascertainment of customary laws of communities of South Sudan vol. 1-3*, 2014.

²² John W Langford and Allan Tupper, *Corruption, Character and Conduct: Essays on Canadian Government Ethics*, 1993.

demand for independent, reliable, and verifiable news. Further, the use of innovative communication conduits such as social media, SMS, community radio and CSO partnerships will reduce the costs associated with actual field presence. Additionally, awareness-raising and encouraging citizens to report acts of corruption and ensuring that whistleblowers are protected are crucial. It is important to create pathways that give citizens a voice and provide the relevant platforms that enable them to engage and participate in governance. Opportunities must be provided for government and civil society to work together to change behavior and monitor progress, including making use of existing networks and platforms to strengthen regular engagement.

Strengthening the legal framework

Generally, legal frameworks establish the necessary architecture for the operation of democratic governance and strengthen the accountability of the government.²³ A strong legal framework strengthens institutional independence and ensures that the relevant authority is granted the relevant powers to investigate, arrest, prosecute and obtain restitution against offenders. This includes granting the LACC prosecutorial independence. In neighboring Sierra Leone for example, the removal of corruption-related prosecutorial authority and powers from the office of the Attorney General in 2007 through legislative change, lifted the lid on prosecution, resulting in an upsurge in the prosecution of corruption cases. Similarly, the establishment of specialized courts ensures efficiency, quality and the speedy disposal of cases which are required to protect the credibility of the process. The LACC Act should sufficiently enable the LACC to investigate and successfully prosecute corruption cases, while bearing in mind the accused's right to a fair trial. Sentences must be sufficiently punitive to deter would-be perpetrators. Corruption must be made unattractive through stiff penalties, barring from public office upon conviction, loss of employment in the public sector and restitution of the proceeds of corruption.

Prevention through accountability measures

Prevention is the bedrock of lasting change in the fight against corruption. A solid prevention strategy involves the systemization of processes and procedures. Government needs to invest in transparent administrative, finance and procurement processes and procedures in the public sector. These systems must be implemented throughout the public sector and officials must be held individually accountable for deviation and breach of relevant rules and protocols. Processes work clearly when administrative lines of authority and responsibility, and approval rights are clearly defined and automated thereby embedding footprints of accountability. Increased automation tends to flag errors and limit non-compliance such as overspending. Recommendations of audit reports should be implemented to rectify lapses and hold corrupt office-holders accountable. Processes should be put in place to ensure that recommendations are followed through. One way of achieving this is by ensuring that audit recommendations are time-bound and individuals are held accountable for the implementation of these recommendations within set timeframes.

Further, public servants who provide direct services to the public must have time-bound deliverables built into performance contracts that are rigorously implemented and incentivized. This will reduce unnecessary delays in securing services which compel clients to pay bribes.

Assets declaration by public officials and regular verification are important preventive measures. An annual review of assets should be introduced. Serious consequences including removal from office must be put in place to address failure by public officers to declare their assets within specific periods. In line with a citizen-centered approach, information on assets declared should be readily available to the public for inspection. Public officers, especially those seeking elective office, have an obligation to open their financial affairs to public scrutiny, to dispel distrust and public perception that public officers are corrupt. It must also be borne in mind that those fighting corruption must, themselves, be above reproach and open to periodic public scrutiny.

Innovation through ICT

Innovation through ICT remains a useful tool in increasing efficiency and ensuring wider coverage and participation in the fight against corruption. Rwanda provides a classic example wherein reliance on ICT has reduced incidents of corruption. With support from UNDP, Rwanda embarked on an ICT-based mechanism which tracks and provides oversight of cases as they are processed through the criminal justice system.

In this regard, an Integrated Electronic Case Management system was developed. This involved the development of a digital platform which enabled the public to file cases which are automatically received by investigators and the judiciary and managed from entry to end point.

The system has produced benefits and solutions. For instance, the loss or disappearance of evidence, which is often a factor of corruption, is rendered redundant by the electronic system since cases and evidence are scanned, uploaded, maintained, and tracked. The system provides a great measure of transparency which has drastically reduced systemic corruption in the justice sector. Since the introduction of the system in 2016, incidents of bribery have reduced from 30 to 9 percent for prosecutors, 8.3 to 6.4 percent in respect of judges and 2.5 to 1.3 percent in respect of the bar association. The system also ensures that cases are processed and determined within a reasonable time. The system has inbuilt trigger mechanisms which are activated when cases exceed the permissible duration. Judges and prosecutors are expected to prosecute cases to finality within six months in accordance with their performance contracts. The system provides for accountability by automatically alerting Court Inspectors upon the expiry of the six months duration. The Court Inspectors are tasked to address delays with the presiding judge. As an additional bonus, reliance has been placed on the system to enable judges to deliver judgments virtually to inmates in prisons taking into account COVID-19 restrictions on physical presence.

