

a news service from transparency international-kenya

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HARAMBEE: THE SPIRIT OF GIVING OR REAPING?

An interview with Eric Makokha, Chief Executive Officer, Shelter Forum

How would you describe the spirit of harambee?

To capture the spirit and mood of harambee since its inception, we need to go back to the time of independence because that is where Kenya as a country got on to the harambee spirit and pushed it forward. We need to understand the philosophy behind that. Kenya had so many social and economic projects it wanted to undertake. Given the limited resources as there were too little resources in government coffers, and the speed at which our people wanted to move forward, there was need to identify a driving force towards the desired economic goals.

The founding president decided to tap resources from our own African spirit which was basically there in many spheres of life. When people wanted to plant they would call neighbours, relatives and friends and in a day do an enormous amount of work. So it was just to translate that on to the modern scenario. It was basically a movement to try and get us to faster achieve some targeted goals. This spirit was embraced in the 1960s and 1970s with that kind of understanding. We knew what it was for and agreed it was a good vehicle to get us to the desired goals. The social dimension of harambee was that it brought people together as one, that what is good for one is good for the other. If you could not achieve what you had set to achieve, there were always relatives, neighbours and friends to fall back to. The economic side of it was that the resources people used to achieve set goals were limited. So it was an issue of let us see how we can help an individual in the economic achievement of their goals.

There was a third aspect that came in the late 1980s and got worse in the 1990s. In this aspect, the social value of harambee was relegated to the sides. In the 1980s, our politicians created another different meaning altogether. They saw it as a vehicle to power where people would see them as politicians who can deliver. This introduced selfishness in the sense that it looked at the mileage the individual wanted to gain out of the harambee. So instead of it being used as a common vehicle, it became a personal vehicle to elevate somebody's interests. Questions like how many harambees do I attend or how much do I chip, set in. Previously when harambees were conducted quietly, nobody knew how much had been raised. But in the recent past, politicians loudly announced their collection and even before going to the harambee, they would make sure

people knew they were going for a harambee. If the politicians realised the pressmen were not there, they were very unhappy. This is how harambees became personal.

...if the government can set up insurance or medical scheme... free education... do its work of providing everyone with basic services... there is no need for harambee

Since the 1980s, harambees stopped being voluntary. The element of coercion came in. The politician, in collusion with provincial administration started using them. Whereas previously people attended harambees on their own accord, they started being forced to attend particular harambees. And even on the D-day, the chief organized his men to go around the village collecting chicken, goats and sheep and other such items for the harambee. So the element of voluntary spirit disappeared.

How have harambees fared in the last few years?

In the 1990s, the politicians wanted to control everything and it is in this era we see the real vehicle of power coming into play. Then the problem of accountability came into play – how much was raised, who was collecting it, who was in charge of the collection. Politicians took advantage of this vacuum and took charge of the money raised including its disbursement. This is the time that the amount raised started being banked in an individual's account. This opened up elements of corruption.

Politicians are overly involved in harambees. What is your view on this?

Due to the change of philosophy over the years, the politician, who is to be the chief guest in a harambee, feels

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Harambee: the spirit of giving or reaping?

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like he is doing that community a favour. The community also begins to believe that the politician is doing them a favour. And since politicians have been handling harambees over the years, there has been the mentality that the politician is the one bringing money to the harambee. In the 1960s, everybody contributed silently, however little or much, but the presence was equally gratifying. The social value of contributing to harambees has now disappeared and has been replaced by gatherings of the rich. Since the 1990s, most attendees of harambees have just been spectators and do not contribute. The mentality that the politicians are the ones bringing in money to harambees gave them leeway to take control of even the proceeds. But if everybody contributed, there would be the social corporate responsibility in the management of the proceeds.

How has coercion in harambees occurred at the community and government levels?

At the community level, the major culprit was the provincial administration. They saw harambees as a means to promotion hence power. The more the amount raised in a certain jurisdiction, the more the junior staff caught the attention of the powers that be. You could be promoted from District Officer I all the way to a district commissioner (DC) very quickly. So the DC would put pressure on his DO who would put pressure on the chief who would do the same to the headman and so on. Then the headman would go banging on people's doors for that money. This was the coercion at that level. At the higher levels and political circles, this was a publicity strategy. Politicians knew the function may be broadcast, so they had to be seen to raise big money. They would also put pressure on the permanent secretary downwards and consequently to other members of staff and visitors. There was another level of coercion where the higher you were the more you had to contribute. But there were hardly any incidents where anybody contributed more than the president as that would have been seen as insubordination.

