



The Transparency International and Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index: Implications for Sustainable Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Corruption constitutes a canker worm that has eaten deep into the entire fabric of Nigeria's social system. Successive governments have taken diverse steps to nip the scourge in the bud albeit with debatable degrees of success. Despite the celebrated declaration of war against corruption, Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) appears to continually go down. For instance, the Transparency International in its Corruption Perception Index, (CPI) ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt nation in the world for three consecutive years: 2001, 2002 and 2003. In 2006, Nigeria ranked as the 21st most corrupt country, globally. In the 2009 global corruption perception index, Nigeria dropped from its 121st place in 2008 to 130th position, out of the 180 countries surveyed. The report of the 2011 CPI showed that Nigeria emerged 143rd among the 183 nations covered by the survey with a score of 2.4 on a scale of 10 points. In the 2012 report, Nigeria ranked 135th out of the 178 countries polled, scoring 27% out of a possible 100%. This paper examined the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index vis- a-vis Nigeria's downward slide on the global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and its implications for sustainable transformation in Nigeria. It notes that rightly or wrongly, the seeming failure of the war against corruption in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the epileptic nature of political will on the part of the political leadership as well as the weakness of relevant institutions charged with the responsibility of being at the vanguard of the war. This probably explains why skeptical eyebrows are raised whenever the war against corruption is paraded as one of the success stories of the government. This scenario has implications on the country's sustainable transformation agenda. The paper recommends that the federal government demonstrates appropriate political will to prosecute corrupt persons especially Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) such as governors, ministers and members of the national assembly. Government must also enthrone good governance and accountability to restore public confidence in governance.

Key Words: Corruption, implications, index, perception, sustainable.

INTRODUCTION

Corruption is a complex, omnipresent and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects and takes on various forms and functions in different contexts. The tendency of corruption ranges from the single act of a payment contradicted by law to an endemic malfunction of a political and economic system. The problem of corruption has been seen as a structural problem of political, economic, cultural and an individual malaise.

Egwemi (2010) has contended that corruption is a problem that confronts all nations of the world, explaining that the only difference is that its prevalence, gravity and persistence vary from one country to another. Lawal (2007) has noted that the menace of corruption is beginning to receive increased local, national and international attention, in part, due to: (1) series of high level corruption cases in industrialized countries; (2) an increasing awareness of the costs of corruption throughout the world and, (3) the political and economic changes which many countries are undergoing. Girling (1997) argues that corruption does not disappear as countries develop and modernize, but rather that corruption takes on new forms.

Corruption is conventionally understood and referred to, as the private wealth seeking behaviour of someone who represents the state or the public authority. The encyclopedic and working definitions used by the World Bank, Transparency International and others, is that corruption is the abuse of public power for private gain.

The concept, corruption is originally from the Latin verb, *rumpere* which means to break (Abdul-Ismael, n.d). In Colin Nye's classical definition; corruption is "behaviour that deviates from the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) wealth or status" (Nye, 1967:416).

For Sen, corruption is simply the violation of established rules for personal gains and profit while Osoba sees it as "anti-social behaviour conferring improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms, and which undermines the capacity of authorities to improve the living conditions of the people" (in Aluko, 2009:3).

Since its establishment in 1993, the Transparency International (TI) has continuously beamed its searchlight on the corruption profile of Nigeria. The TI's focus on Nigeria may not be misplaced because as the largest black nation in the world with abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria's development appears stunted by the malaise of corruption in both high and low places, resulting in the country being stigmatized by the international community as being very corrupt. This paper examines the Transparency International's focus on Nigeria vis avis the country's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and its implications for Nigeria's sustainable transformation.

The Problem

Although corruption remains a global challenge to the quest for development and welfare, it is a recurring theme in the African discourse. The Nigerian scenario and experience provide a useful illustration of the nuances surrounding corruption and how it interfaces with the state and the struggle for development. The vast literature on state failure, state

collapse and the irrelevant state in Africa especially in the 1980s draw attention to the central problem of corruption and the way it stifled and constrained African development efforts and took away the state from the African people.

