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# The Age-old Fight of Governments: The Legal and Institutional Mechanisms for Combatting Corruption in Cameroon

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***Abstract***

*Corruption seriously affects the economies of most countries in the world and leaves the coffers empty. Corruption in Cameroon affects both the private and public sector in every dimension. Some economists see corruption as a necessary evil that can enhance economic growth in the State. The worry now is that of sustainability. The adverse effects of corruption in the society have led to the putting in place of a number of legal instruments to fight against corruption in Cameroon. This study therefore looks at the legal and institutional framework that is used to fight against corruption in Cameroon. It is no more news that the fight against corruption has gone on for a long time, but results are still not up to standard as expected to be. In this regard we propose that routine checks and ad hoc commissions be put in place and set up in the different sectors of administration so as to fish out corrupt individuals rather than putting in place a permanent agency with a permanent staff who have themselves become corrupt.*

**Keywords:** Corruption, bribery, embezzlement, misappropriation, corrupter, the corrupt

## INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a canker worm to achieving capitalism in the developing world. It encourages gains and swells up the pockets of individuals where they did not deserve it; encourages the transfer of resources meant for development into private pockets; and renders less credit to the functioning of institutions. Corruption is thus a scourge to the society and has no redemption.

Unfortunately, the corrupter and corrupted looks at it to be normal. They believe corruption fastens the flow of services and eases administrative bottlenecks; that it helps in the formation of economies in weak states; that it helps in the sharing of income as unemployed persons for example can easily get employed by the state thereby raising their standards of living. By so doing it ensures the preservation of peace and harmony as disgruntled unemployed persons can also benefit from the national cake [1].

There is however no universally agreed definition of corruption. What is looked at as venality in a particular society is seen to be an expression of gratitude in another society. The topic features in discussions in some societies freely with no consequences but in others taken very seriously. The result is that, corruption is sometimes not or under-penalized or reported just like other offences probably because it is not easily understood or qualified.

Corruption has been aptly described as a real canker worm that poses a threat to the State governed by the rule of law, stability and security of the society, as well as jeopardizes equity in the distribution of resources. In fact, it undermines

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fundamental democratic values and institutions by compromising social, economic and political development, as well as the promotion of human rights [2].

Various corruption indices have been developed by several institutions and have been used by several researchers. A good number of economists have argued that corruption can be beneficial to the growth of the economy. Though they put forward certain convincing arguments to back their view, these arguments are rejected for different qualitative and quantitative reasons which are given for the negative impact of corruption on growth.

In the case of Cameroon for example corruption has always been perceived as an ill which needs to be redressed and fought against. It will be difficult to convince citizens that the acts of corrupters and the corrupt could be beneficial to the growth of the economy. This is so because many persons perceive especially the public sector as the most corrupt beginning at the highest level (for example with ministers) down to the lowest level (involving for example school principals, city council workers etc.).

Corruption is like a virus that that has affected the Cameroonian society. All sectors of the economy are affected, both public and private and even the church itself cannot boast of being entirely free from corruption. It has become traditional and like a right in the Cameroonian society notably in the public security, education, customs, sports and judiciary. Cameroon has been rated twice as the most corrupt state in the world (1998 and 1999) by Transparency International indices. The manifestation of corruption can be seen in several forms including bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, falsification of records and influence peddling etc. [3].

Corruption can however be remedied via the guarantee of available information that is disseminated for free and made accessible to the public as well as press that is uncompromised, and an active civil society activist and non-governmental organisations. Where these are absent, any efforts made against this unjust enrichment of private pockets is bound to fail.

Eliminating corruption totally is an utmost impossibility, but its reduction very visible, just like its effects. The cooperation of trustworthy persons and institutions is necessary for its fight. Corruption can only be eradicated or defeated internally though the use of external help is useful.