Records indicate that some politicians contributed millions of shillings to harambees. How realistic is such a scenario bearing in mind a politician's salary?

Politicians were contributing what they could not even be able to earn in five years or more. This raised eyebrows, where was this money coming from? It is basically a question of corruption. Somebody was getting money from a certain source which could not be accounted for. Then, of course there used to be many fat bouncing cheques, but out of fear the organisers would not talk about it. You would be amazed if someone came up with correct statistics about the number of cheques that bounced and their total value.

How have community-based organisations benefited from harambees?

There are many groups that have benefited from harambees and have achieved their targeted figures. But on the other hand, there are many who have been ripped off. There are some people who are invited to fundraise for women groups and if the groups do not have an account, the contributor offers to keep the money in his account. After that, the

money disappears. Some community-based organisations have raised funds to buy pieces of land, only to realize that the land sold to them did not belong to the purported seller. So as much as corruption in harambees has been at the national level, community-based organisations have also been victims to that effect.

In your opinion is it necessary to look into the whole issue of harambees and why?

The taskforce should find out where we lost the original philosophy and how we can reclaim it. Kenyans have been ripped of their monies through harambees, and there should be a way of doing justice to the victims. The taskforce should come up with mechanism for retribution for this. The taskforce should recommend other mechanisms of fundraising apart from harambees. It should find ways of ensuring that the direction harambees have taken should never happen again. It should also come up with mechanisms for accountability and transparency of funds raised through any fundraising strategies, not only harambees.

In instances of private harambees (for individuals), should the taskforce look into them or should it limit itself to public harambees?

It should be for both. We should come up with mechanisms of controlling harambee so that a member of parliament, minister or anybody else does not advance his or her own selfish ends. Likewise, since corruption has crept into every corner of the society, then we should not exempt private harambees. We have known people who claim they want to fundraise to go for studies, but never go, so we should cover all spheres of harambee.

What would be the impact if harambees were banned?

If the 1990s are anything to go by, then there may be no negative impact because the money was used for wrongful purposes. But there are those genuine cases. We have had bursaries, medical emergencies and other aspects that have helped the poor access basic needs. If they are well managed, if the government can set up insurance or medical scheme that cater for everyone, if free education continues and is supported even to higher levels, and if the government can do its work of providing everyone with basic services, then I think there is no need for harambee.

We must look at the system in totality before we can condemn harambees, and we must collect all the revenue and channel all of it to worthy causes. If the government collected its revenue and dispensed it correctly, we would not need to keep borrowing from outside. The way Kenya has been looted yet it has not gone on its knees, is evidence that this country is very rich. It is the untapped potential of this country that has seen us this far. If the potential is fully tapped, we will even be ahead of South Africa.

Shelter Forum is an NGO that brings together key players to facilitate access to affordable and decent shelter for marginalised groups

HARAMBEES: WHICH WAY FOR KENYANS?

*Excerpts from a speech made by Hon. Koigi wa Wamwere, Chairman,
Task force on Harambees, during the task force's launch*

I would like to echo Hon. Kiraitu Murungi's (Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs) sentiments that, harambee has been a means of distributing poverty among the poor. However, there are a lot of people who think otherwise. A while ago at Bomas, I told an MP that I was coming for this function. He told me to be careful not to abolish harambees. We have not made up our minds which way to go. We are here to investigate and make recommendations that will reflect the wishes of the majority of our people.

Most of the politicians have not had much choice about harambees. It has not been a question of liking or not liking. It is a question of being asked to come to people's harambees or else you are shown the way out. So I am quite sure that many politicians are hardly in love with harambees, but they do not have much of a choice so they go along. No one should therefore assume that we are here to pose our personal positions on this subject. We are doing an investigation and it will be up to Kenyans to decide whether to preserve harambees or not. Ours is simply to collect their views, analyse them, write a report and present it to the government for execution.

As the national taskforce on harambees, we believe our first business is to understand harambee by posing the following questions:

- ♦ What was harambee in the beginning, and what is it today
- ♦ What is it today
- ♦ Why do many people think that harambee has become a menace to the very society it purports to serve
- ♦ What is good about harambees?
- ♦ Can the good and the bad about harambees be preserved together?