Nigeria, like most African states, appears to be at a cross road. It is ridden with crisis and contradictions. The crisis is multifaceted and entails issues of good governance, economic deprivation, underdevelopment, political violence and ethno-religious and communal crisis. In the words of Omotola (2006), these dimensions of the crisis appropriately qualify to be described as the crisis of governance, which underscore the failure of the Nigerian state.

Nigeria is endowed with enormous material and human resources. It is the largest oil producer in Africa and the eleventh largest in the world. However, despite its material wealth, Nigeria has been rated as one of the poorest countries in the world (as majority of its people live below the poverty line of less than US\$1 per day, with some in absolute poverty), Gross Domestic Product, (GDP), per capita income stands at \$1300, for a population of well over 140 million people (UNESCO, 2006).

The depth of the crisis is evident in the massive unemployment and a general lack of opportunities for economic ventures, low living standards, devalued currency and a failure to meet the health, food, habitat, and security needs of majority of its people. While the rural areas of Nigeria, where majority of the population resides remain largely undeveloped, the few industries in the urban and peri-urban areas operate below installed capacity and several others have closed down. This has led to poor economic conditions for most households especially youths. The economic situation in Nigeria is such that most parents are unable to care for and properly feed their families. At the heart of these crises is the problem of corruption.

Arising from the foregoing problems, this paper seeks to examine the Transparency International's focus on Nigeria's Corruption profile through the instrumentality of the TI's Corruption Perception Index for the country. This is with a view to determining the implications of the index on the country's transformation agenda.

To put the discussion in proper perspective, this paper is divided into several sections. After the introduction, statement of the problem and the methodology, part two deals with the clarification of the concepts used in the presentation. These are the concepts of Transparency International (TI), Corruption, Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and Transformation agenda. The third part of the paper deals with issue of corruption in Nigeria and public concern with corruption in the country, while part four discusses the nation's CPI and the transformation agenda of President Good luck Jonathan. The final section brings the discussion to a close by way of conclusion and recommendations.

Methodology

Although much work has been done in the general area of corruption, there is a general paucity of data especially about public and institutional perceptions of corruption. This has compelled us to rely extensively on secondary data sources such as reports, journal, books, newspapers, magazines and the internet.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The key concepts in this paper are very well known, widely used and, to a large extent self-explanatory. Nevertheless, it is germane to provide definitions of the concepts within the context in which they are used here to ensure clarity of conceptual usage and minimize the possibility of misunderstanding. These terms are highlighted below.

The Transparency International (TI)

The Transparency International (TI) is a non-governmental global Civil Society Organization (CSO) leading the fight against corruption. It was founded in May 1993 through the initiative of Peter Elgen, a former Regional Director for the World Bank. With its international secretariat in Berlin, Germany, the organization has more than 90 chapters worldwide. It monitors and publicizes corporate and political corruption in international development. It also raises awareness about the damaging effects of corruption by collaborating with partners in government, business and civil society to develop and implement effective measures to tackle it.

Corruption

Corruption involves the abuse of public trust for private gain. It has its origin in the Latin verb, *rumpere*, which means to break into pieces.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

The Corruption Perception Index, CPI, is a blueprint, which contains a comparative listing of corrupt nations worldwide. It was developed in 1995 by the Transparency International. To form this index, the Transparency International compiles surveys that ask businessmen and analysts both within and outside the countries they are analyzing, their perceptions of how corrupt a country is. The CPI which is the most commonly used measure for corruption in countries worldwide is published annually. To come up with its result, the CPI measures domestic public sector corruption in the chosen countries. A country's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 -10, where 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt and 10 means that a country is perceived as very clean.

Transformation Agenda

The transformation agenda is a 5-year development plan (2011-2015), put together by President Good luck Jonathan, with focus on three key areas of a strong, inclusive and non inflationary growth; employment generation and poverty alleviation and value re-orientation of the Nigerian citizenry. The policy package is driven by a world class team of 25 technocrats under the chairmanship of the president himself and the coordination of the Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Several scholars have argued that the popular diagnosis of the root of Nigeria's political and economic underdevelopment is the fact of pervasive corruption in public life. One of such scholars Onoge (1983) noted that when the Nigerian military made its political debut by subordinating other organs of the state to itself in 1966, the war against corruption was a core aspect of its *raison d'être*. Onoge quoted Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in his celebrated broadcast of January 15, 1966 as proclaiming *inter alia*:

The aim of the Revolutionary Council is to establish a strong, united and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife... our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and pull the calendar back by their words and deeds (Ademoyega, 1981:87-89, in Onoge, 1983).