**DEFINITION OF CORRUPTION**

Corruption originates from the Latin word *corrumpere*, which means 'bribe, mar or destroy.' Corruption is said to have existed for long and is widely discussed at the global level in recent times. Irrespective of the fact that corruption has and continue to affect many states, there seem to be no general acceptance as to a unique definition. While corruption is mostly described as "*the abuse of public power for private gain"* (which does not mean that corruption does not exist in the private sector) [4] moralists describe corruption as "*an immoral and unethical phenomenon that contains a set of moral aberrations from moral standards of society, causing loss of respect for and confidence in duly constituted authority* [5]."

In most cases, different observers will agree on whether different behaviour will connote corruption. Unfortunately, the behaviour is often difficult to observe directly because, of course, acts of corruption are often done in the 'dark'. Corruption can also be defined as *"a situation whereby someone in power [6] of granting or someone not in the position of granting a service, giving information, solving a problem as of his duty and by right to the person demanding, is not freely and or willingly granted or provided unless some benefits are received by the person in power from the person requesting such service, which is not supposed to be given, so that both the corrupt [7] and corrupter [8] are satisfied at 'helping each other', thus, unethical on the part of the person in power and not moral to both parties [9]."*

One can therefore argue from the stated definitions that, corruption is not limited to the payment of bribes. Acts of embezzlement, conversion and misappropriation of public funds or that of a business by a worker for example are all acts of corruption.

Since it can often be claimed that acts of corruption which have to do with gifts are not bribe by both the corrupt and the corrupter, it is essential that gifts are distinguished from bribe because bribes can be disguised as gifts. A bribe requires reciprocity while this is not the case with gifts [10]. Though this is fundamental, it is sometimes difficult to make. The problem here now is, at what point can one term a gift a bribe? Or at what time when a gift is made can be construed as a bribe? Can one look at the size of the gift as a yardstick to imply a bribe? We would now have to look at different cultural explanations on the size and types of gifts. Is the gift given in the 'dark' or in public? These are all indicators that identifying a bribe is a hard rock to crack.

## FORMS OF CORRUPTION

One can identify two basic forms of corruption: the first is that of agents who use their positions to make private gains thereby indirectly swindling the public treasury; and secondly, politicians who use their powers to attain private goals. The first form of corruption, that of agents, is not actually very problematic as it could be easily controlled by imposing stricter penalties and ensuring better control mechanisms. Thus, an economic analysis of this type of corruption is identical to an economic analysis of crime which postulates firmness of the legal framework, control of power and sanctions for malpractice [11]. The agents here are easily identified, for example, policemen and gendarmes on patrol, court clerks, judges, school principals etc.

The other type of corruption being political or systematic corruption, concerns government or state officials and presents a more complex problem as it involves controlling the bosses or controllers themselves. This form of corruption can become endemic so long as corrupt politicians who wave power are in charge of redefining the legal framework. Under such phenomena, there will be the involvement of many agents in corrupt practices, thereby amounting to a very high political, social and economic cost. Corruption in such form defeats confidence in political structures and encourages civil disobedience from the rule of law. It also affects the allocation of resources and distorts market competition not leaving out investment, socio-economic growth and infrastructural development. The main consequence is that those mostly affected are the poor who cannot compete with market prices.

## THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

There exists no specific anti-corruption law in Cameroon and so resource is made with the Penal Code. It criminalizes different types of acts of corruption such as bribery (passive and active, bribing a foreign official), money laundering, the misuse of public funds for private interest and extortion. Sanctions ranges from imprisonment from 2 years to life imprisonment and even fines and asset seizure. In cases of theft of public funds and embezzlement, where the money is returned, charges can be dropped. The constitution of Cameroon requires that state officials and civil servants declare their assets (property) [12], though this is not enforced. The Cameroonian civil servants Code of Ethics addresses problems of conflicts of interest as well as provides rules of ethical conduct in all public institutions. The Public Contract Code regulates public procurement, affords for open competition techniques and forbids the fractioning of public contracts [13].

