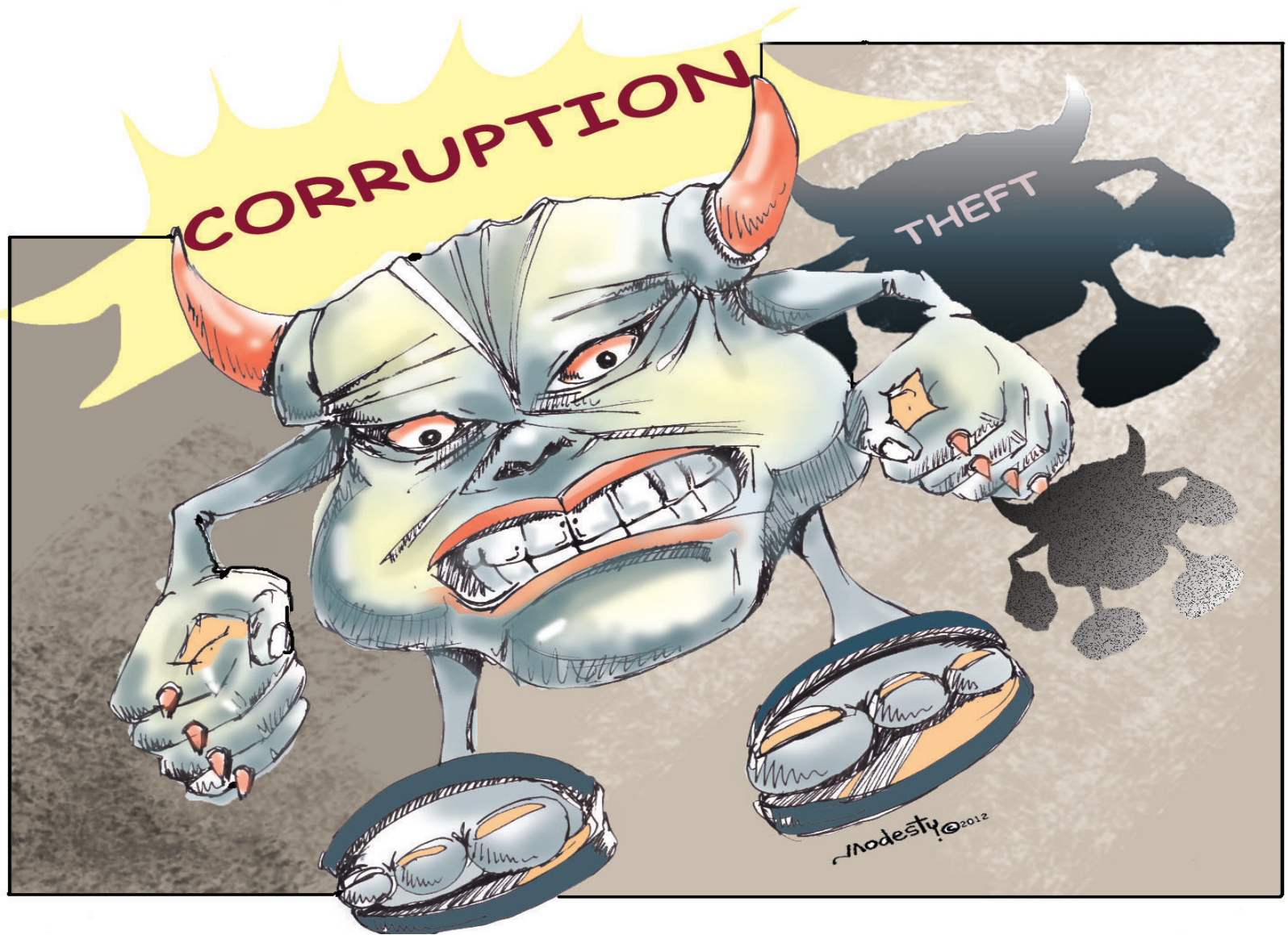


## REPORT



# Corruption, An Epidemic Social Disorder In Nigeria

By Mannix Paul

**N**ever-ending scandals of corruption riddle Nigeria's integrity worldwide. The humiliation and scolding resulting from these scandals may not be noted by those that abuse authority or privilege as appointed agents or heads of an administration, but is distressing for most Nigerians in Diaspora and at home. Anti-corruption experts suggest that Nigeria government should provide an enabling atmosphere to implement ethics-related laws, and enforce discipline among public employees that requires accountability. The administration is encouraged to ensure stiff criminal penalties for those who intentionally provide enticement or those that receive kickback based on their official responsibility or others that support the corruption process.