As it is well known, this 'voluntary' crusade against corruption has become a staple item in the social curricular of successive "corrective" dictatorships in contemporary Africa. The Nigerian state in both civilian and militarized form has been quite loud in this show of concern with the problem of corruption. Poster campaigns have been waged frequently against giving and taking bribes especially with regards to civilian transactions with the baton-carrying constable, the lower class sector of the Nigerian police establishment.

In addition, "Let us pray" revivalism against the demon of corruption has been canvassed periodically by governors, military and civilian, while commissions of enquiry have become an established ritual at both local and national levels. There was the mass retirement of public officers in the great purge by the Murtala regime in 1975.

Perhaps, the most important evidence of state concern with corruption is the institutionalization of a code of conduct for public officers as the fifth schedule of the constitution of the second republic which eventually gave birth to the establishment of the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal. While the Code of conduct bureau expects public officers to publicly declare their assets periodically, the tribunal tries those who violate provisions of the former.

Onoge who lamented that corruption has persisted in Nigeria despite efforts to rout it out noted that its rate and scale increased enormously in the oil boom days. His words: "its scope has grown beyond the formal boundaries of the Nigerian social system. Nigeria is an important factor in Euro-American parliamentary investigations of corruption rackets involving multinationals such as Lockheed and the like. Corruption is an integral part of the international image of Nigeria. Euro-American media regards corruption as a 'way of life' in Nigeria" (Onoge, 1983:21).

Evidence in the literature suggests that corruption is not a new or recent development in Nigeria. Corruption is as old as civilization itself (Aluko, 2009). Omotola (2006) traces corruption in Nigeria to colonialism, arguing that colonialism in Nigeria was built on corruption. This is to the extent that "because of the colonialists' corrupt disposition to exploit the state for their exclusive benefit, they liquidated social structures against corruption associated with pre-colonial Africa and replaced and or transformed those to their own purposes" (2006:217).

Aluko agrees no less with Omotola. According to him the colonial era was characterized by allegations of corrupt practices against civil servants and police officers. This colonial legacy was believed to have been carried into the independence period (Aluko, 2009). Chinua Achebe, the famous Nigerian novelist also highlighted the incidence of corruption in Nigeria in some of his novels (Achebe, 1960, 1966, and 1988). Egwemi (2010) noted that Achebe's literary presentation of corruption indicates the extent and damaging effect of corruption on Nigeria and her people.

PUBLIC CONCERN WITH CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Corruption constitutes a canker worm that has eaten deep into the entire fabric of Nigeria's social system. Successive governments have taken diverse steps to nip the scourge in the bud albeit with debatable degrees of success. Despite the celebrated declaration of war against corruption, Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) appears to continually go down. For instance, the Transparency International in its Corruption Perception Index (CPI), ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt nation in the world for three consecutive years: 2001, 2002, and 2003 (ICPC, 2007).

Rightly or wrongly, the seeming failure of the war against corruption in Nigeria may not be unconnected with the epileptic nature of political will on the part of the political leadership as well as the weakness of institutions charged with the responsibility of being at the vanguard of the war. This probably explains why skeptical eyebrows are raised whenever the war against corruption is paraded as one of the success stories of the government.

The above public misgivings may not be far from the fact that:

- (a) Attempts to fight corruption by institutional means such as the Code of Conduct Bureau, Code of Conduct Tribunal, the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the EFCC have been largely perceived as ineffectual and rather ridiculed by the public;
- (b) The clamour for a more effective offensive against corruption in Nigeria appears real and strong; which shows the peoples' awareness of the ravages of corruption as a major obstacle to the social and economic development of the country;
- (c) The challenges and obstacles militating against successful anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria may be multifarious and deeply rooted;

Public concern against corruption in Nigeria extends beyond the shores of the country. One of such global bodies which have shown continuous interest in the corruption profile of Nigeria is the Transparency International (TI). The Transparency International (TI) is a non-governmental global Civil Society Organization (CSO) leading the fight against corruption. It was founded in May 1993 through the initiative of Peter Elgen, a former Regional Director for the World Bank.

