### CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENTS MADE IN BUILDING A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY AND ETHICS IN THE UGANDAN SOCIETY

When the NRM Government assumed power, it was realized that in order to consolidate and sustain the achievements in democratic governance, there was need to intensify and focus the fight against corruption or rebuilding a culture of ethical conduct and integrity in all sectors of the Ugandan society.

Government recognized that the underlying cause of corruption was moral decadence. It was also recognized that corruption not only leads to misallocation of resources but also erodes the moral fabric of humanity. Corruption retards development and undermines democracy and the rule of law, which is the basis of every civilized society.

In a bid to scale up the fight against corruption and moral decadence in Uganda, there was need to establish a Government mechanism to coordinate and provide information to the public about the measures taken to address the vice.

Against that backdrop, an Anti-Corruption Coordination Unit was established in March 1996 under the Vice President’s Office and it was endorsed by Cabinet in February 1997. The Directorate for Ethics and Integrity (DEI) was established as the Secretariat for the Inter Agency Forum on corruption (IAF) member institutions, thus coordinating the Government efforts to curb corruption in Uganda. The IAF is a coordinating mechanism for institutions that are mandated to enhance accountability and fight corruption at the Central Government level. Currently it constitutes of 19 member institutions.

What has been achieved?

The DEI has, since its establishment, made strides in an effort to coordinate efforts in the fight against corruption and rebuilding ethics and integrity in the Ugandan society. A number of achievements have been realised broadly in the area of coordination, capacity development of Anti-Corruption institutions and sensitisation of the public on ethics and National Ethical Values.

#### i. Coordination of Anti-Corruption efforts in Uganda

To accelerate the fight against corruption and to rebuild ethics in Uganda, a Government Plan to fight corruption was developed and adapted in July 2000. Consequently the plan was transformed into the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS). The NACS is a tool used by the IAF in guiding anti-corruption efforts in Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Local Governments (MDALGs).

The key achievement of the NACS is the joint IAF mechanism of the implementation of government programs and service delivery. The implementation of the NACS has facilitated joint monitoring and inspection of Government programs both at Central Government and Local Government level.

#### ii. Enactment of enabling anti-corruption legal and policy framework

A number of laws and policies have been developed and reviewed to facilitate the fight against corruption. These included:

- The Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2013
- The National Audit Act 2006
- The PPD Act and Regulations 2014
- The High Court (Anti-Corruption Division) Practice Directions 2009
- The Public Finance Management Act, 2015
- The whistleblowers’ Protection Act, 2010
- The Whitecollar’s Protection Regulations, 2015
- The Inspectorate of Government Act 2002
- The Leadership Code Act, 2002
- The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2003
- The Access to Information Act, 2003
- The Financial and Accounting Regulations Act, 2007
- The Financial and Accounting Regulations Act, 2013 (Revised)
- The Anti-Corruption Act, 2009
- The National Ethical Values Policy 2013

#### iii. Increased conviction rate of corruption cases

This is attributed to effective investigations and prosecutions supported by appropriate laws and policies. In addition to that, there has been noticeable improvement in the disposal of corruption cases. This is facilitated by the introduction of up-country sessions and recording of proceedings which has led to reduction of backlog.

#### iv. Recovery of stolen funds

The anti-corruption enforcement agencies have recovered substantial amounts of missappropriated public funds though refunds, settlements, compensation orders and fines. An example of this is the recovered funds from Global Fund, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) project, and the Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

**v. Improved revenue collection:**

As a result of enforcement of disciplinary measures for staff involved in corruption tendencies and punishment of corrupt tax payers, there has been a tremendous increase in tax revenue which is used to fund over 70% of Uganda’s budget.

**vi. Increased Audits:**

Through the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (PPDA), Government has registered a remarkable increase in audit cases in terms of coverage and the need for special audits.

**vii. Improved Public Financial Management Systems:**

The Government put in place systems and processes, such as the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) to ensure effective control measures such as the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) to ensure effective financial management and Integrated Personnel and Payroll System (IPPS) to regulate the payroll as a way of restraining bribery and other forms of corruption.

**viii. Acquisition of specialized skills:**

In order to enhance the capacity of the staff of the IAF institutions in handling corruption issues, training programs were organized and carried out. Main focus was on investigative techniques, property rights, digital investigation, cyber crimes, asset tracking and recovery, leadership and good governance.

**ix. District Integrity Promotion Forum (DIPF):**

The DEI partnered with Local Governments to coordinate anti-corruption efforts, effective leadership accountability and good governance at the district level. This has been done through the establishment of District Integrity Promotion Forum (DIPF), through the DIPF the DEI builds the capacity of senior officials and representatives of selected CSOs at the district with an aim of promoting accountability of the Local Government level.

**x. Creation of the Professional Standards Unit (PSU):**

This was established to handle special investigations and check corrupt officials within the Police Forces. This approach was used as a deterrent weapon against officers who were found guilty of abusing office.

**xi. Increasing Public Participation in the Fight against Corruption:**

In 2003, the Government established a structured collaboration with the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) called the Anti-Corruption Public Private Partnership (ACPPP) for greater achievements in the fight against corruption and fighting moral decadence. The ACPPP framework brings together members of the IAF and some selected Anti-Corruption CSOs to work jointly in areas of Policy review and formulation, advocacy, capacity building and development.

**xii. Development of the National Ethical Values Policy:**

The National Ethical Values Policy (NEVP) was developed and launched in 2013 as a tool to rebuild and sustain a morally upright society with national integrity for the fulfillment of Uganda’s aspirations and ideas. The ten National Ethical Values are:

- Integrity, Honesty, Transparency, Accountability, National Unity, Justice and Social Harmony, Unity and Respect, Citizenship and Patriotism.

**xiii. Integration of Ethical Values in the school systems:**

In pursuance of its mission of empowering the Ugandan society to uphold moral values and principles, the DEI works closely with schools to rebuild ethics and integrity. The DEI worked with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) to introduce ethical values in the revised primary School Curriculum. Currently ethical values are integrated in school activities. In addition to that, the DEI developed a training program for Primary Teachers’ Colleges (PTCs) to integrate ethical values in school activities.

**xiv. Coordination of Religious Affairs in Uganda:**

In order to inculcate moral values and ethics in the lay community, the DEI partnered with religious leaders and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) as key partners in the dissemination of the National Ethical Values Policy. A Department of Religious Affairs was established to coordinate the programs. A comprehensive Policy for Faith Based Organisations is being developed. The Policy will provide a framework under which the DEI will work with Religious Organizations to inculcate values in the society and continue to campaign against corruption.

**Future prospects**

In the coming years Government will continue enforcing Zero-Tolerance-to-Corruption and offshoots of moral decadence stance through:

- Strengthening leadership and coordination of anti-corruption efforts in all public offices
- Empowering citizens to participate in anti-corruption measures at national level and Local Governments level
- Strengthening the anti-corruption institutions for effective enforcement of the Legal and regulatory anti-corruption measures and improving compliance with international and national accountability standards among public and private institutions.

It should be noted that the fight against corruption requires collective efforts. All stakeholders, right from national level to the lowest community level should undertake total commitment to this cause.