Corruption is a specific offence in Cameroon. The legislator has enacted national pieces of legislation as well as adopted international instruments in Cameroon that sanctions corruption. The 18th January 1996 Constitution, the 12th July 2016 Penal Code, the 2015 Criminal Procedure Code, the Declaration of Assets and Property law, and the 2003 law on banking secrecy stand as the national pieces of legislation that sanctions acts of corruption in Cameroon; there also exist the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI) and the National Anti-Corruption Commission known by its French acronym (CONAC) created by presidential Decree No. 2006/088 of 11 March 2006 which is the main body to that fights against corruption in Cameroon.

 

At the international scene, the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crimes, the UN Convention against Corruption, and the African Union Convention on the Prevention and Fight against Corruption are pieces of legislation ratified by Cameroon in the fight against corruption [14].

**National Legal Instruments in Combatting Corruption in Cameroon**

The Cameroonian legislative or government have not enacted or passed any particular piece of legislation specifically meant for combatting corruption. However, the Cameroon penal code of 2016 is however the main legal instrument used in the fight against corruption in Cameroon. Complementing this piece of legislation, is the 2003 law on banking secrecy.

Unlike the case in other criminal proceedings, the defendant has the burden of proof to show that the wealth or property acquired originates from genuinely gotten funds. The assets are sold at auction, and the proceeds typically go back to the public treasury when the defendant is unable to provide such conclusive and persuasive proof, has left the country or has passed away. Numerous nations, including the UK, US, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, and Switzerland etc., make use of this policy.

***The Penal Code***

This is the primary national law in Cameroon that addresses corruption as a crime. This piece of legislation (Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 relating to the Penal Code) identifies and punishes several forms of corruption. These include bribery, indulgence, procuring influence, coercion of public employees, unreasonable demands, theft of public funds, and employee corruption. It identifies what it calls active [15] and passive corruption [16]. By these, it simply identifies the corrupt or corrupted under active corruption and the corrupter under passive corruption.

*Bribery:* A bribe is what is usually given or taken in a corrupt relationship and so it is implied in the definition of corruption by the Penal Code [17]; being the most common way or act of corruption. The act of corruption itself includes paying or accepting a bribe and is typically viewed as proof of corruption. The Penal Code, which addresses this type of corruption, penalizes public officials, government workers, and anyone else who solicits, takes, or receives a bribe for themselves or another person, as well as anyone who offers a bribe or submits to one. Bribery may take the shape of a proposition, gift or assurance (promise). Such bribery is typically paid in exchange for performing certain tasks or behaving contrary to professional requirements. According to the Penal Code, bribery must be used to force a person to perform, put off performing, or refrain from doing an official duty. It might be a reward for work previously done, or the recipient might have refrained from doing what he ought to have done. This clause of the law therefore penalizes both the briber and the bribe recipient. According to this law, the punishment entails both a fine of 200,000 up to 2,000,000 FCFA and a sentence of 5 to 10 years imprisonment. However, if the act was not within the scope of the corrupted person's authority but was made possible by their position, they will face a fine of between 100,000 and 1,000,000 francs and a sentence of one to five years imprisonment.

*Other Forms of Corruption Identified in the Penal Code:* The Penal Code also sanctions other forms of corruption with either imprisonment or fines or both such as interest in grant [18], insider trading [19], interference with the financial market [20], indulgence against the state [21], failure to report deficiency [22], abuse of function [23], undue demand [24], favouritism [25], forgery of official act [26], compulsion of public servant [27], procuring influence [28], misappropriation of public funds [29], corruption of employee [30]. There are however other acts that can be influenced by corruption of a public official by a corrupter asking him to refrain from serving a particular person or group of persons which the Penal Code punishes such as failure to protect private life [31], denial of justice [32] and refusal of service [33]; though these offences do not outrightly fall as acts of corruption but they can be influenced by corruption.