The rapid change of events in the nation is now beyond control. Scandals upon scandals and the fight against corruption adds no new dimension. Corruption has

reinvented itself so much that unethical practices of governors, legislators, and other top government agents are uncovered with no penalty. The anti-corruption community patiently has been watching the unending lawmakers' bribery and corruption scandals, which is self-evident of the height of deviation among trustees of government. According to the news publication, "Farouk Lawan (lawmaker) denies collection of the bribe from 'Femi Otedola, but didn't deny that money was given to him by the man."

The abuse of public trust has become a standard way of living, but such a corrupt orientation is challenged by other countries of the world, considering that the lack of a nation's integrity is injurious to trustworthiness.

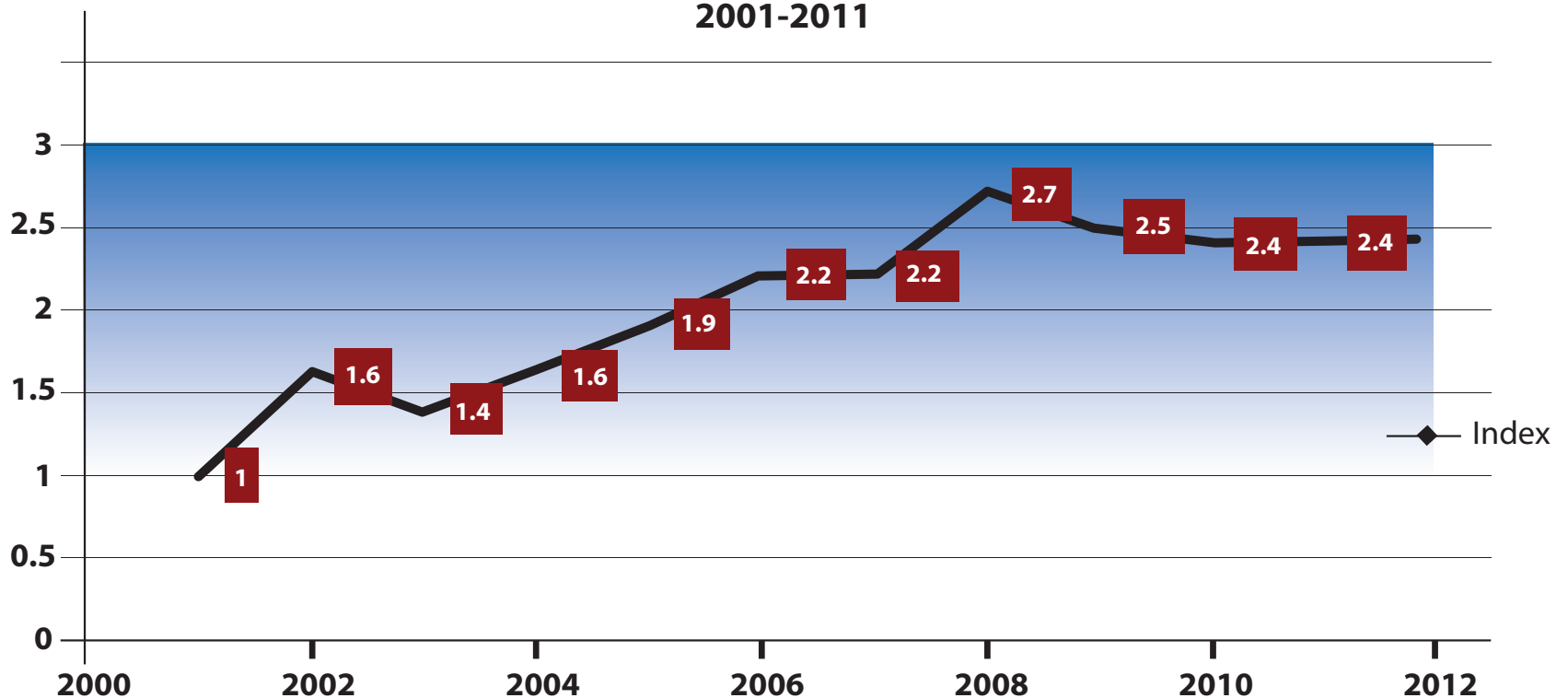
The bribery and corruption scandal sagas tend to support the hypotheses that "corruption in Nigeria is practised with impunity" and "attempts to correct the situation are difficult."

