

**AFRICAN UNION ADVISORY BOARD ON  
CORRUPTION**

**المجلس الاستشاري للإتحاد الإفريقي  
لمحاربة الفساد**



**CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE L'UNION  
AFRICAINNE SUR LA CORRUPTION**

**CONSELHO CONSULTIVO DA UNIÃO  
AFRICANA SOBRE CORRUPÇÃO**

---

P.O Box 6071, ARUSHA, TANZANIA -Tel: +255 27 205 0030- Fax: +255 27 205 0031

Email: [auanticorruption@gmail.com](mailto:auanticorruption@gmail.com) \*Website: [www.auanticorruption.org](http://www.auanticorruption.org)

---

## **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

8<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Arusha, Tanzania.

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS**

**Mrs. Charity Hanene Nchimunya**

Executive Secretary – African Union Advisory Board on Corruption

**Hon. Justice Sylvain Ore, President of the Court**  
**Hon. Justice Ben Kioko, Vice-President of the Court,**  
**Hon. Judges of the Court,**  
**Dr. Robert Eno, Registrar of the Court,**  
**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

1. It gives me pleasure this morning to give the keynote address on behalf of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption here at the African Court as we join the rest of the World in celebrating the International Women’s Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018. From the onset, I want to thank and applaud the leadership of the Court for getting all of us together to come and celebrate this day and interrogate further the impact of corruption on women and girl-child welfare. I truly feel honoured and privileged to share the platform with all of you Hon. Judges and distinguished representatives from various organizations.
2. On this auspicious day, the International Women’s Day, we celebrate women all over the world and their contribution to a better and more just world. It is undeniable that women play a vital role in the development of a society, a nation and the world at large. This is such an important day as we get to honor women in our communities, women who have pressed for progress in uplifting humanity. It is also an opportunity to reflect on their contribution to development and the challenges they face in their paths while doing that.
3. In reflecting on the theme of this celebration that the Court has come up with ‘**Impact of Corruption on Women and Girl-Child Welfare**’, allow me to recall that 2018 has been declared and dedicated by the African Union as the ‘**African Anti-Corruption Year**’. The focus of the year under the wider AU theme of ‘**Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation**’ is to elevate the efforts and activities that all key players are deploying and implementing in fighting corruption on the continent in 2018. The continent is being led in these efforts by H.E President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria as the Champion for the year of anti-corruption. And every one of us is expected to contribute to the fight against corruption as its negative effects affect all of us. Therefore, reflecting on the impact of corruption on women and girl child welfare on this day is a very

commendable move and I salute the African Court for choosing an appropriate theme that resonates well with the wider AU theme for the year.

**Hon. Judges, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

4. The effects and impact of corruption on women should be considered due to the fact that women are more affected than men as women form the majority of the global poor and hence are the most vulnerable in the society. Though corruption affects both men and women, women suffer the impact of corruption more. This mainly is due to the already existing unequal gender relations in society, where women are in many settings more exposed to corruption and its consequences.
5. You may wish to appreciate that many African countries still experience gender inequality in their societies. Women tend to be deprived of their rights and are considered as the minority. They are largely exposed to illegal acts, corruption being one among them that occurs in their daily lives. Gender inequality is not a topic to be ignored when discussing the impacts of corruption on women and girl-child welfare. Studies have revealed that gender inequality breeds corruption and likewise corruption aggravates gender inequality. This leads women to experience the effects and impact of corruption disproportionately and their wellbeing and welfare is negatively affected.

**Hon. Judges, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

6. Corruption affects women and girl-child welfare in various ways and forms. In my address I will just reflect on a few which include women's access to social services, political participation, social and human rights as well as economic and financial participation.
7. Women and girls are disproportionately affected than men when corruption exists in public services. Women, many of whom are the primary caretakers and are living in poverty have the greater need for essential and basic services. Most of them being responsible for the care of children and the elderly need to access essential services such as health, education, water and sanitation.

