

CORRUPTION AND ITS COMMON FORMS.

1. Definition of corruption

Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power, office or authority for private gain. It takes place in both the public and private sectors.

2. Terms used to describe the extent of corruption

In describing corruption a number of terms are commonly used. These include:- grand corruption, active corruption, passive corruption, petty corruption, sporadic corruption and systemic corruption. It is therefore important to start by explaining what they mean.

Grand Corruption

This type of corruption pervades the highest levels of government, leading to the broad erosion of confidence in good governance, the rule of law and economic stability.

Petty Corruption

Petty corruption entails the exchange of small amounts of money and other minor favors by individuals seeking special treatment or employment of friends and relatives for minor positions, amongst other things.

Sporadic corruption

Sporadic corruption occurs irregularly and does not quickly threaten the mechanisms of

control or the economy. It is not crippling, but it can seriously undermine morale and sap the economy of resources.

Systemic or endemic corruption

It is the opposite of sporadic corruption and occurs when corruption is integrated into the economic, social and political system. Systemic or endemic corruption is an every day occurrence and takes place at all levels. It happens when major institutions and processes of governments are under the control of corrupt individuals and groups.

Active and passive corruption

Active corruption is committed by a person who promises or gives the bribe when passive corruption is committed by the person who receives the bribe.

3. Forms of Corruption

Bribery

It is the act of giving or offering someone money, services or other valuables, in order to persuade that person to do something in return. Some people call it kickbacks, baksheesh, payola; hush money, sweetener, protection money, boodle, gratuity etc.

Cronyism

It refers to favorable treatment of friends and associates in the distribution of resources and positions without regard to their objective qualifications and professionalism.

Baksheesh

It is an Arabic term for petty amounts of money given to a beggar or for services rendered like what is given to a waiter. Examples are the alms, tips, gratuity, and pourboire.

Embezzlement

Embezzlement is the misappropriation of property or funds legally entrusted to someone in their formal position as an agent, trustee or guardian.

Extortion

It is the unlawful demand or receipt of property or money through the use of force or threat. Whilst bribery involves use of payments or other positive incentives, extortion involves coercive incentives such as the use or threat of violence or exposing an individual through divulging damaging information in order to induce cooperation.

Favoritism

Favoritism takes place when one favors or prefers acquaintances, friends and family over strangers. It becomes corruption when public (and private sector) officials unfairly distribute positions and resources to colleagues.

Nepotism

Nepotism is used to indicate a form of favoritism that involves family relationships. It describes situations in which a person exploits

his or her power and authority to procure jobs or other favors for relatives.

☒ Fraud

Fraud is an economic crime involving deceit, trickery or false pretences, whereby someone gains unlawfully.

☒ Graft

Graft is to obtain money dishonestly by exploiting one's position of power, especially political power.

☒ Interest peddling

It occurs when someone solicits benefits in exchange for using his or her influence to unfairly advance the interests of a particular person or party.

☒ Kleptocracy

It is a political system under the control of those who steal from the state.

☒ Money laundering

It is a process whereby the origin of dishonest and/or illegally acquired money is disguised so that it appears to come from a legitimate source. It is often used to mask the proceeds of corruption, and is widely practiced by drug traffickers, kleptocrats and white-collar criminals. The practice of Bank secrecy and tax havens make laundered money difficult to trace.

☒ Trading of influence

This takes place when a public official promises or uses his or her real or supposed influence to the benefit of another person in exchange for money or other favors.

☒ Influence-peddling

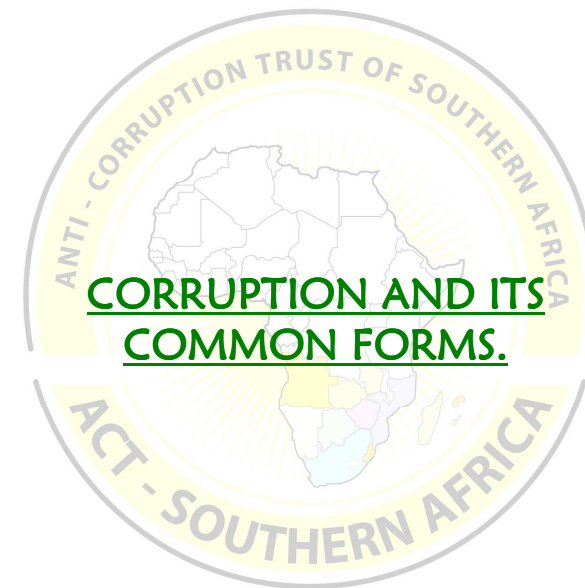
This happens when public officials or other political or government insiders offer to exert influence not available to outsiders.

☒ Abuse of Discretion

Discretion means the liberty or power to make a decision what should be done in a particular situation. Corruption occurs when the use of discretion vested in an individual or institution used to make decisions for personal gain. For example, an official responsible for government contracting may exercise discretion to purchase goods or services from a company in which he or she holds an interest.

☒ Improper political contributions.

There is need to distinguish between legitimate and corrupt contributions to political parties. A donation made because the donor supports a certain political party and wishes to increase its chances of being elected does not amount to corruption. A donation made with the intention or an expectation that the party will, once in office, favour the interests of the donor over the interests of the public is similar to a bribe.



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