Strategist analyst would suggest that Nigeria's chief

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### Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index 2001-2011



problem is insecurity, but if a nation experiences uncontrolled level of corruption and gross mismanagement, citizens and other nations of the world would doubt the integrity of the judicial system, the law-making body, and the executive because of the collective corrupt coordination, which in itself is lawlessness that increases the vulnerability of the nation's insecurity. Nigeria has a synchronize corruption system that makes it difficult for any administration to fight insecurity, and at the same time to meet the social responsibilities of government toward her citizens is tough to achieve with no strong anti-corruption mission.

The fight against corruption is unavoidable, both in government and in corporations, if humanity is to be served. This battle is necessitated by the long-standing practice of corruption among public employees and the fact that the lack of ruled-based-oriented culture has destroyed the overall work ethics among public servants to the point where unethical business practices have become an acceptable phenomenon in public organizations. Many people have been astounded by the long years of Nigeria being ranked as one of the most corrupt nations in the world. Is corruption a social dysfunction or epidemic in Nigeria? What are the causes and possible remedies for the endless scandals and the get-rich-quick syndrome that have become a status quo in society? What effort is leadership making to implement proactive programmes to establish a rule-based-oriented Culture that fosters compliances, policies and procedures, and regulate and, repair the failed judicial system, and thus tackle the pandemic ascension corruption in Nigeria has assumed? The fight against corruption is not solely for the current administration, but must be for all Nigerian citizens. Because the compelling forces of change in a society or organizations either emanate from the top to bottom or bottom to the top.

*The inability of a government to control corruption is harmful to both local and international business and the future generations, and promotes lawlessness*

Generally, the inability of a government to control corruption is harmful to both local and international business and future generations, and promotes lawlessness, where the nation's credibility is threatened worldwide including the nation's security, and the well-being of her citizens. An administration that fails to make a deliberate effort to alter the existing unethical cultural practices could experience failure in implementing long-term projects, which could potentially lead to anarchy, insecurity, and social dysfunction.

However, the fight against corruption is a difficult task that calls for a strong transformational leader who is endowed with the political willingness to do so.

Over the years the Federal Government of Nigeria has established various agencies and commissions to tackle corruption including Judicial Commissions, the Code of Conduct Bureau, the Public Complaint Commission, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent Corrupt Practice and Other-related Offence Commission (ICPC). The establishment of these agencies is a milestone for the fight against corruption but after all these years, the statistical records indicate that no significant progress has been attained. The latest Transparency

International worldwide report shows that Nigeria is ranked 143rd with a perception index of 2.4. Regardless, experience has also shown that none of the federal agencies is viable and that they need an organizational strategy that fosters efficiency in the fight against corruption. The data exemplifies Nigeria Corruption Perception Index from 2001 to 2011, and calls for timely reformation, and a change of strategy for the fight against corruption.

Source: Transparency International worldwide from 2001-2011

Each leader and the anti-corruption community would ask the mind-troubling question: Is the Nigerian government



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doing enough to eradicate corruption? This question is also applicable to observers either national or international relating to the fight against corruption. The answer is not far from the truth. The nature of humanity is corrupt, which leads to the clamour for wealth and power. Thus, corruption is based on individual subjective values, but individuals do have the power to practise self-control and the willingness to uphold integrity in a depraved society.

There are several pragmatic views why the fight against corruption in Nigeria tends to be a myth at the local, state and federal level of government. In the past, the Nigeria Security Adviser (Nov. 2010) stated that administrative loopholes that supports corruption, and the lack of accountability in governance are the greatest enemy of peace and security in Nigeria. Usually, the fight against corruption is multifaceted, and no agency or arm of government can fight corruption solely but the tone for the fight against it must be set by those in leadership position. According to newspaper publications, Waziri (Oct 2011), former chairperson of EFCC stated that the anti-corruption process was not supported by the judicial system, while Lormorde (May 2012), the current chairperson of EFCC has stated that it is almost impossible for EFCC to fight corruption due to under-staffing.

The chairperson added that it is difficult for only a workforce of 3,000 to handle a population of 160 million people.

In addition, the relentless conflict among competing agencies cannot be overlooked. In recent times, Chief Justice of Nigeria, (March 2012) ordered EFCC and ICPC

to submit the list of pending graft cases. On the other hand, the head of special operation, Bako, (2012) stated that limited finances and logistics are the key problems that affect anti-corruption in ICPC and another publication (Dec., 2011) reported how a senior solicitor's aide bribed a Judge, and former ICPC Chairman expressed grief at the existing culture.