With its international secretariat in Berlin, Germany, the organization which is headed by Huguette Labelle has more than 90 chapters worldwide. It monitors and publicizes corporate and political corruption in international development. It also raises awareness about the damaging effects of corruption by collaborating with partners in government, business and civil society to develop and implement effective measures to tackle it.

In 1995, the TI developed the Corruption Perceptions Index, CPI, a blueprint, which contains a comparative listing of corrupt nations worldwide. To form this index, the Transparency International compiles surveys that ask businessmen and analysts both within and outside the countries they are analyzing, their perceptions of how corrupt a country is. The CPI which is the most commonly used measure for corruption in countries worldwide is published annually (Transparency International, 2011).

The Index draws on different assessments and business opinion surveys carried out by 13 reputable institutions among them, the World Bank Economists Intelligence Unit, the World Economic Forum, Freedom House, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Institute of Management Development, Lausanne; Political Risk Consultancy, World Business Survey (World Bank); State Capacity Survey, Columbia University, Gallup International, Multilateral Bank, Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey, World Markets Research Centre and Information International (Transparency International, 2011).

The surveys and assessments used to compile the corruption perception index include questions relating to bribery of officials, kick backs in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds and questions that probe the strength and effectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts.

Since its establishment in 1993, the Transparency International has consistently investigated corruption in Nigeria and elsewhere. To underscore the depth and pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria the Transparency International in its CPI ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt nation in the world for three consecutive years: 2001, 2002 and 2003 (ICPC, 2007). In 2006, Nigeria was ranked as the twenty first (21) most corrupt country, globally. In the 2009 global corruption perception index, released by the global anti-corruption agency, Nigeria dropped from its 121st place in 2008 to 130th position, out of the 180 countries surveyed.

The 2009 CPI showed that in the West African region Nigeria occupied the 10th position out of the 16 countries surveyed on perceived corruption while it secured the 27th slot out of 53 nations surveyed in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria was ranked 33rd out of the 53 African nations surveyed. This earned the county a 2.5 score. Ezeoke (2009) noted however, that even though the 2.5 score had moved Nigeria away from the list of the 10 most corrupt countries in the world, it is nonetheless, a minus compared to its score of 2008. According to him, "last year Nigeria scored 2.7 with its 121 global ranking. With the lower score it got this year, the country now has to queue behind other smaller countries in the sub-Saharan and the West African region in particular" (2009:27).

Ezeoke added that in the West African region for instance, Cape Verde, which had a score of 5.1 and a global ranking of 46, is ranked the best perceived corruption-free nation with Ghana having a score of 3.2 and a global ranking of 69, occupying the second best position.

The 2009 CPI further showed that at the sub-Saharan and African levels, Botswana came first, occupying the 37th position and 5.6 score points while Ghana occupied the seventh position at both the sub-Saharan and African levels. Going by the 2009 CPI, New Zealand was ranked the most corruption free nation beating Denmark to the second slot. New Zealand scored 9.4 as against Denmark's 9.3. The country perceived to be the most corrupt in the world in the 2009 survey was Somalia with a 1.1 score to clinch the 180th position.

As with the 2009 corruption perception index report, Nigeria again plunged deeper on the corruption scale in the 2010 survey released on October 25th 2010. Nigeria emerged 134th out of the 178 countries assessed by the Transparency International scoring 2.4 out of a possible 10 points in terms of public opinion on corruption. In the 2010 ranking, Nigeria slid four places from the previous year's position of 130 out of the 180 assessed nations. Ghana was ranked 62 among 178 nations scoring 4.1 while no African country was ranked among the top 20 countries in the detailed survey. In Africa, Botswana came first in terms of public corruption perception with a score of 5.8 and global placement of 33.

Also, nine countries, namely, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Benin Republic, Mali and Niger, ranked above Nigeria in the West African sub-region. The 2010 CPI revealed further that Nigeria lined up behind other smaller African countries like Eritrea and Madagascar and Niger Republic on the global corruption scale. For instance, while Eritrea and Madagascar tied at the 123rd position, Nigeria came a distant 134th with a 2.4 score point.

