

Developing and implementing a national strategic change management framework towards the eradication of corruption in Nigeria

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Introduction

On May 29th, 2016, the government of President Muhammadu Buhari was one year in office. A number of articles have been written and views expressed on the media on the performance of his administration. The focus of this paper is not on performance analysis of the government but on the mantra of change which he made the clarion call for his electioneering campaign. Whereas change was used in the campaign to highlight their intention to transform the whole country for the better, change as it affects the eradication of corruption is the priority of this paper. It is evident that the anticorruption campaign has been in the forefront of the president's activities within the past year. It has been closely followed by the fight against Boko Haram. Eradication of corruption in the country is an inescapable task. Apart from the hardship it causes internally, it has given us a very bad press externally for the past thirty years and more.

The statement made by Prime Minister David Cameron on May 10 that "Nigeria is one of the fantastically corrupt nation" drives home the scale of the problem as perceived by outsiders. It is unhelpful arguing about whether or not he is correct because it will serve no purpose. The productive approach, in the view of this writer, should be for us Nigerians to take effective actions to resolve whatever problems we have because it should be in our interest to eradicate the cankerworm of corruption that is destroying the moral, social and economic fabric of our nation.

The contribution of this paper is therefore to turn the searchlight onto ourselves as a nation, list some cases of corruption in our current history, and to present them as manifestations of the malaise in our nation. In effect, they constitute a definition of the problem that needs to be solved. It is also the objective of this paper to make suggestions for its solution. It is hoped that some of the readers may be challenged enough to join efforts towards the eradication of corruption especially following efforts in this paper to expose and disclose some real-life cases of corruption in our recent political and socio-economic history. It does us no good to sweep the problem under the carpet. Its eradication necessitates a clear definition of its various facets, agreeing on a strategic vision of what a corruption-free nation should be, and exploring options that could be translated into nation-wide activities for the implementation of goals that will ensure the actualisation of the vision. All these comprise a strategic framework for the eradication of corruption in our nation.

A strategic framework

The comprehensive eradication of corruption in all its forms calls for the use of a strategic framework to ensure holistic and sustainable efforts that will yield the desired

corruption-free nation. There should be a clear vision of what the country should become in every aspect of our national life. It is essential that there should be proper identification of corruption in the recent history and the current events of the country. The strategic planning and implementation tasks consist of activities that should move the nation from the unacceptable position to the desired envisioned status. This done, it may become feasible to explore probable options that could be considered in the drawing up of a plan and implementation steps of the programme.

Accordingly, the rest of the contents of the paper consist of the following:

1. Problem definition
2. Strategic options for the design of solutions
3. Analysis of options
4. Recommendations on a tentative solution
5. Conclusion

1. Problem definition

It is proposed that brief historical review of the problem of corruption in Nigeria is undertaken first. To appreciate the enormity or otherwise of the problem, it becomes necessary to look back into the history of the nation and choose a point at which it could be assumed that corruption became a major problem. It may be unwise and indeed inconsequential to start designing a solution without a clear understanding of the problem. Going back to history, it is suggested to start with the administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo.

General Obasanjo's Administration (February 1976 – September 1979) [1]

The administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo was a continuation of the administration of the assassinated General Murtala Mohammed. Having overthrown the regime of General Gowon, the focus of the administration was to eradicate the national ills, as they saw them, and then move the nation from military to civilian rule. Major projects including the building of new refineries, pipelines, etc., as well as hosting the Festival of Black Arts and Culture in Lagos in 1977 (FESTAC) were executed during the administration. A number of these national projects were allegedly conduits to distribute favors and enrich connected politicians. The famous Afrobeat musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, sang variously about major scandals involving the rulers and soldiers of the nation. There was one on an international telecommunication company, ITT, led by Chief MKO Abiola in Nigeria. He was allegedly associated with the then Head of State, Gen Olusegun Obasanjo. Fela, in one of his records, changed the acronym ITT to stand for International Thief, Thief. (BBC News, Thursday, 2 August 2007)

General Buhari's Administration (December 1983 – August 1985) [1]