Furthermore, Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Chief Judge (May, 2012), indicated that Nigeria's judiciary sector ranks low in the world and also condemned the soaring level of corruption in the judiciary. According to Chief Justice of Nigeria (2012) "corrupt practices have been undermining every attempt at reforming this country" and added that "some Judges in the country lacked integrity, honesty, knowledge of the law, willingness to listen, empathy, sense of fair play, patience and honesty."

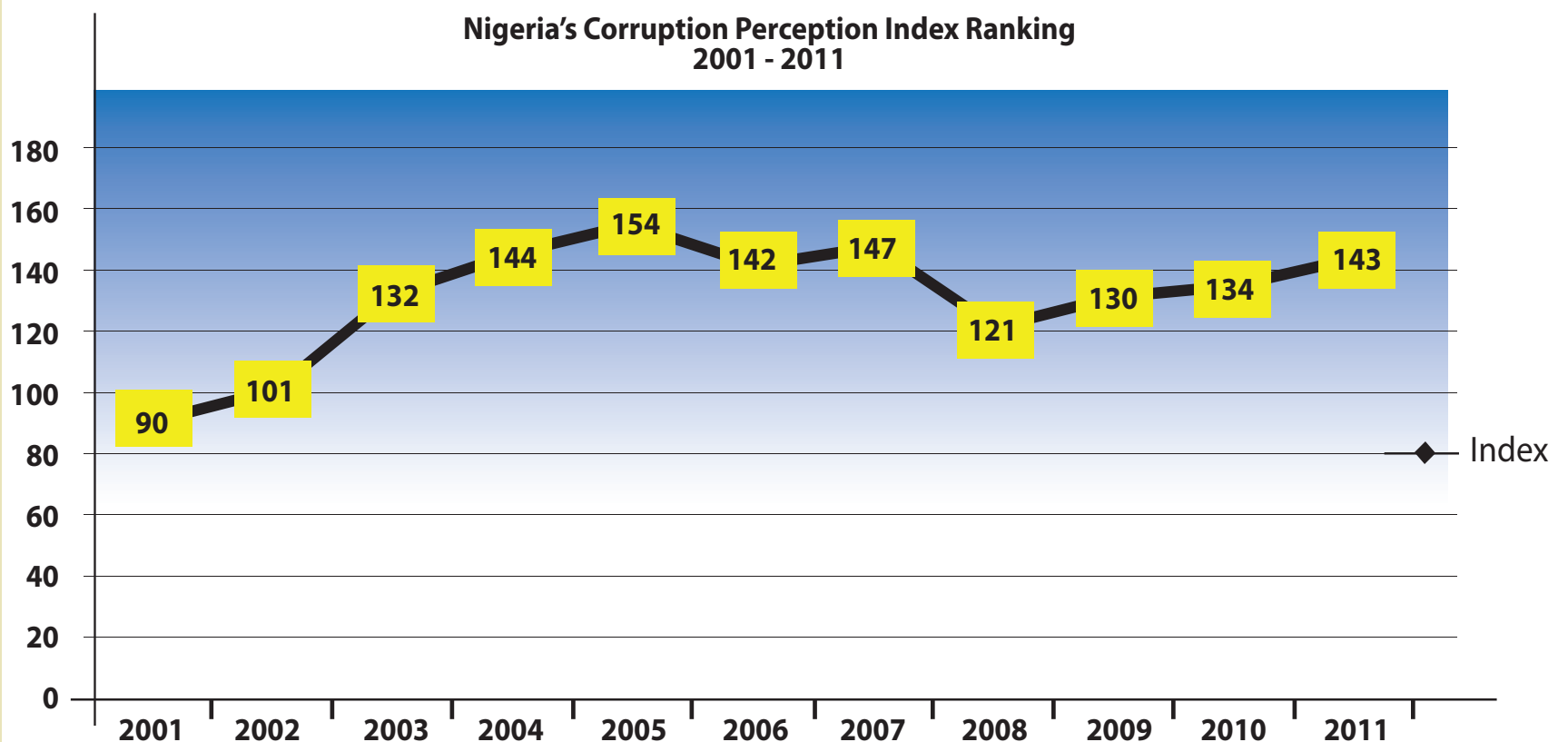
Based on these premises, how can Nigerian fight corruption without an effective judicial system and without an appropriate logistics and adequate workforce?