Also evident from the report of the corruption survey for the year under review is the fact that three top-running countries, Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore tied at the first position with a score point of 9.3, making them relatively highly corruption-free while Somalia, for the second year running, was adjudged the most corrupt nation in the world, occupying the 178th position on a score point of 1.1. The report revealed further that nearly three-quarters of the 178 countries indexed, scored below five on a scale from zero (perceived to be highly corrupt to ten, perceived to have low levels of corruption) indicating as Akosile (2010) noted, a serious corruption problem.

Reacting to the report of the survey, Huguette Labelle, Chairman of Transparency International said "these results signal that significantly greater efforts must go into strengthening governance across the globe. With the livelihood of so many at stake, governments' commitments to anti-corruption, transparency and accountability must speak through their actions. Good governance is an essential part of the solution to the global policy challenges governments face today" (see Akosile, 2010:1). Labelle advocated stricter implementation of the United Nations' Convention against Corruption, the only global initiative that provides a framework for putting an end to the menace of corruption if the challenges posed by corruption must be overcome. He declared thus:

Allowing corruption to continue is unacceptable: too many people continue to suffer its consequences around the world. We need to see more enforcement of existing rules and laws. There should be nowhere to hide for the corrupt or their money (see Akosile, 2010:1).

As with previous years, there seems to be no let off to Nigeria's apparently steady decline on the global corruption perception index. The report of the 2011 CPI released by the global anti-corruption watch dog in December 2011 showed that Nigeria emerged 143rd among the 183 nations covered by the survey with a score of 2.4 on a scale of 10 points. By this ranking, Nigeria dropped nine places from its 2010 position of 134.

The 2011 CPI also showed that Nigeria trailed behind seven other West African nations, namely Cape Verde, Ghana, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Cameroon and Sierra Leone on the global corruption survey. Like in the previous years, Botswana continued its impressive showing on the global corruption ranking as the 32nd nation with a score of 6.1 while at the West African sub-regional level Cape Verde emerged the best perceived corruption-free nation with a global ranking of 41 and a score of 5.5. New Zealand, one of the three consistent top-runners on the corruption perception index emerged first with a score of 9.5; followed by Denmark and Finland which came second and third, with 9.4 points on a scale of 10 points. Somalia and North Korea jointly emerged as the two most corrupt nations in the world for the period under review. The two nations ranked 182 with a score of 1.0.

Public outcry at corruption, impunity and economic instability sent shockwaves around the world in 2011, with protests escalating from small scale action to mass demonstrations uniting people from all parts of society. The Transparency International argues that the result of the 2011 global corruption survey showed that public frustration with corruption was well founded. The global anti – corruption body while noting that the background of the protests was diverse, said the message was the same: more transparency and accountability from the leaders is needed.

Hugette Labelle, TI's chairman shares similar sentiments. According to him, "this year, we have seen corruption on protestors' banners, be they rich or poor. Whether in Europe hit by debt crisis or an Arab world starting a new political era, leaders must heed the demands for better government" (Transparency International, 2011:1).

Like the 2011 ranking, Nigeria did not fare any better in the CPI for 2012. The Transparency International CPI report for the year 2012 released on Wednesday, December 5, 2012 by the global anti-corruption police ranked Nigeria as the 135th most corrupt nation out of the 178 countries surveyed; scoring 27 % of a possible 100 %. The report showed that in Africa, countries like Botswana, and Cape Verde took the 30th and 39th positions, scoring 65 % and 60%. The countries of Rwanda, Ghana and South Africa scored 53, 45 and 43 % respectively, on a global CPI ranking of 53, 66 and 69 out of the 178 countries covered in the survey for the period under review. The 2012 CPI report showed that at the global level, Denmark, Finland and New Zealand emerged first, second and third in that order, in the ranking as the least corrupt nations tying on 83% out of 100 %.(see "Corruption Perception Index" @ http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/survey_indices/cpi).