***The 2003 Law on Banking Secrecy***

Law No. 2003-4 of 21st April 2003 relating to banking secrecy sanctions the violation of this law. The sanction touches the banking institution in case a person in management of a financial institution who fails to declare information. Section 27 sanctions whoever participates in the management of a bank who fails to declare information to the State Counsel or monetary authority operations relating to money which he knows or presumes to be proceeds from *inter alia* money laundering with imprisonment for from 1 to 5 years and with fine of from 1 million to 20 million francs.

Section 28 gives additional penalties with relation to Sections 27 above where the court can *suo moto*, *inter alia*, confiscate the "*corpus delicti*", suspend the bank official from public duties or from serving in a credit establishment, close the credit establishment or ensure publicity of the decision taken [34].

Banking secrecy is automatically lifted, and the government indemnifies the banks for any harm they may incur for releasing sensitive information about their clients' accounts when the procedure of asset confiscation or asset forfeiture is initiated.

***The Constitution***

All public officials must provide a statement of assets and liabilities, according to Section 66 of Cameroon's constitution of 18th January 1996. Following this, on April 25th, 2006, Law No. 2006/3 was passed, which relates to the aforementioned declaration of public officials' assets.

***The Criminal Procedure Code***

The Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code, which was established by law no. 2005/007 of July 27, 2005, might be added to these national laws. Extradition is covered in Part XI of this code (sections 645 to 675).

Extradition is the process by which a requested state hands over a foreigner discovered on its territory to a requesting state so that he may be prosecuted for one or more specified crimes under ordinary law or subjected to a sentence of imprisonment imposed against him following a criminal trial for an ordinary crime.

This law in S.642(2) states: (a) 'Felonies and misdemeanours of which are not directed against any form of governmental authority shall be regarded as common law offences and may warrant extradition'. (a) 'Offenses of ordinary law provided by international conventions and ratified by Cameroon shall be considered as offences of universal jurisdiction.'

Along with the international law on corruption, several national rules against corruption are enforced in Cameroon [35].

***National Institutions for fight Against Corruption***

The fight against corruption, which up until a point had been primarily handled by local courts, underwent changes with the arrival of the 21st century.

In Cameroon, a number of institutions were established to tackle this crime.

The first of these was the National Anti-Corruption Observatory, which was established in 2000 when the US State Department, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and Transparency International increased their pressure on the Cameroonian government [36]. This institution's performance was hampered by a lack of institutional and budgetary autonomy, which led to its replacement in 2006 by the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC, also known by the French abbreviation CONAC).

*CONAC*: By Decree No. 2006/88 on March 11th, 2006, the national Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) was established to combat corruption. It is a national organization that is in charge of the government of Cameroon’s anti-corruption initiatives. The organization gathers data, conducts inquiries, studies cases, publishes texts on corruption, and makes recommendations to the appropriate authorities.

Since its founding, CONAC has taken the lead in the battle against corruption, primarily through looking into corrupt officials and reporting its findings to the presidency to facilitate criminal prosecution. CONAC has been actively involved in campaigns to increase public awareness of corruption as well as the planning of anti-corruption conferences like the 2008 symposium to address corruption in the transportation industry. Members of the CONAC coordination committee, representatives of transport-related governments and organizations, and trade union representatives all attended this meeting. The forum’s main goal was to develop practical measures to stop the corruption that had wreaked havoc on the industry. A similar symposium was convened for the education sector, and several conclusions were reached. However, these awareness-raising activities have had little effect because both industries continue to be plagued by the same old malpractices [37].

Unfortunately, no law grants CONAC the authority to conduct corruption investigations with the same authority granted to Judicial Police Officers (JPO) under the CPC and other special laws granting special Judicial Police authority. As a result, although they can be used as evidence in criminal cases under Section 309 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Cameroon, their reports cannot be utilized as judicial police reports before the criminal courts [38].

*The Supreme State Audit:* Today's fight against corruption in Cameroon is also being led by the office of Supreme State Audit.