The ill-famous 53 suitcases incident happened in 1984 during the currency change exercise ordered by the Buhari government. It directed that every case arriving in the country should be inspected irrespective of the status of its owner. The 53 suitcases

were, however, reportedly carried through the Murtala Muhammed International Airport without a customs check by soldiers. This was allegedly following the instruction of Major Mustapha Jokolo, the then aide-de-camp to General Buhari. Abubakar Atiku was at that time the Area Comptroller of Customs in charge of the airport. The spokesperson for Atiku, Garba Shehu, explained that: "In his own account (Adiniyi-Ojo's) the story is how big men and women consider the observance of laid down procedure as something that is belittling. Soldiers who came to pick the suitcases were rude and crude and threatened Customs officers who had insisted on inspecting the suitcases." [5] Research conducted in writing this paper showed that the cases belonged to some Nigerian ambassadors and their families who were returning to the country. Read more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/03/53-suitcases-saga-buhari-blasts-atiku-jonathan/>

General Babangida Administration (August 1985 – August 1993) [1]

A lot of allegations have been made against this regime. For example, it is alleged that his administration refused to give account of the windfall fund from the Gulf War, which has been estimated to be \$12.4 billion. This was the income supposedly earned by the Nigerian government through the sale of oil as price of oil sky rocketed during the Gulf War, from 2nd August 1990 to 28 February 1991.

General Abacha Administration (Nov 1993 – June 1998)

Abacha ruled Nigeria for five years after a 1993 coup, and he is alleged to have stolen \$4.3bn while in office. Following his death in 1998, the Nigerian government asked Switzerland to help it recover \$2.2bn that he was said to have hidden in Swiss banks.

Switzerland planned to give Nigeria \$380m (£260m) on Tuesday, March 17, 2015, a part of the money recovered from the loot by Sani Abacha and stored in European bank accounts. [18]

Chief Obasanjo administration (May 1999 – May 2007)

On January 18 2012, a Japanese conglomerate Marubeni Corp agreed to pay \$54.6 million to the US Government in criminal fines for its role in a scheme to win billions of dollars of contracts by bribing Nigerian government officials. The charges, brought by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, relate to Marubeni's actions as agent for TSKJ, a four-company joint venture that sought contracts to build a liquefied natural gas plant. Between 1995 and 2004 TSKJ, made up of Technip, Snamprogetti Netherlands, Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR) and JGC Corporation, was awarded four contracts valued at more than \$6 billion by Nigeria LNG Ltd (NLNG) to build the LNG facilities on Bonny Island. Government-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation was the largest shareholder in NLNG, owning 49 percent. Marubeni said it had agreed to pay the fine as part of a Deferred Prosecution Agreement with the DOJ [19].

Another allegation was that the Operation Feed the Nation Program, (OFN) with the associated Land Use Decree implemented by the then Head of State has been allegedly linked to the world-class Otta Farm Nigeria (OFN) [20] . Bells University of

Technology, Ota; Otta Farm; and the Obasanjo Presidential Library at Ota in Ogun State are all allegedly owned by Chief Obasanjo.

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua administration (May 2007 –May 2010)

There are a few allegations of political corruption in this regime. The most notorious was the use of his Attorney General, AG Aondakaa, to frustrate ongoing local and international investigations of his powerful friends such as Governor Ibori who was wanted in the UK for money laundering.

Dr. Goodluck Jonathan Administration (2010-2015)

The government of Goodluck Jonathan had several running scandals including the BMW Purchase by his Aviation Minister, for \$250 million, plus security contracts to militants in the Niger Delta. Others include alleged corruption in the Ministry of Petroleum, Malibu Oil International Scandal and several others involving the Ministry of Petroleum. It has been alleged that in Goodluck Jonathan's four year rule as elected President, it was Mrs, Alison-Madueke, and not the Finance Minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who controlled Nigeria's purse strings. She determined how much the NNPC should remit to the state coffers and what it should keep.[5].

Other allegations include:

- \$2.2 billion illegally withdrawn from Excess Crude Oil Accounts of which \$1bn supposedly approved by President Jonathan to fund his reelection campaign without the knowledge of the National Economic Council made up of State Governors and the President & Vice President
- Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) discovered \$11.6 bn was missing from Nigeria LNG Company Dividend Payments
- 60 million barrels of oil valued at \$13.7bn was stolen under the watch of the national oil giant, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation from 2009 to 2012.
- NEITI indicates losses due to crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation from 2005 to 2012 indicated that \$11.63bn had been paid to the NNPC but that "there is no evidence of the money being remitted to the federation account."