Table 1.1 Nigeria's ranking on the Global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2001 – 2012

S/N0	Year	Total N0. of Countries Surveyed	Nigeria's Ranking	Nigeria's CPI score(0-10)
1	2001	91	90	2.0
2	2002	102	101	1.6
3	2003	133	132	2.0
4	2004	145	144	1.8
5	2005	158	152	2.0
6	2006	163	142	2.3
7	2007	179	147	2.4
8	2008	180	121	2.7
9	2009	180	130	2.5
10	2010	178	134	2.4
11	2011	183	143	2.4
12	2012	178	135	Score not indicated (27%)

Source: Adapted from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index Report, CPI. (See "Corruption Perception Index" @ http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/survey_indices/cpi)

Apparent from table 1.1 is the fact Nigeria's corruption index has oscillated between a perceived range of being highly corrupt and relatively corrupt, with her worst score being 1.6 in 2002 and her 'best' being 2.7 in 2008. However, the TI has been criticized for poor methodology and unfair treatment of developing nations. While being praised for highlighting corruption and embarrassing governments, critics argue that it is difficult to measure corruption which by definition happens behind the scene (Akosile, 2010). One of such critics, Akosile (2010) asserted that because the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) uses different methodologies and samples each year, its data cannot be compared from year to year, thereby making it difficult to evaluate the result of new policies.

CAUSES OF NIGERIA'S DOWNWARD SLIDE ON THE GLOBAL CPI

A number of scholars and civil society groups among them (Manzetti and Blake, 1996; Egwemi and Saliu, 2010; Ologbenla, 2007; Ezeoke, 2009 and the Human Rights Watch), have advanced several reasons for the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria and by extension, the nation's seemingly recurrent down ward slide on the global corruption perception index. Manzetti and Blake (1996:666) suggested that corruption is most pervasive in a country like Nigeria where, "(1) the institutional mechanisms for combating corruption are weak or not used; (2) extensive governmental control and regulation of economic resources provide opportunity for corrupt exchanges; and, (3) corruption is so socialized at all societal levels that it is accepted and tolerated".

The Human Rights Watch, (HRW), a non-governmental international civil society organization concurs with Manzetti and Blake's suggestion. In its 2011 *Country Report on: The State of Corruption in Nigeria*, the global anti-human rights abuse body posited that Nigeria's political system seemed to have institutionalized corruption by

continually rewarding rather than punish corruption. The body also faulted the delay in attending to corruption cases by the nation's courts. The organization which also picked holes in many areas of the nation's anti-corruption war argued that "corruption is at the heart of many of Nigeria's most serious human rights problems and Human Rights Watch has repeatedly called on the Nigerian government to do more to fight corruption and bolster the capacity of key anti-corruption institutions" (see *The Nation*, 2011: 54). The report added that the war on corruption in Nigeria currently hangs in the balance and advocated the need to "fix" the EFCC.

The Human Rights Watch did not also spare the Nigerian judiciary in its assessment of Nigeria's corruption profile. The body which scored the courts and the judiciary low succinctly declared thus:

The courts can also be an obstacle to accountability. Most of the EFCC cases against prominent political figures are stalled in the courts for years without the trials even commencing. Nigeria's weak and overburdened judiciary offers seemingly endless opportunities for skilled defense lawyers to secure interminable and sometimes frivolous delays (see *The Nation*, 2011:54).

The duo of Egwemi and Saliu (2010) blamed the country's poor corruption record on lack of transparency, good governance and accountability. The seminal work by the duo titled *Leadership, Corruption and the Crisis of Development in Nigeria* is instructive indeed. In the work, the authors isolated the administrations of former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'adua and the incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan for special treatment.

Beginning with the Obasanjo regime, Egwemi and Saliu noted that even though his government was credited with the setting up of such anti-corruption agencies as the Economic and Financial crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), the administration was mired in series of corrupt practices. They observed that several scandals like the Tafagate, tenure amendment bribe allegation, budget bribe, the PTDF report, Mantu and Hajj scandal, the NITEL-Pentascopes Management-Contract scandal, the SOLGAS and Ajaokuta Steel scandal and TRANSCORP saga among others were awesome revelations of deep seated political corruption in Nigeria under the Obasanjo government. They added that former president Obasanjo's war against corruption was simply about selective justice.