Many of the state elites named in the reports of the Supreme State Audit Office have been imprisoned for embezzlement. The Supreme State Audit boasts of having assisted the government in saving 35 billion FCFA for the execution of significant projects.

*The Special Criminal Court:* The Special Criminal Court was established in 2011 to prosecute State officials who misused cash worth up to 50 million CFA francs in an effort to crack down on widespread public sector embezzlement.

Since then, this court has found guilty of embezzlement numerous high-ranking state officials, including a former prime minister [39], former minister of state in charge of territorial administration and decentralization [40], former minister of finance, and numerous general managers of public enterprises and parastatals.

The minister of Justice stated that 2.401.235.610FCFA had been properly paid in when giving an SCC bulletin to the National Assembly in 2014. This sum is the corpus delicti reimbursement from some defendants who requested the proceedings be stopped. He said that as of that time, 16 people had profited from this approach, including Haman Adama, a former minister in charge of basic education.

*NAFI and the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court:* The Supreme Court Audit Bench and the National Agency for Financial Investigation (NAFI), usually known by its French acronym ANIF, also exist. These bodies are in charge of looking into accounts of public or state officials that may contain a money. These bodies have sent reports to the state hierarchy with allegations of several people engaging in corrupt behaviour. They create and disseminate annual reports on State accounting for the Head of State.

*GICAM and BCAC:* Institutions that fight corruption in the business sector include the Business Coalition against Corruption (BCAC) and the Inter-Patronal Organization of Cameroon (GICAM). For instance, BCAC combat corruption primarily by teaching corporate staff about the importance of a corrupt-free work environment. As of 2015, more than 200 businesses had received training in the fight against corruption in Cameroon. Similar to this, on November 11, 2014, GICAM and CONAC signed two memorandums of understanding in which GICAM promised to promote awareness of the fight against corruption in the business sector [41].

*Other national agencies and operations that fight against corruption in Cameroon:* To find and expose public employees who misappropriate public monies, the President of the Republic launched what was termed by the media as “Operation Sparrow Hawk”, which was coordinated by the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals.

Additionally, in order to combat corruption, the Public Contract Regulatory Board, also known by its French abbreviation ARMP, was established to supervise the regulation, oversight, and evaluation of the public markets sector. This is because one of the sectors that is particularly plagued by corruption is that of public contracts. Corruption frequently taints the public procurement process since the largest bidder, not necessarily the most qualified, obtains the contract. Statistics from the ARMP's data bank show that the organization has assisted 9411 business players, managed 4080 tenders, and distributed 4310 contracts for 590,056,887,714 FCFA [42].

Other ministries have created anti-corruption units within the ministries so as to combat this endemic virus. An illustration of such a ministry is the Public Service and Administrative Reforms (MINFOPRA), which includes in the Inspectorate General’s Service an Anti-Corruption Unit (ICU) as its primary structure for receiving complaints.

*International Instruments and Institutions for the Fight against Corruption in Cameroon:* Cameroon has signed and ratified a number of international conventions that are instruments for the fight against corruption in Cameroon. They include, the African Union Convention on the Fight Against Corruption, the United Nations Convention on the Fight Against Transnational Organized Crime, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. There also exists Transparency International which is an international non-governmental organisation that has been very influential in the fight against corruption not just in Cameroon but in over 193 countries worldwide.

*The United Nations Convention against Corruption:* The first international anti-corruption law is the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. This convention was approved on October 31, 2003, and Cameroon ratified it on April 25, 2004. Through this convention, the international community will have the chance to create a set of benchmarks for successful anti-corruption policies [43].

*The United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organised Crime:* The National Anti-Corruption Commission was established by Cameroon in 2006 as a result of this convention. This convention aims to encourage cooperation and more effectively prevent, and combat transnational organized crime.

According to this convention, an ‘organized criminal group’ is a structured group of three or more people acting together over time with the intention of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses in order to gain either directly or indirectly a financial benefit or material benefit.