²³ RN Ghosh and MAB Siddique, *Corruption, Good Governance and Economic Development*, 2015.

Concluding Recommendations

Strong political will

The fight against corruption requires strong political will and leadership. All the branches of government - the executive, legislature, and judiciary, as well as civil society and citizens must take ownership of the fight against corruption. While the executive should abstain from interfering with the work of the LACC, the legislature must swiftly pass legislative reforms without watering them down and the judiciary should be independent and resolve corruption cases without delays. Critically, the president should be the face of the fight against corruption. Presidential ownership should be robust and visible.

Rely on customs and local values to influence change

Reliance must be placed on customs and local values to produce change of mindsets from within communities. Customs and local norms must be clarified by communities to promote change internally. Adopting a bottom-up approach through the self-ascertainment of customs provides opportunities for communities to assess and evolve their normative values.

A citizen-centered approach

Place citizens at the center of the fight against corruption. Citizens must be provided with relevant platforms that enable them to engage and participate in governance, including the fight against corruption, without fear of retribution.

Opportunities must be provided for government and civil society to work together to change behavior and monitor progress, including making use of platforms and structures that exist to strengthen engagement. Civil society and the media must play the complementary role of identifying, exposing, and reporting.

Strong legal framework

A strong legal framework that strengthens the mandate of the key integrity institutions to successfully investigate and prosecute cases is critical. For instance, legislation should grant the LACC prosecutorial authority, establish an anti-corruption specialized court, ensure that sentences for convicted persons are sufficiently punitive to deter corrupt acts, protect whistleblowers, and enforce declaration of assets provisions.

Systemise strong preventive measures

Establish a strong strategy to prevent corruption by systemizing administrative, procurement and finance processes and procedures. Ensure that these systems must be implemented throughout the public service and officials held individually accountable for deviation and breach of relevant rules and protocols. Regular audits must be conducted on public institutions and audit recommendations implemented.

Public education

Increased public awareness on corruption and the mandate of integrity institutions will foster public trust and confidence in them. It is important that the public are aware that the fight against corruption is a shared responsibility. A clear understanding of the work of integrity institutions and access to regular updates will increase public trust and encourage citizens to report cases of corruption with the knowledge that the relevant action will be taken.

ICT and innovation

Increase the use of ICT and establish an efficient system that enables the tracking and monitoring of cases from inception through investigation, prosecution, and finalization. Keeping track of cases helps to ensure that they are completed within a reasonable time and can reduce corruption within the justice system. The use of ICT should be central to the communication strategy of integrity institutions. The use of social media will provide wider coverage and enable public engagement.

What UNDP Should Do

- Strengthen media freedom and credibility by establishing networks for civil society to monitor the media through developed standards and indicators and advocating for a more conducive regulatory framework.
- Build the capacity of the media to conduct investigative journalism and support public education to enable citizens to better identify, demand and become consumers of independent and reliable news.
- Support and work with key oversight and monitoring institutions to effectively monitor, advocate and report on human rights issues and corruption, and to ensure compliance and accountability. Key institutions would include, e.g., the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, the Liberia National Bar Association, the media, and civil society organizations, including the Transparency International local chapter.
- Encourage and strengthen pathways for citizens to report corruption by building on an e-platform that enables anonymous reporting of corruption cases to relevant government departments and tracks actions taken.
- Support a network of lawyers to optimize use of the Freedom of Information Act including through public interest litigation and advocacy for access to information.
- Promote public buy-in and support by encouraging dialogue and studies on the ills of corruption, the forms it takes, and its impact on development.
- Support communities to a) use customary norms to respond to corruption, b) self-identify customary norms harmful to the fight against corruption, and c) cultivate consensus on critical issues for reform as well as areas for mindset and behavior change.

- Conduct public perception surveys on access to justice and public trust of justice and security institutions.
- Utilize the UN's convening power to engage with national partners, foster political will, build consensus on key issues, and leverage available technical expertise and know-how on fighting corruption.

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