To get answers to these questions, we will examine all the reports that have hitherto been written on this subject, by among others the Parliamentary Anti-corruption Select Committee of May 2000, and conduct public hearings everywhere in the country. Now that the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs has launched the taskforce, it is our hope and prayer that everyone in our country will help us accomplish the task. However, without prejudice to public views on Harambee, the taskforce has these initial observations:

- § That though confused with traditional communal and family self-help work, harambees are a completely different phenomenon
- § That the genesis of harambee practice goes back to those who built the Kenya-Uganda Railway, calling upon one another to work harder.
- § That from the fields of hard labour, the harambee phenomenon, has like some flying insects,

metamorphosed from beautiful service to obnoxious corruption.

...to separate the self-help spirit both from the corrupt and oppressive aspects of harambee, our rich must learn philanthropy that will give them everlasting legacies and put their money to good use.

§ Harambee was popularized and successfully used by our founding fathers, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and others as a rallying cry for all our people to endure, unite and make their final push for independence. This harambee was so successful that it was imprinted on the national court of arms.

§ That after independence, Kenyans everywhere embraced harambee to build themselves schools that the government later supplied with teachers and finally took over

§ That as the volcanoes of greed in our country erupted and the love of corruption covered the whole land, harambee was not spared. Harambees were no longer instruments of serving but of exploiting the community individually and collectively

§ That government bodies, ministries and departments were vandalized and workers salaries possibly deducted to raise money to take to presidential harambees. Those who objected were punished instantly.

§ That as harambees were conducted in government offices, only those who contributed to them got government services. In politics, harambees have become auctions, where poor voters sell political offices to the highest bidder, and politicians buy occupancy of local councils, parliament and even presidency. Eventually this has led to the commercialization of leadership and power. Indeed, the worst harm harambee has done to this country is to distort the meaning of leadership for example, that the work of a member of parliament is to use harambee to build hospitals, schools and churches for the citizens. With few exceptions, harambee has now given Kenyans not the best but the richest leaders. It has rendered the leadership of good ideas and ideals obsolete.

§ That the corrupt do not use harambees to buy leadership and protection from leaders only. They also use harambees to buy social acceptability from poor Kenyans and primary victims of corruption who never question where the big money comes from. Through harambees, the most corrupt have become local heroes, celebrities and role models for the youth and encouraged Kenyans to embrace corruption

Harambees have also acquired the awesome power to corrupt our spiritual integrity and welfare. As Christians everywhere turn a blind eye to the corrupt way of the men and women whom we invite to build our churches, schools and buy gifts

Harambees: which way for Kenyans?

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for our priests, pastors and, even bishops, they lose their power and authority to challenge corruption and all of us move on without questioning, losing our morality and spirituality. We seem to have reached a stage where we believe that even God must be corruptible and we can buy our way into heaven with money.

Through the ruthlessness of many, harambees have turned society cannibalistic. Clearly, one reason why many people do not like harambees is because they smell corruption. The other reason is that they cannot afford them since they don't have money. Also, harambees are simply too many, people feel harassed because everywhere they turn, somebody is asking them for some form of harambee contribution.

There must be things that people in other countries carry out to assist their needy. The task force must look for that. Instead of asking poor people to contribute, people in these countries ask big companies and extremely wealthy individuals to become philanthropic and donate money to worthy causes like hospitals, medical research organizations, scholarships and universities. In Kenya, Africans would rather bank their money abroad or buy leadership with their money than put up endowment funds

to support worthy causes. If we are to separate the self-help spirit both from the corrupt and oppressive aspects of harambee, our rich must learn philanthropy that will give them everlasting legacies and put their money to good use.

To discourage the type of harambees that poor people cannot afford, the taskforce

would like to believe that it can plead with big companies in this country to give the poor the kind of support they now seek from harambees. In this way, the country may be able to get rid of oppressive harambees without killing the spirit of being our brothers' and sisters' keepers. It is the belief of the harambee task force that, given the current symbiosis between corruption and harambee, harambee will either be fought into extinction alongside corruption or be cleansed of this vice to survive. Together with the people who have been both supporters of the positive spirit of harambee and victims of its corruption, it will be our business to investigate either possibility.