In the case of the late Yar'adua administration, Egwemi and Saliu (2010) averred that his government was dogged by credibility and legitimacy crisis as the 2007 elections which ushered him into power was adjudged by both local and international observers and the late Yar'adua himself as far from being credible. They argued that even though the government adhered to the rule of law and due process mantra, it was generally seen to be weak and slow while its war against graft was simply about shielding certain alleged corrupt officials.

Regarding the administration of incumbent President Good luck Jonathan, the duo said his anti-corruption philosophy is that of withdrawal and soft-landing for people adjudged to be corrupt. The allusion of withdrawal and soft-landing may not be unconnected with the withdrawal of corruption charges against Nuhu Ribadu, pioneer chairman of the EFCC, by the Good luck administration.

In his own submission, Ezeoke (2009:27) claimed that the constant change of leadership of the nation's anti-graft body may have accentuated its slide in corruption. She argued that "many Nigerians believe that the vibrancy of the EFCC had died down following the exit of Nuhu Ribadu, its former boss". We are constrained to say that such a conclusion is subjective because it lacks any objective parameters.

It is also pertinent to observe that notwithstanding the positive contributions and attributes of the leaders x-rayed here and while not isolating the tendency for perception-based conclusions, it may be fair to say that the foregoing analysis is a clear testament to the dwindling fortunes of Nigeria on the global corruption perception index.

NIGERIA'S CPI AND PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN'S TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

Successive regimes in Nigeria have pursued a number of visions and policies from independence to the current democratic dispensation, with a view of putting the economy on a sound and sustainable foundation. President Goodluck Jonathan came to power on May 29, 2011 amidst a plethora of great expectations from a weary Nigerian citizenry which had been traumatized by the gargantuan problems that have continually plagued the nation. To assuage the feelings of Nigerians, the President promised to put in place a holistic policy mechanism dubbed the Transformation Agenda.

The transformation Agenda which is a 5-year development plan spanning the life time of the administration (2011-2015) focused on three major areas, including a strong, inclusive and non-inflationary growth; employment generation and poverty alleviation and value reorientation of the citizenry. The President hopes to leapfrog and transform the Nigerian economy using 13 key sectors among them, power, education, health, information and communication technology and transportation as spring boards (Usigbe, 2011).

The transformation agenda draws its strength from five areas namely, one, a well thought policy document; two, a world class economic management team to drive the process through; three, a potential financial, human and political resource base; four, a growing maturity of major institutions of governance such as the National Assembly, the judiciary, an electoral umpire and the Armed Forces; and five, the needlessness to reinvent the wheel as strategic plans blue prints are already in place.

Nevertheless, there are a number of threats and challenges to the realization of the transformation agenda. These include absence of good governance and accountability, ineffective and inefficient public service, corruption, bankrupt leadership, and weak institutions to effectively drive the transformation agenda.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the Transparency International's rating of Nigeria on its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the implication of the country's recurrent downward slide on the CPI for the sustainable transformation agenda of the

present administration of President Good Luck Jonathan. The summary is that the country's continuous poor record on the global CPI is majorly a function of the lack of political will to deal decisively with corrupt persons especially the so called Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) such as governors, ministers, political appointees and members of the national assembly and the absence of transparency in governance. This sad state of affairs definitely has implications on the transformation mantra of the present government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the magnitude of the problems posed by corruption to the country's international image as reflected in the Transparency International's CPI and its implication for Nigeria's sustainable transformation, it is pertinent to consider some options by way of recommendations in halting the trend. Evidence in the literature suggests that one of the greatest obstacles to the realization of the anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria is the lack of political will to prosecute high profile corruption cases. The Federal Government and the EFCC should therefore, demonstrate appropriate political will to prosecute corrupt persons, irrespective of their status. This will serve as a deterrent and restore both local and international confidence in the anti-corruption battle in Nigeria.

By far the greatest antidote to corruption is good governance. Whatever policies that are put in place by government must be those that promote good governance, accountability and transparency. With good governance, available resources are effectively managed in response to the critical needs of society.

For the transformation agenda to be result-oriented and sustainable, there is the need to take bold and urgent steps to maximize the benefits of the opportunities and strengths of the policy while at the same time reducing to the barest minimum the threats and challenges facing it.

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