*African Union Convention on the Prevention and Fight against Corruption:* The African Union Convention, was approved on July 12 at the summit of the heads of state of the African Union in Maputo, Angola.

The following aims of this convention are listed in its article 2:

1. Encourage and support each State Party's efforts to build in Africa the necessary systems for preventing, detecting, punishing, and outlawing corruption and similar offenses in both the public and private sectors.

 

2. Encourage, support, and oversee state party cooperation in order to guarantee the efficacy of policies, programs, and initiatives aimed at preventing, detecting, punishing, and outlawing corruption and other offenses in Africa.
3. Coordinate and harmonize state parties' policies and laws in order to prevent, identify, punish, and eradicate corruption across the continent.
4. Encourage socioeconomic growth by reducing barriers to the exercise of civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.
5. Create the conditions required to promote accountability and transparency in the administration of public affairs.

*Transparency International:* For its part, Transparency International-Cameroon (TI-C) has not abandoned the fight against corruption. A campaign by TI-C titled "Public Primary Education in Cameroon: Between Bad Governance and the Illusion of Freedom" was introduced in July 2011. This campaign's main objective was to highlight the illegal payment of fees at public primary schools by struggling parents, even though no fees are required. It brought together notable figures from the clergy, media, and civil society, including Christian Cardinal Tumi, Kareyce Fotso, Foly Dirane, and Richard Kings. Over 1400 people were interviewed by TI-C in order to produce this report, mostly the Headmasters of the aforementioned institutions, other administrative staff members, parents, and some students of the hand-selected institutions. According to the survey's findings, each parent annually spends an average of 20,000 FCFA in unauthorized fees for their children's elementary school education. TI-C recommended, among other things, that the texts governing the setup and operation of the primary school budget be respected more. In addition to conducting surveys in the education sector, TI-C has also done so in other fields, including elections, the business sector, and law enforcement, and has produced a variety of suggestions to help make the fight against corruption more effective.

**Civil Societies' Role in the Fight Against Corruption in Cameroon**

According to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which Cameroon has ratified, nations must actively encourage non-governmental organizations to take part in the fight against corruption. If any serious effort to combat corruption is to be made, public involvement in the fight must be a prerequisite. How can changing a system benefit those who receive anything unfairly from it? The corrupt officials who work in the system, whether in the government, the commercial sector, or even the development sector itself, will always want to keep things as they are because it benefits them directly or indirectly. This calls for the presence of a third party with higher moral standards, and that party is civil society. It is true that this will encounter fierce opposition from the long-time allies who profit from corruption. But with a firm, committed, and persistent attitude, the civil society can eventually make progress, inspiring the rest of the population to battle the corruption issue rather than accept it as inevitable.

As opposed to the force-backed structures of a state and commercial institutions of the market, civil society is made up of all voluntary civic and social groups and institutions that serve as the foundation of a functional society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) dominate civil society in the current situation.

Traditionally, NGOs have mostly focused on lobbying and sensitization in the fight against corruption. NGOs focus on raising awareness of the detrimental and harmful impacts of corruption among all those involved in the chain of corruption as well as the general public. They support behaviour modification and the development of institutions to combat corruption. Some attempt to employ the 'name and shame' strategy, host several workshops, and conduct additional research on the corruption phenomena.

Although sensitization may be important, it is insufficient to address and resolve the issue. The problem does not seem to be solved by simply identifying and discussing it. If corruption is not adequately combatted, knowledge regarding corruption is of very little use in and of itself. The existence of state mechanisms to combat corruption does not guarantee an effective campaign, as experience has shown.

In any case, the existence or ongoing growth of non-governmental organizations with the stated goal of combating corruption shows the incapacity or failure of state structures to address the issue, and the persistence of the corruption issue indicates that the methods currently employed by non-governmental organizations are ineffective. In Cameroon, corruption primarily stems from a lack of action rather than a lack of knowledge. As a result, the question of whether NGOs are still important in the fight against corruption is raised. Can NGOs rethink their strategies and identify a role they can effectively play?