We seem to have reached a stage where we believe that even God must be corruptible and we can buy our way into heaven with money

WHAT OPTIONS FOR HARAMBEEES?

An interview with Monica Mutuku, Vice-Chairperson, Task force on Harambees

What is the origin of harambee?

There are a number of theories, but the common use of the word was first popularised by the then Prime Minister of Kenya, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta in 1963, and went on to become the motto for pulling resources together for the reconstruction of the then newly independent state.

Harambee was envisioned as a key strategy for development. Has this been the case and if not why?

Harambees from independence up to the eighties were, in my opinion, fine because most of them were for good courses. Corruption at the time had not become so bad. There may not be concrete data but their contribution to the growth of the economy was very tangible. About 50% of all secondary schools were harambee schools, which were later adopted by the government as government schools. Consider that all rural primary schools were always built by the local communities on the basis of harambee. This means very many people went to school because of the harambee initiative.

The local communities also used to initiate projects like health clinics, dispensaries and other health facilities on a self-help basis. Likewise, many people would perhaps have died had such health facilities not been put up, or many would have died had there not been a harambee call to raise funds to take somebody to hospital. I know of many situations where communities have come together with

medical staff to contribute to the purchase of drugs for public health clinics because the government is not supplying them. Thus communities have furnished their local medical clinics with drugs. Communities have also repaired or constructed roads in their locations through harambees. They contribute money and buy diesel for the government tractors, pay the drivers, and physically assist to have their roads done. Many rural roads were constructed on this basis.

What is your opinion on the view that harambees have become more of a political tool as opposed to a development one?

I think we have to blame the politicians. They saw it as an avenue for introducing themselves to the constituents. If one had intentions of becoming a councillor or going to parliament, then the entry point became the harambee and people accepted that if people wanted to become politicians they had to conduct harambees.

So harambees became a measuring rod used to measure performance of the best candidate in terms of how many harambees that candidate has conducted, how many projects he/she has initiated and so on. Due to the corruption thriving in the country then, there was lack of accountability/she has conducted, how much he/she has raised and what was done with the amount collected.

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...What options for harambees?

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Harambees have contributed significantly to the development of this nation, but are said to have become avenues of corruption. Are they going to be banned?

We have been assigned the task of looking into harambees. Whether they are going to be banned or loopholes tightened will depend on what the public wants. We want Kenyans to come forward and tell us what they think. There are always two sides to a coin. There are those who think harambees should be banned, while others think otherwise. So we are going to enquire into them and find out what Kenyans want.

What went wrong with the government such that people had to contribute to basic services which the government was supposed to provide free?

It was obviously corruption in the government and basically mismanagement. I do not believe that the government was not collecting sufficient funds. They were collecting about Ksh200 billion or so per year, which was not being properly accounted for to justify that there is no money for drugs in health centres, or there is no money for petrol for the road construction machines.

What mechanisms were in place to ensure that recipients of harambees such as churches were accountable for the funds raised?

Concrete mechanisms of accountability for majority of the funds raised have not been there. This also applies to the church, which also needs to be made more accountable. The church wants us to believe it is only raising funds for God's work- that is not being disputed. But even for God's work, we should be told how the money was spent. Churches are the best fundraisers but not all of them are accountable.

You are in the Harambee taskforce set up by the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Kiraitu Murungi. How will the task force go about collecting data?

We are coming up with that decision soon. We will look into how to deal with issues of public hearings and how to collect other data.

In instances of private harambees (for individuals), does the task force have a role in looking into these or will it limit itself to public harambees?

We will be looking at harambees in general, though our main concern is public collections as we are looking at the Public Collections Act. But then when is a harambee an individual's issue? When you are holding a harambee for your personal needs, you are still asking for help from the public, so it is still a public collection. So whether we call them family support, mutual support, merry go-rounds or goat-eating, they all have elements of reciprocity or mutual support.

How would you reconcile harambees as we know them with the spirit of philanthropy?

Philanthropy is a growing phenomenon in the world today. We are having a situation where qualities have been increasing with globalisation. We have a lot of upcoming young wealthy millionaires. For example in the information technology industry there are many wealthy people including.

