

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF EAAACA AND CHIEF OMBUDSMAN OF RWANDA IN THE AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF ANTI CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES HELD IN BUJUMBURA FROM 20th TO 21st JUNE 2011

- Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi,
- Honorable Members of the Parliament,
- Honorable Members of the Senate,
- Honorable Ombudsman of Burundi,
- Honorable Ministers,
- Honorable Heads of Anti Corruption of EAAACA,
- Honorable Heads of African Anti Corruption Bodies,
- Distinguished delegates from different countries,
- Distinguished Invited Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today, it's a great day for the East African Association of Anti Corruption Authorities (EAAACA) and in particular for the Republic of Burundi to host an African conference of Anti Corruption Bodies. This impressive gathering of various countries to discuss the role of the Anti Corruption Agencies in addressing corruption and related offences issues as well as sharing experiences, is very fundamental for all of us.

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Honorable Heads of African Anti Corruption Bodies, Delegates, Distinguished Invited Guests;

Since its creation in 2007, EAAACA has successfully held its Annual General Meetings in each of the East African partner states. We are due to hold the 5th Annual General Meeting in November this year in Kampala, Uganda. In this regard, the EAAACA has elected a secretariat based in Uganda.

During the third Annual General Meeting of EAAACA held in Bujumbura in 2009, Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi, you brought the idea and recommended to organise an African Conference in order to reinforce cooperation between African countries in fight against corruption. This initiative was reiterated as one of the important resolutions adopted by the 4th Annual General Meeting of EAAACA held in Nairobi from 24th -28th November 2010

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Honorable Heads of African Anti Corruption Bodies, Delegates, Distinguished Invited Guests;

Corruption is a global concern. No one dares to dispute the devastating and consequences of corruption and it is widely recognized as one of the notorious transnational crimes. Not only that it undermines the rule of law and democratic processes, but also destroys the efficacy of public and private institutions and as a result, it erodes public trust, damages economic development and increases poverty.

Corruption has a negative effect on national development generally, and its impact spreads across the political, economic and social areas.

Politically, corruption undermines the confidence of the people in public institutions, erodes the capacity and legitimacy of the state and makes a myth of the rule of law.

Economically, corruption raises the cost of doing business, encourages neglect of contractual obligations, facilitates the misallocation and wastage of resources, discourages foreign investment and retards economic growth and development.

Socially, corruption accounts for poor service delivery, and the inefficient functioning of social services like health, education, roads, water supply and telecommunications, etc. It exacerbates social inequalities and increases social tensions in any society. In addition, it deepens poverty and intensifies deprivation amongst those who do not have the capacity to be corrupt.

Without doubt, corruption is like a cancer which attacks a small part of the body but undermines all the body.

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Burundi, Honorable Heads of African Anti Corruption Bodies, Delegates, Distinguished Invited Guests;

In the campaign of fighting corruption, the most important is the political will. It has been demonstrated that leaders who are determined to integrate into programmes of good governance the fight against corruption, they succeed by establishing legal and institutional framework.

We have noted that corruption is a cancer for the society and it is high time everybody joins the struggle to completely eliminate it.

But this struggle should start by educating and sensitising our citizens to reject, denounce and whistle blowing practices related to corruption. This leads also, for our people, to know and fight for the respect of their rights.

Furthermore, as a transnational crime, authors of corruption commit their forfeiture in their countries and fly to foreign countries. The product of this crime benefits other countries and in so doing, discourages investors.

So, there is a need of collaboration with other regional anti-corruption associations, forums and individual Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa, hence this Conference. We can succeed by joining our efforts in investigations and in mutual legal assistance in implementation of our respective strategies in fight against corruption.

Your Excellency, your political will is reflected in your initiative to bring the African partnership for fighting against corruption. The idea came from you during the third Annual General Meeting of EAAACA three years ago and it was joined by our resolution made last year in the Nairobi Communiqué of EAAACA.

I, once more, take this opportunity to thank you for your fruitful proposal, your help in giving ideas and your financial support. We thank you also for having honoured this conference by your presence.

And on behalf of the members of EAAACA, I extend our gratitude to African Development Bank for funding this Conference;

To the Government of the Republic of Burundi for the assistance and encouragement in organizing this Conference;

And to all the delegates who have honoured our invitation to come to this Conference.

I wish you all success in the war of combating corruption and related offences.

Let us join our efforts against this cancer which undermines our development and

I wish you to be proud of Africa without corruption.

Thank you