



INTEGRITY COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Chairman's 2021 International Anti-Corruption Day Message

The Integrity Commission of Jamaica joins with the international community in celebrating International Anti-Corruption Day. The Commission does so at a time when there is a perception that corruption is everywhere in the world. Jamaica has not escaped being in that net of perception. However, the Commission, established in 2018, is committed to the execution of its mandate: "to promote and enhance standards of ethical conduct" in the society, and to monitor and investigate the actions of public bodies so far as the expenditure of public funds and the provision of public service is concerned, among other things.

The Commission has, over the past year, established a Division with the specific responsibility of educating the populace on what is corruption, and the means by which corruption should be avoided.

Corruption is not something that is confined to, or committed by, public officials only. Corrupt acts usually involve individuals who are not public officials. These individuals are the beneficiaries of favours from public officials, and cover a wide range. The person who pays money to a public official in order to secure a contract for public works is involved in corruption; so too is the person who makes a false declaration on a customs form that requires the value or identity of an imported item. Corruption is not necessarily an inherited trait. It is a learnt and practiced art that does the broader society no good. It stifles personal development where for example an appropriately qualified person is denied a position so as to facilitate a relative or friend who is not qualified.

Individuals need to be sensitized at an early age as to the values of truthfulness, honesty and fairness. This ought to begin in homes and be continued in our schools. Persons who have been adversely affected by or know of corrupt acts should not hesitate to report same to the bodies that have been established to deal with such acts. The problem of corruption may only be lessened or eradicated if well-thinking persons in the society assist in this regard. There is need for a realization that the cost of global corruption, estimated at nearly US\$3 billion, is a burden that is too great especially for the under-developed and the developing countries of the world.

They need to breathe a sigh of relief.

Hon Justice (Ret'd) Seymour Panton, OJ, CD



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Executive Director's 2021 International Anti-Corruption Day Message

Jamaica's Integrity Commission joins the United Nations, other national anti-corruption agencies and leaders and institutions all around the world in commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day on December 9, 2021.

This year, the annual global campaign is being advanced under the theme: "Your right, your role: Say no to corruption."

The theme highlights the fact that citizens not only have a right, but a responsibility, to speak up against corruption. You should not feel inhibited to do so. Neither must you allow others to intimidate you into silence.

When we do not speak out about corruption we not only help to normalize it but, worse, we give it the oxygen that it needs to breathe. We, therefore, become constructive aiders and abettors of a problem that will ultimately operate to our own detriment.

Corruption benefits only the corrupt! Consequently, the architects and administrators of corruption, and their supporters, would like nothing more than for you to keep quiet. In fact, they will go to extremes to accomplish their objective, oftentimes in very subtle ways, and other times in ways that could bring you harm.

As it has been said, when you fight corruption, it will fight back! But, as patriots, we must not be deterred by this. There is too much at stake!

Very importantly, however, the fight against corruption is not just a fight for citizens, or for anti-corruption agencies and law-enforcement. It's a fight for a nation's leaders. Why? Because, like all worthy efforts, if they are to succeed they must be purposefully led.

The battle against corruption must, therefore, commence with a country's Prime Minister or Executive President, and his/her Cabinet.

They must design the policies and set the tone that will drive and encourage high standards of integrity, ethical conduct, values and accountability, not only in government, but in the wider public sector, as well as throughout the country as a whole. And they must do so in both word and in deed!

As Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father and first Prime Minister of Singapore said, "the moment key leaders are less than incorruptible, less than stern in demanding high standards, from that moment on the structure of administrative integrity will weaken, and will eventually crumble."

Leadership in a nation's anti-corruption fight also falls, as a matter of course, to a nation's lawmakers.

It is axiomatic, though not readily obvious to all, that if a country's anti-corruption laws are deficient, or are inconsistent with international anti-corruption and anti-bribery best practices, you can have as many anti-corruption institutions as you would wish, but they will be of no moment.

Business leaders, too, must recognize that the 'bottom line' of profit is not the only line in a commercial enterprise. There is something that is called the 'good corporate citizen' and, as the captains of industry, manufacturing, trade and commerce, they must also visibly and credibly lend themselves to the anti-corruption cry.

A big part of corruption is attributable to the role that businessmen play in political campaign financing. Oftentimes, this is done with the implicit or overt understanding that there will, in time, be a quid pro quo for their contributions.

That said, it is virtually impossible for the grand bribery of political, government or public officials to take place without the complicity of members of the private sector. This is a stark reality. And, it is for this singular reason that many countries around the world have been passing laws to punish the business enterprise, whether large or small, for its 'failure to prevent bribery'.

In the final analysis, we must all play a role in rejecting corruption. We must call out its purveyors, as well as its sponsors. And we must do so loudly. We must let them know that they are enemies of society, inhibitors of national prosperity, obstructionists to social and economic progress, and architects of poverty.

It was Mr. Javier Corral, the then Governor of Mexico's Chihuahua State, who said this on March 28, 2017: "He who steals from the government does not just steal a few cents or some millions. He steals opportunities, he steals hope, and he steals the rights of people who aspire to a better life."

Say NO to corruption!

Greg Christie