Kenyans abroad who would like to send money back home for a worthy course. This is called diaspora philanthropy. There is also, in Kenya, the growing middle class who benefited from harambees in one way or the other, and want to contribute something. This has resulted in increased corporate social responsibility.

There is a growing movement of community foundations that mobilise community resources to deal with community issues and development such as poverty issues.

The concept of the community foundation works on the principle of a community contributing to a local foundation so that they permanently have funds to do various charitable activities in the community. So it is one resource that we should look into. We should provide people with a mechanism in which they can give and we can become accountable to them in terms of what the foundation did with the money.

If we did away with harambees, how would such foundations assist individual needs such as medical bills and fees for study?

People can set up permanent funds for doing those sorts of things. For example, if one was interested in giving scholarships to those who want to go and study abroad, such monies can be channelled to local foundations. If it is one million, for example, the contributor instructs the foundation to give the accruing interest to deserving individuals. We need such kind of foundations which take the responsibility of helping people to give in an organized, structured, formal and accountable way.

Any last comments?

Kenyans should look at their giving spirit and see how they can introduce more integrity, accountability and transparency. The giving is there. But we need to ensure that our giving is in a more organized way.

Ms Mutuku is also the CEO of the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF). KCDF is Kenya's first public foundation that mobilizes resources for building permanent funds for grant making towards the development of communities

HARAMBEES: A POLITICIAN'S BEST FRIEND?

By Osendo Con Omore

Harambee, a word meaning pooling resources together for development, has been a Kenyan, homegrown tool for raising funds to subsidize what the government provides for development purposes. It began in the 1960's and was used to raise funds for various projects key being water, agriculture and educational. Many Kenyans can attest to the fact that they have been educated through harambees. Many communities and self-help groups can testify that they have flourished and developed and have access to amenities because of harambees. Many politicians can also say that harambees provided a launching pad for their political careers.

Loyalty Pledge

As the 1980s approached, politicians seemed to have realized that harambee functions are probably the best forums for making and breaking political careers. Furthermore, harambees could serve as a stage for displaying their wealth, mostly ill-gotten. Thus at the turn of the decade, harambee got a new face and identity. Politicians traversed the country giving to this project and that fund, to a self-help group here, and a cattle dip there. Harambee became the mother of patronage politics. High profile harambees surfaced such that if the politician was not in attendance his job would be on the line. The politician had to also make hefty contribution, which brought a momentary air of importance and status to the contributor.

Amounts and Beneficiaries

The amounts contributed and raised in harambees were ridiculously high. Contributors were mainly public officers whose income is public knowledge. Thus, the source of such immense wealth displayed in harambees is highly questionable. A research conducted by Transparency International- Kenya on harambees between January 2000 and September 2002 reveals that, 60% of harambees held were educational, which receive the highest amount of proceeds.

An interesting phenomenon known as district/constituency bursary funds was mooted a few years ago and almost every Member of Parliament (MP) took it upon himself/herself to organize bursary harambees. Church-related projects also account for about 20% of harambee activity. The close interaction between church leaders and politicians has resulted in many of the men of the cloth engaging in corrupt activities due to their ascendancy in the power ladder.

Harambees conducted in the recent past have raised an average of Kshs1 million each. Contributors give anything from Kshs.100,000 to Kshs.10 million. Contributions are made either by being present or sending emissaries. Either way, one's presence and influence is felt by their contribution.

Antics and Elections

In October 2002, an MP who is currently in parliament raised Kshs.8.5 Million in thirty five minutes! In addition,

another MP, also who is in parliament, supervised 17 harambees by helicopter in his constituency! And another MP who did not make it to parliament this time organized a walk that was launched in a Nairobi hotel, complete with beauty queens, from his constituency in Western Province to Nairobi to raise funds for the constituency bursary fund. What was impressive is that... he actually walked.

Empirical research shows that harambee contributions and their frequency escalate during the second half of an election year. All of a sudden, outgoing MPs and those campaigning for a chance to get into parliament, use fundraising functions to flex their political muscles. Donations are usually hefty and the usual promises and abuses heaped at their opponents are launched from this platform. The multiparty election of 1992 and 1997 account for 60% of that decade's total contributions.

Reforms

The Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Hon. Kiraitu Murungi, recently set up a task force to look into the origins, relevance and impact of harambees in the Kenyan society. It will, among others, investigate the nature, forms and linkages of corruption, extortion and other abuses of harambees.

The Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Select Committee report of 2000 recommended the revision of the Public Collections Act (Cap106) and the banning of all harambees. It also proposed the enactment of a leadership code and code of conduct which will specify categories of public officers who should not participate in harambees due to the nature of their duties.

The Public Officers Ethics Bill 2003 section 12 states that "A public officer shall not use his office or place of work as a venue for soliciting or collecting harambee."

With the right, friendly legal framework, harambees can continue contributing enormously to national development.

CITIZENS' VIEWS ON HARAMBEES

- ◆ *Harambees are a source of socializing, capital and a means of informal philanthropy*
- ◆ *Harambees tempt politicians to steal to cover up for what they give*
- ◆ *If the government can provide all the basic social amenities, it can ban harambees*
- ◆ *Harambees are good but we should kick corruption out of them*
- ◆ *If the rich hold harambees to send their kids abroad, it's not fair*

GLOBAL ANTICORRUPTION FORUM URGES ACTIONS

An international conference on fighting corruption ended its four-day session in Seoul yesterday (May 27), adopting a statement calling for concerted efforts by government, the judiciary, the private sector and civil society. "All are part of the problem, and all have an active part to play in achieving solutions," said the statement issued at the closing plenary of the 11th International Anti-Corruption Conference. "We state our strong conviction that there is absolutely no substance in the myth that corruption is a matter of culture. Rather, it offends the beliefs and traditions of us all," participants said in their statement. More than 1,000 figures from 110 countries around the world attended the biennial conference, the largest global anticorruption event which began in 1983. Under the theme of "Different Cultures, Common Values," participants at the Seoul conference discussed ways to achieve a common goal of uprooting corruption and building an accountable and transparent society. They held four plenary sessions and 60 workshops divided into 12 categories such as building ethics in the real world and international instruments to combat corruption. The conference will be followed by the 3rd Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, which opens a three-day session in Seoul today. In their statement, the conference participants called for strengthened efforts to combat human trafficking and corruption in development projects and health and pharmaceuticals sectors. The statement also emphasized the importance of protecting whistle-blowers from reprisals and the need to raise standards

of transparency and accountability within civil society. It noted water and energy resources should be considered public goods, access to which is a fundamental human right. "If privatized, the decision-making process should be fully transparent, and strict conditions must be applied," the statement said. Participants expressed their recognition for them having moved past mere words into the sphere of concrete and concerted action. "As we continue in our efforts, we will do so in the conviction that the values we all share will place us in good stead throughout the years ahead," they said in the statement. While the IACC is an event in which participants attend in their personal capacities, the Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity, which was launched in 1999 in Washington under the auspices of the U.S. government, is an intergovernmental conference held on the ministerial level. Prominent attendants at the third GF in Seoul will include OECD Secretary-General Donald Johnston, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans, Saudi Arabian Justice Minister Abdullah Al Shiek and Harada Akio, prosecutor general of Japan. U.S. President George W. Bush and Javier Solana, secretary-general of the European Union Council, are also scheduled to send video messages for the opening ceremony, said Justice Ministry officials organizing the forum.

Korea Herald, May 28

ANTI-GRAFT GURU UPBEAT ABOUT KOREA

Peter Eigen, founder and chairman of Berlin-based Transparency International, is in Seoul to attend the International Anti-Corruption Conference. Eigen spent over two decades working in economic development projects, serving as a program manager in Africa and Latin America for the World Bank before he became a leader of a worldwide anti-corruption movement in 1993. Eigen says his personal experiences were what pushed him to devote his life to the anti-corruption movement. Many of the World Bank projects under his management failed due to the cozy relationships between companies and African governments, making him frustrated and angry at the same time. Even civic groups were skeptical about his idea to create an anti-corruption organization, saying the chain of corruption would never be broken. Some ridiculed him as a Don Quixote. But his efforts paid off, and after 10 years, TI grew to have some 80 branches around the world.

The organization releases an annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and Bribe Payers Index (BPI), which many governments pay close attention to.