Studies however have revealed that women and girls, being vulnerable, fail to get easy and unhindered access to these essential and basic services such as education, health, water, sanitation and electricity, documentation (licenses, residence and identity papers) and law enforcement. There are cases when they may not only be forced into bribery but also to sexual extortion in order to access these services. These acts often go unreported due to the stigma and shame associated with sexual crimes but does not change the fact that these women and girls suffer the pains of corruption. Moreover, corruption shrinks public revenue that leads to cutting spending on social services and seriously undermines women and children who rely most on such services provided by the state. And it goes without saying that this impacts negatively on the women and girl-child welfare.

8. On the political front, women who have the desire to engage in politics often times find it challenging to do so, as some corrupt political party structures create an unfair environment for women officials to have access in decision making processes in a country's government and political system. In some countries, corruption has now turned to be the prerequisite for women who want to have a seat in the parliament. The minds of young girls who aspire to be great political figures are now stained with this reality of corruption that ends up breeding fear and as a result they lose their interest in political matters. This deprives the young women the opportunity to excel and lead in the political arena.
9. When corruption creeps in the law enforcement systems it erodes the protection and advancement of women's rights. Often violated social, political and economic issues include marriage and divorce, allegations of adultery and rape, child custody, human trafficking, inheritance, property rights and financial independence. But when the judicial system is allowed to be corrupt, women who are already economically marginalized cannot afford legal fees or even meet the demands of lawyers and judges who may be compromised. In some cases, some even fall prey to sexual extortion and in some instances, their cases end up being dismissed as they cannot afford to bribe prosecutors. This leads to unfair judgements and infringement of the rights to fair trial. And this puts the welfare of women and the girl child at stake.

**Hon. Judges, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

10. You may wish to also know that even in conflict and war zones, women and girls suffer the impact of war and corruption more profoundly than men. Women and girls make up a larger portion of refugees and displaced populations in conflict and post-conflict countries or in natural disaster situations. In situations where most aid workers and peacekeepers are men, opportunities arise for abuse of entrusted power, exposing vulnerable women and girls to sexual and other forms of exploitation. Women also report, poor or absent service delivery as a form of corruption because it is connected to abuse of power by leaders who enable or fail to hold accountable subordinates engaging in corruption.
11. Women are also subjected to corruption when seeking employment or pursuing their own businesses in both the formal and informal sectors. This kind of corruption prevents them from starting businesses and acts as a major barrier to earning income or sustaining their businesses. As women form a large part of the informal sector in which corruption tends to be more rampant, they are more likely to be under constant pressure to yield to corruption and thereby lose their hard earned revenue or even livelihood. Women also face extortion when exercising their land and property rights. They are forced to bribery during land transactions so they can have what rightfully belongs to them. When women can't fully enjoy their land rights, this puts them in a perpetual poverty cycle which in turn affects those under their charge including the girl-child.
12. The list on how corruption affects women can go on and on and the fact remains that corruption negatively affects women and the girl child and their welfare. Hence the underlying principle remains that we need to deal with corruption and its every manifestation. If women and girls are regarded as key players in development, then targeted solutions must be developed to ensure that their rights are not infringed upon, that they have equal and unhindered access to the basic services and are given platforms to exercise their human rights and ensure that corruption is eradicated at all levels.
13. Therefore the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption wishes to make an action call to all of us and our respective institutions regarding this matter,

to press for progress in the fight against corruption and reducing, or even better, eradicating the undermining effects and impact it has on the welfare of women and the girl-child. Let's take advantage of the call to action made by our leaders through the declaration of 2018 as the 'African Anti-Corruption Year' to elevate the fight against corruption and put to task our leaders to deal with impunity on the African continent.

14. On that note, allow me to conclude by stating that I am looking forward to standing together with you all in the fight against corruption in creating a corrupt free Africa, an Africa where the welfare of women and the girl-child are not compromised by the scourge of corruption. Let us press for progress in the fight against corruption and together we can win!!
15. Finally, let me take this opportunity on my own behalf and on behalf of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption to wish you a happy International Women's Day 2018 and a corrupt free 2018.

**I thank you for your kind attention**

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*