

Committee: Special Political 1

Topic: The question of corruption in LEDCs

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Summary

“The most devastating forms of corruption include the diversion and outright theft of funds for public programs and the damage caused by firms and individuals that pay bribes to avoid health and safety regulations intended to benefit the public.” This is a quote by Jakob Svensson from an article written in 2005. A time in which Chad and Bangladesh were the most corrupt places on the Corruption Perceptions Index. With Chad at the start of a five-year civil war, and Bangladesh amid a violent and politically corrupt environment, both have since moved away from their joint title as the worlds most corrupt countries.

However, a look at the most recent Corruption Perceptions Index uploaded to Transparency International, shows us that Somalia is now the most corrupt country in the world. Corruption may bring up the image of back room deals in one person’s mind, and the underground trade of firearms in another’s. The topic is large and unwieldy, with corruption taking many forms across the world. This is especially devastating within LEDCs, where poverty and politically turbulent situations seem to exacerbate corruption of all forms and levels. However, one could argue that corruption begins and ends with how a country is ruled and regulated. If the system is inherently wrong, then how is anyone expected to thrive within it using completely ethical means.

Countries with high levels of corruption also face the ‘Brain Drain’, which is when skilled workers leave to find work elsewhere in the hopes of creating a better future for themselves. The ‘Brain Drain’ furthers the damaging effect of corruption on developing nations.

MEDC: (More Economically Developed Country) sector includes countries with a higher GDP and a higher standard of living than LEDC. Indicators used to classify countries as LEDC or MEDC include industrial development and education.

Bribe: persuade (someone) to act in one's favour, typically illegally or dishonestly, by a gift of money or other inducement.

Background Information

Overview

According to the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, Somalia is the most corrupt country in the world. Somalia was ravaged by a bloody civil war from 1986 till 1992. With fights over territory still breaking out after the civil war. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 64 journalists have been killed in Somalia since 1992. Present day Somalia's instability greatly restricts business. With corrupt government officials tolerating illegal activities in return for bribes. As there is no regulatory framework in place, economic competitiveness is not an option, and tight monopolies dominate their market.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Transparency International

They provide the public with the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index that ranks countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption.

Transparency International has held governments and companies to account by exposing corrupt deals since 1993 in over 120 countries.

Transparency International receives funding from a range of donors, including government agencies, multilateral institutions, foundations, the private sector and individuals through monetary or other means “provided that acceptance does not impair our independence to pursue our mission or endanger our integrity and reputation” according to the organisations’ website.

Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

POGO is an organisation that uses intel gathered by their reports and civilians in order to publish reports and conduct investigative journalism.

POGO is a “nonpartisan independent watchdog fighting the influence of money in policy and championing good government reforms”.

The organisation has been investigating corruption, misconduct and conflict of interest in the federal government for over three decades.

The website also informs people on the risks and precautions they may take when whistleblowing. Like Transparency International they have achieved reforms that make the American government work better.

POGO also allows people to sign and create petitions or legislation on pressing issues to be put onto their website and submitted to office. While America is not an LEDC, POGO is a good example of a website that provides a useful service to it’s citizens, and clearly outlines it’s goals, and the risks of things such as whistle blowing.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
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March 5, 2016 - A US strike in Somalia kills as many as 150 suspected Al-Shabaab fighters, according to the Pentagon. Both manned and unmanned aircraft are used.

February 8, 2017 - Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, who resigned as prime minister in 2011, is elected president.

February 23, 2017 - President Mohamed names Hassan Ali Khaire prime minister.

October 14, 2017 - At least 300 people are confirmed dead after a double car bombing in Mogadishu. Less than two months later, authorities announce that the death toll has climbed to 512.

November 3, 2017 - For the first time, the United States conducts airstrikes targeting ISIS militants in north-eastern Somalia. Unmanned drones make the two airstrikes.

July 25, 2018 - Somalia announces it will pursue its first prosecution for female genital mutilation, after a 10-year-old dies following the procedure.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

51/59 Action against corruption

General assembly

- The resolution mainly focuses on asking the security general to distribute the international code of conduct to officials of all states.

- The resolution also asks the Security General if funds are available to provide education to states as to how corruption effects their country.
- It requests that information on corruption can be gathered to further aid in the removal of corruption.
- It also urges member states to realise what effect corruption has on its people and its country.

<https://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/51/a51r059.htm>

1997/25 international cooperation against corruption and bribery in international commercial transactions

The Economic and Social Council

- The resolution refers to numerous previous resolutions on corruption
- Urges all member states who have not already done so to adhere to them.
- It urges all member states to criminalize the corruption of government officials and police.
- The resolution also asks the Security General to provide funding if available, for the education of states where corruption takes place on the topic.

<https://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/res/1997/eres1997-25.htm>

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

Transparency International worked with Humanitarian Outcomes will publish a report on 13 December examining the main corruption risks in humanitarian operations.

Possible Solutions

Possible solutions for fighting corruption according to the World Bank:

“1. Corruption is not only about bribes: People especially the poor get hurt when resources are wasted. That’s why it is so important to understand the different kinds of corruption to develop smart responses.

2. Power of the people: Create pathways that give citizens relevant tools to engage and participate in their governments – identify priorities, problems and find solutions.

3. Cut the red tape: Bring together formal and informal processes (this means working with the government as well as non-governmental groups) to change behaviour and monitor progress.

4. It’s not 1999: Use the power of technology to build dynamic and continuous exchanges between key stakeholders: government, citizens, business, civil society groups, media, academia etc.

5. Deliver the goods: Invest in institutions and policy – sustainable improvement in how a government delivers services is only possible if the people in these institutions endorse sensible rules and practices that allow for change while making the best use of tested traditions and legacies – imported models often do not work.

6. Get incentives right: Align anti-corruption measures with market, behavioural, and social forces. Adopting integrity standards is a smart business decision, especially for companies interested in doing business with the World Bank Group and other development partners.

7. Sanctions matter: Punishing corruption is a vital component of any effective anti-corruption effort.

8. Act globally and locally: Keep citizens engaged on corruption at local, national, international and global levels – in line with the scale and scope of corruption. Make use of the architecture that has been developed and the platforms that exist for engagement.

9. Build capacity for those who need it most: Countries that suffer from chronic fragility, conflict and violence– are often the ones that have the fewest internal resources to combat corruption. Identify ways to leverage international resources to support and sustain good governance.

10. Learn by doing: Any good strategy must be continually monitored and evaluated to make sure it can be easily adapted as situations on the ground change.”

Another solution may be: Paying civil servants well

Many studies show that if a civil servant is payed more, they are less inclined to take a bribe. This is assumedly because they would have the financial incentive or need to take a bribe. A study on the question” Do Higher Government Wages Reduce Corruption? Evidence Based on a Novel Dataset by Van-Ha Le, Jakob de Haan and Erik Dietzenbacher. In which they found that “The impact of government wages on corruption is moderated by the level of per capita income. When income per capita is relatively low, higher government wages reduce corruption. This negative impact reduces as the level of income increases, and eventually becomes positive, though insignificant. Intuitively, petty corruption is more prevalent in poor countries, and well-paid bureaucrats forgo such type of corruption. However, when income is higher, petty corruption becomes less important. Grand corruption, involving more secret transactions that violate the laws and regulations, becomes prevalent. This type of corruption brings about larger revenues that outweigh any realistic compensation package to the corrupted bureaucrats. It is also more difficult to detect. To combat the latter form of corruption, increasing government wages might not be efficient.”.

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