When the organization releases its corruption index, countries at the bottom of the list often complain and sometimes strongly protest. Carlos Menem, former president of Argentina, called Eigen a "criminal," Eigen said, and the president of Cameroon Paul Biya called him the "enemy of Africa." But he is unruffled by harsh criticisms, for he believes the index is based on ample and fairly-acquired evidence. Still, Eigen does not deny

that the index could be subjective, since it is calculated based on surveys of the citizens of each country. Ironically, the stronger the country's will to eradicate corruption, the more extensively the media will cover the issue, so the citizens may overestimate the problem. Conversely, under autocratic regimes that conceal their corruption, citizens might be oblivious to it. Eigen affirms that the best way to stamp out corruption is to ensure open information. The anti-corruption movement is like the human immune system, says Eigen. Like a human body has the immune system ready for possible invasion by viruses, the anti-corruption movement should prepare organic response systems in all fields, from punishments to ombudsmen to accounting to fiscal discipline.

Korea was ranked at the 40th among the 102 countries in the last year's CPI, and 18th among 21 countries in the BPI. Eigen says he was impressed to hear the news that the former president's backdoor dealing with Pyongyang will be investigated. He is optimistic about Korea's chances of getting a higher ranking soon, noting the government's and civic groups' strong wills to eradicate corruption. While Korea's ranking has remained steady for the last few years, Eigen pointed out that it only takes a minute for a country to sink into corruption, but the recovery takes a long time.

The Chosun Ilbo, May 28

Upcoming Events

June 9-20: Financial Management for Development
NGOs: Foundations, Tools and Strategies
Organisers: Management Accounting for Non
Governmental Organisations (Mango)
Location: Oxford or London, UK
Contact: Barbara Johnstone bjohnstone@mango.org.uk
Website: www.mango.org.uk

June 12-13: First Annual Strathmore University Ethics
Conference - The Objective of Business Management
Venue: Strathmore University, Madaraka Estate
E-mail: dlutz@strathmore.edu
Internet: www.strathmore.edu

June 17-27: Public Administration and Civil Service
Management
Organisers: UNESCO and Galilee College
Location: Tivon, Israel
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Think about it...

Corruption is a concern in the public and private sectors alike, distorting economies and finances and creating incentives that impact every level of society. It puts democratic institutions in peril, holds up countries' socioeconomic advancement and, if allowed to take root, can undermine the credibility of democratic institutions and systems.

**Enrique Iglesias, President
Inter-American Development Bank**

On a lighter note

While proudly showing off his new apartment to friends, a college student led the way into the den. "What is the big brass gong and hammer for?" one of his friends asked. "That is the talking clock," the man replied. "How's it work?"

"Watch," the man said and proceeded to give the gong an ear shattering pound with the hammer. Suddenly, someone screamed from the other side of the wall, "Knock it off, you idiot! It's two o'clock in the morning!"

TASK FORCE ON HARAMBEES LAUNCHED

A task force to look into public collections (harambees) has been set up. It was launched last month by Hon. Kiraitu Murungi, Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The terms of reference for the task force are:

- (a) to investigate the origins, relevance and impact of public collections (popularly known as "harambees") in the Kenyan society
- (b) to investigate the nature, forms and linkages of corruption, extortion and other abuses of "harambees"
- (c) to make policy and legislative proposals for the introduction of transparency and accountability in "harambees" in order to prevent their abuse
- (d) to review the Public Collections Act (Cap. 106) with a view to institutionalizing philanthropy, charities, and endowment funds in Kenya
- (e) to make recommendations as to the nature of "harambees" in Kenya
- (f) to make any further recommendations incidental to the foregoing, and to make a report of its findings to the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

In the performance of its functions, the task force:

- (a) shall hold such number of meetings in such places and at such times as the task force shall consider necessary for the proper discharge of its functions
- (b) shall receive views from members of the public and receive oral and/or written submissions from any person with relevant information
- (c) may use official reports of any previous investigations relevant to its mandate
- (d) may carry out or cause to be carried out such studies or researches as may inform the task force on its mandate.

The Chairman of the task force is Hon. Koigi wa Wamwere, while Ms Monica Mutuku is the Vice-chairperson. The members are Justin Muturi, the Permanent Secretary of the ministry responsible for provincial administration or his representative, George Nyamweya, Mwalimu Mati, Albert Mbungu, Abdulaziz Mwendia, Gaciku Kangari, Prof. Gideon Mutiso, James Orendo, Gervase Akhaabi, Jacob Haji, Kagwiria Mbogori and Ezekiel Abang (Secretary).

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