There are logical reasons why after a decade of the fight against corruption no improvements have been achieved and the efforts of these agencies cannot

translate into efficiency, accountability and transparency in society. Instead, the culture of corruptions has escalated beyond measure that affects the stronghold like religious faith and academic institutions that are originally considered landmarks of moral values in society. What is the future of Nigeria in the absence of patriotism and integrity in the fight against corruption? Did you think Nigeria as a nation is ready for the fight against corruption?

Corruption in Nigeria is undeniable and the success of an

*Corruption in Nigeria is undeniable and the success of an administration depends on leadership's ability to tackle the problem of corruption*



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administration depends on its leadership's ability to tackle the problem of corruption. Recent publication indicates that an appointed committee of the President of Nigeria recommended for the abolition of anti-corruption agencies. The committee provides the rationale that anti-corruption agencies are a duplication of original police functions. Reading through such a report was mind-troubling, which was a clear indication that achieving a major transformation is a key challenge.

However, the delayed response to the implementation of the recommendation by the leadership was judicious because the police force solitarily cannot tackle the intensifying problems of corruption. Notwithstanding, a change is indispensable for non-functional strategy, but it must be done incrementally especially in relation to judicial matters and enforcement. For such a modification requires due diligence because of the legal implication and rapid change in techniques, where training and research are essential parts of improving the fight against corruption in organisations.

There are several schools of thought about the problem of corruption in society or organisations. It is an undisputed assumption that the complete destruction of corruption humanly is not a practical option among a group of people or societies. This implies corruption has an indestructible force, which can only be suppressed and controlled, depending on the leadership style of an administration. Corruption in Nigeria has become a social disorder. It has bred into an epidemic dimension that affects the minds and thoughts of most people, and the get-rich-quick syndrome is now an unquestionable trend in Nigerian society.

Consequently, the idea of getting rich while in power, or as an appointed agent, invested with the public trust is nothing new. It is sad to note that appointed agents are not ashamed or even afraid of the law simply because our society's perverted society belief that leaving position of power and being poor is the same as a living dead. Any nation that experiences such a magnitude of deviation from standard moral practices requires instantaneous government intervention, creates larger alliance both local and international, designed intentional anti-corruption programmes, engage in a massive grassroots campaign, and create awareness that brings regeneration relating to institutionalised corrupt practices.

For instance, in a recent news publication, a senior member of the Nigeria Police Force states that bribery and corruption

is pronounced among serving members due to the fear of leaving the service or dying without leaving a legacy for family. This would suggest that poor remuneration is an apparent issue of police corruption. Comparatively, decades of salary disparity between the police force and the other arm forces is long due for examination. For decent wages (and incentive) is a potential force of building a modern police force that stresses a culture of discipline, pride, patriotism, and professionalism. The shortfall of good incentive and assured protection for the police force cannot be ignored, if current leadership aspires to repair the nation's credibility and succeed in the fight against corruption in Nigeria. Why the salary disparity gap is so much even today?

Does it possibly mean that the long years of military leadership could be a probable cause of the salary disparity? For such a bold public statement from an enforcement agent requires the nation's leadership and lawmakers to review the impact of remuneration disparity between the police force and the other arm forces, and reckon the effect of wages and the war against corruption. This is a puzzle for the fight against corruption which will show that the current administration responding to the root causes of corruption in the police force and the judiciary is a promising landmark that cannot be undermined.

It was quite inspiring when the President of Nigeria declares in a broadcast that the "war Against corruption would begin from the centre."

The most vulnerable in society is eager to see a change, but the usual catchphrase echoes "others have done it and there is no ramifications or just minimal prison time if caught, why not me?"

After all, how many people have the anti-corruption agencies successfully charged and sentenced to prison terms for corruption? Even those who were at one time incarcerated for the reason of corruption, and released after just a short jail term are now the kingmakers in the political parties and, authority of power, and so continue to influence the political process. These activities have set wrong precedent for the next generation and is detrimental to the existence of the nation. The voices of the helpless whispers, what a tragedy, and continues to asked questions that mankind has no answer: how long will this corruption continues? Forever if founded on falsehood that fails to promote the patriotism of her citizens.

In addition, the existing cultural orientation does not promote honesty, and this has influenced how individuals

*Government needs comprehensive reforms to address the remote causes of corruption, in order to tackle the lapses that ridicule the fight against corruption*