## LIMITATIONS TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN CAMEROON

High-level officials frequently act without consequence in Cameroon since the country's anti-corruption laws are not successfully implemented. The fight against corruption in Cameroon is marred with lots of irregularities ranging from government actions down to civilian unwillingness to stop this *virus* that has eaten so deeply into the management of affairs of the state both at the private and public sectors.

Even though Cameroon has made tremendous progress against corruption recently, the battle is far from complete. This is due to the anti-corruption movement's flaws, which have dogged it. The endurance of this *virus* has been attributed to the absence of political will, which is seen in the non-enforcement of Article 66 of the Cameroonian constitution, which requires the declaration of wealth by public authorities.

Additionally, the efficiency of these organs is jeopardized by the executive's dominant role in relation to anti-corruption units and the units' lack of independence. This is demonstrated by the fact that the President of the Republic of Cameroon preside over the Higher Judicial Council, the body in responsibility of selecting, elevating, and disciplining judges. In Cameroon, the government has always had and still maintains complete control over the judiciary through the selection of judges and the distribution of the department's funding. The 'Operation Sparrow Hawk' is one example of how this strategy has frequently led to questioning of the sincerity of the battle against corruption.

Additionally, a cross-section of the Cameroonian public views the Special Criminal Court as a tool of settling political scores due to its selective prosecution of people implicated by reports from the Supreme State Audit Office, CONAC, and the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court.

Furthermore, CONAC has failed woefully in its duties for it has been unable to adequately curtail corruption and recover funds. Out of the hundreds of millions embezzled former ministers with one misappropriating up to 100 million francs; CONAC has been unable to recover these huge sums. The 2015 report of CONAC was given in 2018, reporting they have been able to recover over 65 million which amounts to nothing compared to the sums of money embezzled yearly which are made known upon persecution of the culprits.

Also, the inability of CONAC to get reports from ministries and ministers denying answering to this anti-corruption commission's questions on corruption within the ministry only makes CONAC look like a dog all in chains and kept in a cage. Officials working under or with this commission have also become corrupted and so it renders this institution worthless in fighting this ill.

Furthermore, it is regretful that bodies like CONAC, NAFI, the Supreme State Audit, and the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court lack the authority to pursue charges against persons implicated in their investigations. This only makes them be like soldiers sent to the war front with arms to fight the enemy who has all sorts of sophisticated weapons.

**CONCLUSION**

The majority of research revealed that corruption gets worse in nations with weak institutions, lax laws and regulations, a public sector that has lost its independence and professionalism, and a civil society that lacks the power to influence the government. The consensus among experts is that corruption hinders progress. Corruption has various vices, including misuse of authority, accumulating illicit wealth, money laundering, fraud, falsifying official papers, and trafficking. Corruption is preventing economic growth, halting development, and ruining our natural resources.

When corruption directly targets the defences put in place to combat it, one of its most severe effects can be seen. Corruption destroys government agencies responsible for making laws and weakens the legal and judicial systems in charge of enforcing and implementing them. Governments, civic society, and the international community make enormous efforts to create institutions and processes to combat corruption. These attempts are useless due to improper implementation and enforcement. A law loses all meaning if it cannot be put into practice because that is where its real value rests.

Most of the time, dishonest public officials behave like parasites that only serve to advance their own interests. As corruption spreads, honest workers lose motivation to do their jobs right and lose faith in the system. However, it is also critical to recognize that our world is imperfect and that some moderate corruption can help us solve some of our most pressing issues. Because corruption will never be totally abolished but can be reduced to the barest minimum, it is a cancer to our society and an AIDS to our economy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It will be most beneficial if only ad hoc commissions are set up to fight corruption. The members of this commission should be given a time frame to achieve a level of results. Their mandate should not be long and there should be frequent changes so that the corrupt and corrupters do not get so familiar with these officials.