President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 -

The government's anti-corruption war leaves a few unanswered questions. It appears political and selective. Hounding and "hunting down the opposition party, PDP, members over Jonathan's campaign fund disbursement without doing so to those that funded Buhari's campaign is contradictory and amounts to double standard", according to the writer of the quoted report. He continues: "That is the point the Sunday Mail of London rubbed in recently over the non-prosecution of alleged corrupt people in APC. The media trial of corruption suspects, and the despicable manner of arrest and detention without bail, do not serve the course of justice well" [21].

To exemplify this allegation, there is a publication by The Punch. Its headline with the story is as follows: **“N4bn campaign funds: Falae firm's account frozen, Fani-Kayode detained [11]** : The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has frozen the bank account of a company belonging to a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae, the PUNCH has learnt. It was gathered that the account with the United Bank for Africa titled Marecco Nigeria Limited with number 1000627022, was frozen as part of investigations into the N4bn disbursed by the Goodluck Jonathan Campaign Organisation during the build-up to the 2015 presidential election. The EFCC detained a former Minister of Aviation, Chief Femi Fani-Kayode, on Monday for receiving N840m from the campaign funds.

Other Examples of corruption

Having invested much space and time discussing cases of corruption against our rulers, it is necessary that cases against ordinary citizens should be presented.

A Federal Civil Servant – an Accountant Jailed [6]

This happened when a former accountant with the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) was convicted and imprisoned for six months without option of fine, for crimes that included stealing, abuse of office and forgery. The convict, Mr. Babatunde Abisuga, was reported to have fraudulently helped himself to the tune of N109 million, over US\$500,000, from pension funds. He was prosecuted in a High Court in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Nailing the accused with clear evidence and proof of his culpability, Abisuga who had earlier pleaded not guilty to the charges against him turned to a 'plea bargain' that earned him not only six months imprisonment but also loss of all the proceeds of the crime. This came after four years of prosecution, as the case commenced in April 2012.

Current Investigation of money laundering in the Federal Ministry of Health [7]

Operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) planned to interrogate some top management officials of the Federal Ministry of Health over allegations of diversion of public funds and money laundering. The officials were also expected to offer explanations on allegations of criminal conspiracy, embezzlement and abuse of office. In a letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Health, dated May 23, 2016, the anti-graft agency listed some of the officials to be interrogated as the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Director of Finance and Account at the ministry.

There have been intense allegations of misuse of Ebola fund, donor funds and several similar issues at the ministry. It was said that President Muhammadu Buhari on May 9 ordered full investigations into the alleged misuse of millions of dollars support to Nigeria from the Global Fund to Fight Malaria, AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). The President directed the EFCC to investigate the issue and bring those found culpable to book.

Ghost workers [8]

In his first year anniversary broadcast, the President stated that getting our housekeeping right meant the start of the treasury single account. This has led to the identification of forty-three thousand ghost workers through the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information system.

Sokoto State Uncovers N300m fraud in councils, totalling N4,2 billion stolen every month. [9]

Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal, reported that over N300m (US \$1 million) fraud was uncovered following the verification of workers' statuses in the 23 local government councils of the state. He disclosed that an official of a council sold 200 appointment letters to a contractor in the neighbouring Zamfara State. He added that the state government had recovered over N300m in one month from the payrolls of the 23 local government councils as a result of the ongoing verification exercise. "This fraud was discovered when the contractor sent a text to the Secretary to the Sokoto State Government (SSG), complaining that he had an agreement with an official who sold 200 appointment letters to him such that the salaries of the 200 persons would be remitted to him monthly. "When the official could not send the salaries of a particular month to the contractor in Zamfara, he then sent a text to the SSG while we were together. "The SSG showed me the text message, which informed our full-scale investigation into local government salary system."

N23bn Diezani bribe: 11 INEC officials admit receiving N120m [10]

Eleven officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission who supervised the 2015 general elections in Gombe State have reportedly admitted to receiving N120m out of the N23bn (\$115m) allegedly disbursed by a former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, according to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. The revelation came about a month after the EFCC arrested a former Resident Electoral Commissioner in Rivers State, Mrs. Gesila Khan, and other top INEC officials in the South-South for allegedly receiving N675.1m from Diezani.

