



**MEDIA STATEMENT ON GOVERNMENT’S RESPONSE
ON THE IPPR BRIEFING PAPER AND SUBSEQUENT
NEWSPAPER REPORTS**

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media,
Good Afternoon

I have called this Media briefing to advance Government's perspective on the IPRR Briefing Paper titled "The Role of the Private Sector in Tackling, Corruption" published last week – which paper was widely reported in the print media.

The briefing paper amongst other things purports that:

- a) *there was little motivation for public sector reform, as Swapo enjoyed a two-thirds majority in parliament, and was secure because no opposition party was strong enough to topple it from power; and that "If the political and public office-bearers who are responsible for drafting, approving and implementing legislation, policies, regulations and by-laws tolerate bribes, the private sector will most certainly offer bribes to increase their profits,".*
- b) *"politically connected and incompetent officials were a large proportion of government officialdom and in other sectors of the economy, such that reforms would have a severe negative impact on the ruling party"*
- c) *"Public officials, were thus tempted to take bribes, partly because of the culture of ingrained corruption, a sense of entitlement, political connections, and relatively low salaries, to mention some factors."*

3. Let me from the outset state that as government we value research for we derive utility from credible research outcomes. Utility in the sense that decisions we make, policies we contemplate, should all grounded on sound information - information of course derived from credible research!

While we applaud credible research undertaken by IPPR over the years, it is sad to note that this particular briefing paper, should not have been published at all given its gaping flaws both in terms of content and quality of empirical evidence advanced. Outcomes of the briefing paper, are grossly prejudiced, heavily opinionated, blatantly pre-determined and worst of all, not supported by empirical evidence.

4. The following brief synopsis of the genesis of government's efforts in fighting corruption affirms what is stated in paragraph 3 above.
 - 4.1 Government at the highest level of Head of State has illustrated its resolve to fight and root out the scourge of corruption. Please refer to statements made by the former President H.E. Hifikepunye Pohamba (inaugural & other statements and those made by the current President of the Republic of the Republic of Namibia, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob.

Additionally, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, Hon. Calle Schlettwein in his 2017/18 budget statement said the following *“Corruption, or better the fight against it needs our attention. Whether it is the misuse of office, soliciting and receiving bribes, inflating tender prices or whatever improper conduct of persons who further their personal gain to the detriment of the common good must be dealt with. It is well known that the poor suffer most from the impact of corruption. Let us make sure that all parties to these illicit activities are brought to book.*

Government has to play its role in this fight, but so has the private sector. No one should engage in this “dance with the rattle snake” where the initial moves may be very pleasant, but in the end, when the snake has bitten it becomes lethal. Let us jointly remove the snakes from the dancing floor by reporting them instead of engaging them”

Needless to say that ensuing interventions on the budget statement, were all in unison on the imperative for our nation to collectively adopt zero tolerance to corruption!

- 4.2 The Anti-Corruption Commission was established in 2006 to drive the nation’s anti-corruption agenda. In 2010, a constitutional amendment was effected to remove the powers to investigate corruption from the office of the Ombudsman and locate these in the ACC. Over the years, additional financial resources have been provided to the ACC to boost

their capacity to deal with reported corruption cases. In the same vein, the Namibian Government is signatory to various regional and international conventions/protocols against corruption.

- 4.3 In 2017, the Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2017 Act No 10 of 2017 and the Witness Protection Act, 2017 Act No 11 of 2017 were passed to add to the legislative arsenal in our nation's eternal fight against corruption
- 4.4 The Public Procurement Act 2015, Act No. 15 of 2015 was also passed to ensure transparency in the procurement system previously beset with perceptions of corruption and manipulation.
- 4.5 The current President of the Republic of Namibia, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob cemented Government's resolve to stop corruption dead in its tracks by intervening in (a) the now infamous Hosea Kutako Airport upgrading tender, (b) Lodging an investigation into the National Oil Storage facility, and (c) the recent action taken by the President requesting some of my colleagues to respond to accusations levelled against them.
5. Corruption is a global phenomenon which is not confined to Namibia alone. You will recall that not long ago, the world was plunged into the worst ever global financial crisis, induced by greed, collusive and unscrupulous practices in

the financial sector in the developed world, which had far reaching ramifications on the world economy.

It is therefore absurd to apportion endemic overt and covert private sector corrupt practices on government. Yes, it is true that in terms of accountability, the buck stops with us as government! However, the fight against corruption, is an eternal collective national and global undertaking that demands the indulgence of every member of the Namibian society, the private sector included!

6. In order for our fight against corruption to gain traction, we must heed government's repeated calls to report incidences of corruption to legally established institutions. As a country, we must give latitude to established institutions such as the ACC and the courts of law to decisively deal with reported incidences of corruption. As evidenced by the long standing AVID case which is now drawing to a close, the due process of law grinds slowly, but it certainly grinds decisively!
7. To be assured of success in our fight against corruption, we do not need spectators, nor do we need surrogate defenders of private sector corruption. What we need is unity of action to isolate and deal with all those involved in corrupt practices regardless of their standing in society!

During his State of Nation Address (2018) His Excellency the President Dr. Hage G. Geingob said: *“If we are to win the war against corruption we have a shared obligation to blow the whistle”*

Indeed, for us to make a dent on corruption, we must re-invigorate our society’s value system that has seemingly degenerated over the years.

I THANK YOU