

Seychelles National Assembly Speaker Patrick Herminie met a two-member delegation from the African Union (AU) Advisory Board on Corruption.



The delegation – comprising Dr Edward Hoseah and Henriette Diop Tall -- visited the National Assembly building at Ile du Port, where they discussed the role of the National Assembly to strengthen the fight against corruption in Seychelles and how the AU Advisory Board can help the National Assembly to promote and encourage the adoption of measures and actions by the state to prevent, detect and eradicate corruption.

Both delegations agreed that though Seychelles is doing its best to fight corruption there is still opportunity to improve its ranking on the Corruption Perception Index. Seychelles is ranked 50th on the index. Dr Hoseah pointed out that though Seychelles acceded to the AU Convention on Corruption on June 1, 2008, it has not yet ratified the convention. He spelled out the advantages of ratifying the Convention, which included technical assistance and training of the staff and members of the National Assembly and consultancy as well as the drafting of any anti-corruption law. Once Seychelles ratifies the convention, it will also receive help to better advocate and create awareness among the young people.

Both sides also agreed on the need to set up an anti-corruption body to oversee the problem of corruption in Seychelles, and to also strengthen the committees of the National Assembly, namely the Finance and Public Accounts Committee and the Government Assurances Committee, to make them more effective in their oversight role in fighting corruption. Dr Herminie said “In a democracy like Seychelles, the National Assembly is the central institution of oversight and accountability and so it follows that a strong committee system is absolutely essential in the fight against corruption.”

AU ADVISORY BOARD ON CORRUPTION ADVOCACY TO GHANA



A three-member delegation from the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC) has commended the National African Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council for establishing District APRM Oversight

committees throughout the country as part of efforts to empower grassroots actors to actively participate in the governance processes in the country.

The Board is required under Article 22 (5h) of the AU Convention on Corruption to submit reports on a regular basis on the programme made by each State Party in complying with the Provisions of the Convention to the Executive Council.

The Board was, therefore in the country to assess progress made and the challenges faced by Ghana in the implementation of the Convention.

The delegation comprised Dr.(Justice) Jane Ansah (Malawi), Ambassador Leonadis Havyarimana (Burundi) and Mr. John Ikubaje, the Board's Senior Governance Officer.



The leader of the delegation, (Dr. Justice) Jane Ansah of Malawi expressed satisfaction with the involvement of the APRM District Oversight Committees and added that it is a commendable initiative that must be shared throughout the continent to facilitate the attainment of good governance.

Dr. (Justice) Jane Ansah said as signatory to the Convention on Corruption, Ghana has demonstrated a proactive commitment to the convention by signing, ratifying and responding to the implementation questionnaire provided. She added that the mandate of the Board is to encourage member State Parties that have not

ratified the Convention to do so and those who have to move on to implementation.

The Chairman of the National African Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council, Rev. Prof. S.K. Adjepong on behalf of Council welcomed the delegation and shared Ghana's journey through the APRM Process and the birth of APRM Oversight Committees— a flagship project that seeks to deepen the participation of the grassroots in the governance process. He added that a number of countries have visited Ghana to study to understudy the country's APRM decentralization efforts.

He added that the uniqueness of Ghana's APRM was in the relative neutrality of the Council and its organs, and the use of the local language in working with the grassroots.

The Governing Council and the members of the Board discussed challenges confronting anti-corruption programmes in Ghana. Issues discussed included Legislative Framework to Fight Corruption, Laundering of the Proceeds of Corruption, Funding of Political Parties, Fight against Corruption in the Public Service, Access to Information and the Role of the Media and Civil Society in the Fight against Corruption.

Rev. Prof. Adjepong indicated that adequate laws including the Financial Administration Act, the Public Procurement Act, the Whistleblower Act as well as anti-corruption institutions like the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), the Auditor-General, the Public Accounts



committee of Parliament are being strengthened to fight the menace.

He praised the groundbreaking efforts of the media and civil society organizations in exposing high level of corruption. Rev. Prof. Adjepong however lamented that institutions and the general public were limited in their fight against corruption due to fear of reprisals and their

inability to obtain relevant information from authorities.

.AMBASSADOR BASSIR ATTENDS AFRICAN UNION CONFERENCE ON CORRUPTION



H.E. Ambassador Khadijatu Bassir.

SENEGAL: Her Excellency Ambassador Khadijatu Bassir was on Friday among several diplomats that attended the closing ceremony of the five-day AU sponsored conference against corruption in Dakar, Senegal. Senegalese Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Madicke Niang graced the occasion on behalf of President Abdoulaye Wade. Prominent among the experts that featured at the ceremony was Sierra Leone's Abdul Tejan-Cole, the Executive Director ad interim of the Dakar-based Open Society Initiative in West Africa.

Mr. Tejan-Cole was out of the country on official business but was represented at the experts' round table discussion by the Manager of OSIWA's Law, Justice and Human Rights Program. Affia Asamtewaa Asare-Kyei called on Africans to "contentiously reject" the notion that corruption stems from poverty as claimed by afro-pessimists.

She observed that even people living in economically development countries thieve in the midst of corrupt acts.

Welcoming the guests, the Chairperson of the AU Advisory Board on Corruption (AU-ABC) Mrs. Julie Onum-Nwariaku of Nigeria, said the event coincided with this year's International Anti-Corruption day. She said the aim was to make up-to-date recommendations on how to combat corruption in Africa. She added that the event was also intended to strengthen collaboration with other stakeholders in the fight against corruption in the continent and raise public awareness of corruption in the Africa continent. The chairperson also insisted that the fight against corruption should go beyond the exposure and punishment of acts of corruption. "It should aim ultimately at good governance and the enthronement of ethical behavior in society," she said.

Even though corruption affects all countries in different degrees including the developed countries, she noted that its effect in Africa is "horrendous". Quoting a World Bank study in 2002, she said Africa lost more than 148 billion United States dollars annually or 25 percent of the continent's gross domestic product as a result of corruption. Apart from the physical

financial loss which can be quantified, she said the real cost of corruption is unquantifiable and that the poor bear the heaviest brunt of the multifaceted phenomenon.

In his contribution, the Vice Chairperson of the AU-ABC, Mr Nabil Hattail observed that humanity cannot eliminate corruption “because it is part of us” and can only attenuate it. He called on the rich countries to return confiscated capital siphoned to banks abroad back to the poor countries from which it originates and urged them to set the pace against impunity.

Ambassador Bassir confirmed that Sierra Leone is among the 31 out of the 54 countries on the continent that have ratified the AU convention against corruption. “Sierra Leone has done so since 2009 and has gone further to enact the stringent Anti- Corruption Legislation second to none in Africa” she said. H.E. Ambassador Bassir, pleaded with the rest of the members of the AU to do so and implement it accordingly. .

BY- Ralph Ese'Donnu Sawyerr, Information Attaché, Embassy of The Republic of Sierra Leone,

In Senegal and The Gambia.

Pictures of retreat can be found here <http://flickr.com/gp/51398252@N08/8293J7/>