



The 2025 African Anti-Corruption Dialogue: Promoting Human Dignity in the Fight Against Corruption

1. Background

Corruption remains a formidable impediment to sustainable development, good governance, peace, security, and the protection of human rights across Africa. Recognizing its corrosive impact, the African Union (AU) adopted the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) on 11th July 2003, signifying Africa's collective commitment to rooting out corruption and enhancing good governance.

The AUCPCC transcends mere criminalization of corrupt practices; it advocates for preventive measures, active involvement of civil society, robust asset recovery mechanisms, and strengthened international cooperation. Crucially, its provisions affirm the critical link between anti-corruption efforts and the advancement of human rights, democratic governance, and social justice.

To continue advocating the fight against corruption in Africa, the AUABC hosts the Annual Anti-Corruption Dialogue as a platform (flagship programme of the Board) which brings together all key stakeholders to engage and reflect on a dedicated anti-corruption thematic area as a way of soliciting inputs specifically on the progress, challenges, experience, and lessons learnt on the theme. For 2025, the dialogue will be centred on the profound theme: **Promoting Human Dignity in the Fight Against Corruption**.

Human dignity, defined as the respect and fulfilment of the rights and freedoms of human beings, lies at the very heart of human rights. Therefore, this year's theme is a clarion call to all State and Non-State Actors to recognize human dignity in all anti-corruption initiatives and to protect the most vulnerable from the devastating consequences of corruption.

This dialogue comes at a pivotal time when corruption was recognised as a human rights issue during the fifty-ninth session of the Human Rights Council held between June 16 and July 9, 2025. The recognition of corruption as a Human Rights issue underscores the global recognition of the detrimental impact of corruption on human rights. The council recognised that fighting corruption in all its forms and across all sectors is a means of contributing positively to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Furthermore, the theme aligns with the African Union 2025 theme on justice for Africans and People of African Descent through reparations. Both themes converge on the imperative of restoring inherent human worth. Just as robust anti-corruption measures are crucial to ensure that public resources serve the well-being and fundamental rights of every individual on the continent, the pursuit of reparations addresses the intergenerational harm and systemic injustices that have historically stripped dignity and equity from African communities worldwide. Hence, achieving human dignity for Africans, whether through combating contemporary corruption or redressing historical injustices, necessitates a steadfast commitment to justice, equity, and accountability.

2. Defining Human Dignity in the Anti-Corruption Context

The Constitutive Act of the African Union and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights recognize respect for human dignity and the promotion of human and peoples' rights as essential principles of governance and unity on the continent. Additionally, the objectives and principles of the AUCPCC have embedded the respect for human rights, the rule of law, and transparency as fundamental elements of human dignity, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) affirms that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

Given this reality, human dignity must be both the foundation and the goal of anti-corruption efforts. This requires that:

- i. Prevention measures prioritize inclusivity, social justice, and equitable access to public resources, ensuring that no group is left behind due to corruption.
- ii. Investigations into corruption are conducted with fairness, integrity, and full respect for the rights of all persons involved, whether victims, witnesses, or suspects.
- iii. Prosecutions are carried out impartially and under the rule of law, with safeguards against abuse of power, political persecution, or selective justice.
- iv. Respecting human dignity through the protection of whistleblowers, empowering citizens to speak out against corruption without fear, and ensuring that justice serves both accountability and restoration.

3. Objectives of the Dialogue

The 2025 African Anti-Corruption Dialogue aims to:

- i. Reinforce the centrality of human dignity in anti-corruption strategies across the continent by promoting people-centered approaches in the prevention, investigations, and prosecution of corruption.
- ii. Raise awareness among citizens, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups, about their rights and the importance of demanding transparency, accountability, and dignity in public service delivery.
- iii. Encourage Member States to align their national anti-corruption frameworks with the provisions of the AUCPCC, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and other relevant human rights instruments.
- iv. Recognise progress and share best practices in integrating human dignity in anti-corruption efforts through legal reforms, citizen engagement, institutional integrity, and social accountability mechanisms.
- v. Provide an enhanced platform for deeper engagement and solidarity among governments, civil society, anti-corruption agencies, development partners, faith-based organizations, academia, media, and the private sector in advancing dignity-based anti-corruption initiatives.
- vi. Encourage the protection of whistleblowers and victims of corruption and promote legal and psychosocial support mechanisms that uphold their dignity and safety.

4. Target Audience

The dialogue will bring together different stakeholders, including:

- i. Representatives from AU Member States (Heads of National Anti-corruption Agencies)

- ii. Representatives from the African Union and its organs
- iii. Representatives from Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- iv. United Nations Agencies and other international development partners
- v. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders
- vi. Academia and Research Institutions
- vii. Private Sector representatives
- viii. Media professionals
- ix. Youth and women's organizations

5. Methodology

The 2025 African Anti-Corruption Dialogue will be conducted over three days, fostering in-depth discussions, knowledge exchange, and the development of actionable recommendations. The dialogue will feature keynote addresses, presentation of research findings, high-level panel discussions, and dedicated networking opportunities. The dialogue is proposed to be in a hybrid version (both in-person and virtual).

6. Key Messages

- i. Corruption is a Violation of Human Dignity.
- ii. Anti-Corruption is a Human-Centered Effort.
- iii. Corruption Deepens Inequality and Injustice.
- iv. Empowering Citizens is Key to Upholding Dignity.
- v. Protecting Whistleblowers is Protecting Dignity.
- vi. The Fight Against Corruption is a Collective Responsibility.
- vii. Let Us Reaffirm Our Commitment to Upholding Human Dignity

7. Expected Outcomes

- i. A shared, deeper understanding and actionable recommendations among stakeholders on the importance of integrating human dignity into anti-corruption efforts and strategies.
- ii. A comprehensive roadmap for promoting human dignity in the fight against corruption within the African Union framework, with clear actions for Member States and other stakeholders.
- iii. Strengthened collaboration and coordination among stakeholders on anti-corruption and human rights issues, fostering a more unified continental approach.
- iv. Commissioning of a study on the nexus between Corruption and Human Rights in Africa, building on the dialogue's insights.
- v. Enhanced public awareness and commitment from national authorities to integrate human dignity principles into anti-corruption policies and practices.

8. Date and Venue

The dialogue will be held virtually on 13th November 2025.

9. Conclusion

The 2025 African Anti-Corruption Dialogue represents a critical opportunity for Africa to deepen its commitment to integrity, justice, and human rights. It is also an opportunity to reaffirm that anti-corruption is not simply a legal or institutional process; it is a human-centred imperative that demands empathy, fairness, and respect for the rights and dignity of all. The dialogue is expected to establish actionable strategies that will pave the way for a prosperous, united, and dignified Africa, free from the corrosive grip of corruption.