Again, corruption fighting units be set in every public office and frequent checks be made with a standard base monitoring of activities at all levels.

The laws against corrupt acts be revisited and greater sanctions be put in place with full and immediate implementation against persons found guilty.

Clear tax and custom rules be made and a total ban on contra-band goods and a seizure with possibility of sanctions on persons found marketing such goods be established with an increase in the sanctions where they deny to disclose the identity of the state agents involved in corrupt acts.

Though the law may hold that a person innocent until proven guilty, once investigation as to corruption is taking place on a suspect, office or sector, there should be publication of such an investigation against that person, office or sector; it yields results in that such a person or workers in that office and/or sector will redress their steps and carryon their duties diligently. This will help curve out corruption in Cameroon.

Also, computerisation or digitalisation of the economy, government agencies, etc. helps in the fight against corruption. The Minister of Secondary Education, Professor Nalova Lyonga has for the 2018/2019 academic year instituted a payment system for tuition via mobile money or electronically. This way standards are set, information about exact fees is given and amounts are specific. Once fee is paid electronically, there is little chance to manoeuvre the amount through embezzlement by any one person since the money does not get to be handle physically as before. This way, ghost students admitted by corrupt principals who intend using their fee as their private money may finally become official students.

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6. A person in power here simply means anyone who has the duty of granting services or goods and anyone who can influence the decision of another person who actually possesses the real right of granting the service, information or goods required by the requester.
7. The corrupt is anyone who allows him or herself to be bought over by gifts and promises at the detriment of his/her duties or simply known as the one who receives an undue gift.
8. The corrupter is anyone who deviates somebody from his/her duties through promises, gifts, and undue services, etc. or simply known as the giver.
9. This definition is that given by the author of this work from his own understanding of what corruption is all about.
10. A bribe will warrant that the corrupt reciprocate by acting in way or doing something back as an obligation for the corrupter while in gifts, though something is often expected back in future such as love, good behavior of a child etc., there is no obligation.
11. Pierre RA. Corruption and Structural Reforms in Cameroon. Sciedu Press, Research in World Economy. 2012; 3(2): 7–19. At http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/rwe.v3n2p7 (accessed on the 20th of May 30, 2022).
12. Section 66 of the 1996 Constitution of Cameroon.
13. www.business-anti-corruption.com
14. Mbah Acha R.F., Corruption under Cameroon Law.
15. Section 134 of the 2016 Penal Code defines active corruption as "any national, foreign or international civil servant or public employee who, for himself or for a third party, solicits, accepts or receives any offer, promise, gift or present in order to perform, refrain from performing or postpone any act of his office".
16. Section 134-1 of the 2016 Penal Code defines passive corruption as "whoever makes promises, offers, gifts and presents or yields to requests liable to result in corruption in order to obtain either the performance, postponement or abstention from an act or one of the favours or benefits".
17. Section 134 of the Penal Code.
18. Section 135.
19. Section 135-1.
20. Section 135-2.
21. Section 137.
22. Section 138.
23. Section 140.
24. Section 142.
25. Section 143.
26. Section 144.
27. Section 160.
28. Section 161.
29. Section 184.
30. Section 312.
31. Section 146.
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33. Section 148.
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35. Mbah Acha R.F, Loc.Cit. 8p.
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37. Bechem E.E., Loc.Cit. 4p.
38. Kwei, Haliday N. Institutional Approach to Fight Corruption: The Case of the National Anti-corruption Commission of Cameroon. Jurnal Hubungan Internasional. 2020; 8(2): 140–152.
39. Chief Ephraim Inoni.
40. Marafa Amidou Yaya.
41. Bechem E.E., Op. Cit. 2p.
42. Ibid. 4p.
43. Mbah Acha R.F., Loc. Cit. 8p.

 