New immigration boss vows to eliminate corruption at passport offices [15]

The new Comptroller General of the Nigeria immigration Service (NIS), Mr Muhammad Babandede has pledged to decentralise and eliminate corruption at all passport offices in the country. Babandede disclosed this in an interview on Thursday, June 2, in Abuja. He explained that the decentralisation with reorganisation of the passport offices, was part of the sweeping reforms that has been embarked on by his administration. "The Minister of Interior, Rtd Lt.-Gen. Abdulrahman Dambazau has tasked me to embark on this reform. "We have taken stock of previous reforms, so what we are doing now is to decentralise the process, so that everybody does not need to come to Abuja for their passport, "You know this creates tension in the system and even encourages corruption because of the pressure," he said. He explained that he has also given approval to the state commands to commence the change of name due to marriage and replacement of lost passports which was hitherto done in Abuja. "Approval for replacement of lost

passports shall henceforth be given by state comptrollers after online vetting and processing of application at the Passport Division in the Service's headquarters," he said. The Immigration boss said that as part of efforts to root out corruption at passport offices, the official fees/categories of passports will henceforth be displayed at various passport offices to ensure transparency.

Five-year jail term for lecturers who sexually molest students [16]

Lecturers who engage in sexual relationship with students would henceforth face a five-year jail term if a bill in the Senate is passed and assented to by President Muhammadu Buhari. It seeks to stop completely any form of sexual relationship between them and their students. Briefing journalists, Senator Omo-Agege, who sponsored the bill, said the nation's institutions of higher learning must be sanitised to rid them of lecturers who saw female students as "prize'."

2. Strategic Options for design of solutions

Going through the lists of cases, which include allegations against our rulers and also against us as the ruled, makes uncomfortable reading. The lists are only "a tip of the iceberg", as it were. Many cases have not been included in this write-up. However, suffice it here to suggest that all of us Nigerians are tainted with this ill of corruption directly or indirectly. It could be the case of a person stealing money from the nation for their use. It could also be the case of misusing the nation's money by installing unqualified or poorly persons into positions instead of qualified unrelated persons. The examples also show that corruption cuts across every facet of our national life and, indeed, it has been institutionalised in the country.

As a people, our vision should include the following objectives:

- To do business in the country with the confidence that there will be no unnecessary delays and deliberately created impediments on the transactions in government or private sector offices.
- To have contractors deliver projects for which they have been paid.
- To have politicians and public servants deliver the budget planning and implementation professionally as they have been intended.
- To have politicians not diverting public funds into their private accounts.
- To have politicians not diverting money budgeted for some public projects into personal use such as buying personal aircraft for party electioneering campaigns.
- To have politicians not diverting money budgeted for national projects such as procurement of arms into funding their party electioneering campaigns.
- To have the government decidedly fair to all Nigerians in its distribution of offices and national goods irrespective of their state of origin.
- To have a legal system that is truly independent and free to dispense justice to every person as their case deserves.
- To have students in academia receive the grades they achieve without any compromising requirements and attached strings of immorality, sexual or otherwise.

Lists of the objectives tied to this vision, the desired state of a corruption-free country and its implications to all the functionaries of the nation, have been deliberately made long. They should be longer to cover all the facets of services and functions in the country. Our vision describes a pleasant and desirable future which should inspire and motivate our decision makers. Such a vision does not just happen. It needs to be achieved. What strategies can be used to transform this vision into reality?

3. Analysis of Strategic options

There are questions to consider such that as the answers are found, they will enable the actualisation of our vision. They include the following:

What are we going to create?

In the foregoing paragraphs, a list of the envisioned corruption-free nation has been suggested. There are more facets of this vision that have not been listed. In the view of this writer, it is certainly unrealistic for one person to think and suggest that they have the answers to all our national problem of corruption. The solution should be implemented in a way to permeate the grassroots and create consciousness in all people in villages, cities, public and private sectors of the economy. It should involve every individual and all types of groups and organizations in the country. As a result, it should be necessary to give our citizens the opportunity to make suggestions on how to eradicate corruption.

Who will suggest the solutions?

The involvement of everyone is essential because corruption in the country is such that anybody working for the government is believed to be stupid if they do not embezzle or “steal” the property of their employer. If they succeed in emptying the purse and bringing the loot home, they are praised and crowned a hero[2]. This was a true life experience of this writer. Over thirty years ago, he travelled to a village and met the family of the general manager of the Nigerian Federal Government company for which he was working as an engineer. As he spoke with one of his elder brothers, the brother replied that they had been warning their brother to do something because it was a fool who would be working for the government and failed to enrich himself. He continued, the position is not permanent; he could be removed any time. The writer was quiet and could not say much to the unexpected lecture on how to work “wisely” for the government.

How and where we are going to create it?

A holistic methodology that would involve all citizens and combined with modern approaches is needed. For example, anti-corruption campaign with publicity and positive relevant education through all media, in the churches, mosques, community gatherings, market places, newspapers, TVs, and radios.

Through such publicity, our people will be educated in [2]:

- Learning civic duties and to be patriotic
- Understanding that government job or appointment is not a spring board to stealing
- Learning that elected offices are to serve their people with nobility
- Discouraging giving and taking of bribes
- Dishonouring community members who embezzle public funds or enrich themselves through dubious means
- Developing modern business ethics and be quality minded in production of goods and services
- Making and distributing stickers with such inscriptions as: “Help Police Fight Bribery & Corruption,” etc.
Educating people through town hall meetings with community members
- Visiting elementary and high schools, and engaging students in debates on topics like why corruption is bad for the country..

These suggestions are not too far-fetched and indeed should not be strange to older Nigerians; in their fifties and above. There was a successful publicity campaign launched by the General Buhari administration against undisciplined behaviour. It was called “War Against Indiscipline.

War Against Indiscipline: Nigerians were made to queue at the bus stops, post offices, check-out counters, indeed everywhere in which it was necessary to be served on the first-come, first-served basis, as you came. It was very successful. However with successive changes of government, it could not be sustained. There was a recent publication that President Buhari intends to reintroduce it. The report reads thus: “President Muhammadu Buhari is set to relaunch the War Against Indiscipline and Corruption in his patriotic bid to wipe out corruption from Nigeria. This was revealed by the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, at a meeting with the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) in Abuja yesterday January, 6, 2016, to enlist their support in the on-going war against terrorism”.[22]. This should be a welcome development.

When are we are going to create it:

As a part of its anti-corruption campaign, the President Buhari government has created a “ National Prosecution Coordination Committee, NPCC”. This was inaugurated “for the effective prosecution of high criminal cases in the country, with an assurance that President Muhammadu Buhari is not interested in tele-guiding the anti-corruption agencies or prosecution authorities in the country”, as stated by the Vice President. The committee was inaugurated on May 27th by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, SAN, at the Presidential Villa. It is headed by the Attorney-General of the Federation, Mr. Abubakar Malami. While addressing the 20-member Committee, the Vice President stated that their responsibility is to exercise prosecutorial power independently and without any direction.

With all due respect to this initiative, this may not be an appropriate strategic response to our problem of corruption. It is backward looking and not positive or designed to educate our people and infuse in all of us the lessons in patriotism that should make people reject corruption.

Archbishop Alfred Martins of the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos has this piece of advice for the President: “The more we dwell on the errors of the past, the more we stumble and fall. I believe the present administration needs to focus less on the past mistakes and face the future and the task of leading the nation out of the quagmire that we are in now. Let us look beyond those things that divide us and dwell more on those that unite us,” he said [17]

4 Recommendations

The view of this paper is that the government should set up a team to develop a framework for a “War Against Corruption”. The committee should do the following:

- Call for suggestions from all Nigerians, including those in Diaspora, on the various forms of corruption and how they could be cured.
- They should be analysed and published for amendments to ensure adequacy of the contributed suggestions as a basis for analysis.
- Contributions on how to implement the various suggestions including educating the public as already suggested and taking other corrective or new actions. Such actions should help us develop the required social and administrative structures that will enable the implementation of the anticorruption measures.
- The committee should have a free hand to involve other Nigerians as they find necessary. They will define their respective tasks and timelines for executing them.
- It is essential that a National Corruption Eradication Roadmap should be developed with timelines and milestones.
- The Roadmap which should be a plan should be reviewed at agreed yearly or half-yearly intervals to monitor progress and amended as necessary.
- It should be an organic plan to ensure its sustainability.
- It should be apolitical and not dependent or belonging to any political party..

5 Conclusion

For corruption that has been so institutionalised over the years to be eradicated, there has to be a thoroughly and comprehensively planned programme or roadmap for change with clearly defined vision and objectives. For success to be achieved, there must be focus on the objectives and how they will be implemented. This is why the preparation of a strategic plan that takes along the people is necessary.

It takes courage, vision, and hard work to create the necessary environment for the strategic change to be actualised. It may be essential to find new ways to solve our old and current problems.

As already explained, all Nigerians should be motivated as much as possible to work for, and embrace, the change. It takes more than planning to achieve a successful strategic change. Turning strategy into reality is not easy as it involves much hard work. What is more, it has to be planned for sustainability so that the hard work will eventually yield a changed country for the welfare and pride of every Nigerian for now and in the years to come.

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