

---

# THE WORLD BANK COMMUNICATES ITS GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION (GAC) STRATEGY IN SIERRA LEONE

Monday June 23 2008 at the British Council, Tower Hill, Freetown

...a public lecture by Sahr Kpundeh, Senior Public Sector Specialist of the World Bank

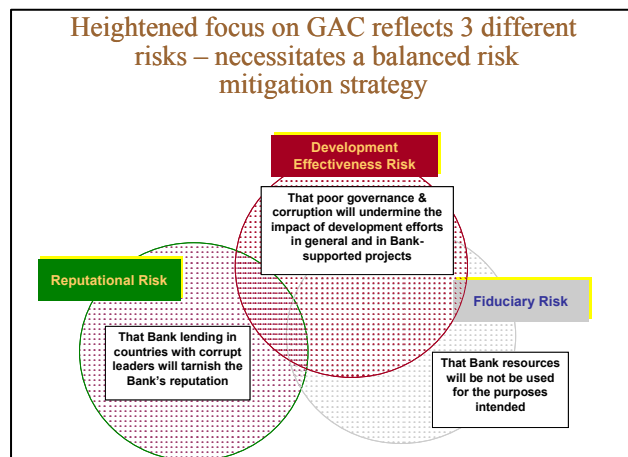
Sahr Kpundeh, Senior Public Sector Specialist of the World Bank, was on Monday June 23 2008 guest speaker of a well-attended public forum organized by the Sierra Leone Anti Corruption Commission at the British Council hall in Freetown.



His presentation sought to orientate core representatives of both supply and demand side accountability stakeholders in Sierra Leone on the World Bank **Governance and Anti-Corruption Strategy (GAC)**, and to share his wealth of cross-country and analytic experience in the strengthening of state and non-state institutions for good governance and accountability. Specifically, Kpundeh dwelled on the World Bank's mission and governance, presenting a background to Bank's GAC process and the lessons and challenges learnt in the process as well as the new Bank GAC Strategy and its lessons and implications for current country program implementation.

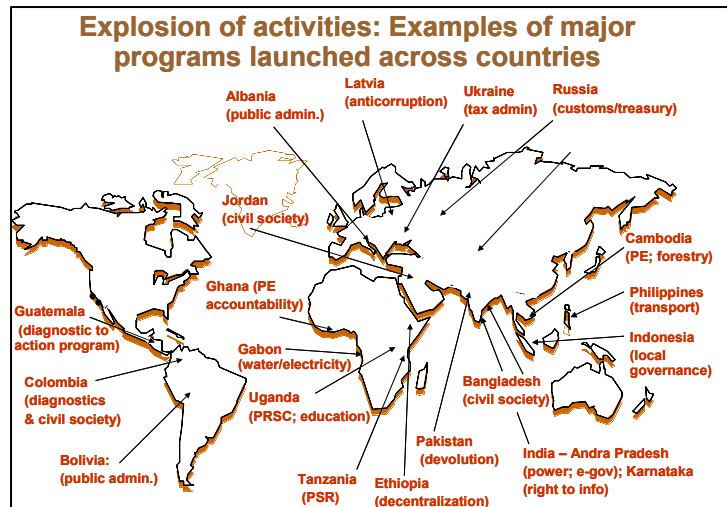
Based on a number of premises and causes, Kpundeh opened his discourse with the central argument that by most African countries shining the spotlight on corruption since the early 90s was not a mistaken move nor were the challenges that emerged hopeless. He said the error was, however, in presuming that the cure of corruption lay in narrowly targeted anti-corruption data-collection and awareness campaigns which exhorted citizens and politicians to change behavior. The crucial lesson from this presumption and moves over the past twelve years, he submitted, **“has been that the roots of corruption lie in dysfunctional state institutions”**.

At the level of the World Bank, he explained, the heightened focus on GAC has been driven by the need for a balanced risk mitigation strategy, one that seeks to mitigate three forms of risks - **reputational risk** - where the Bank lending in countries with corrupt leaders is feared to tarnish the Bank's reputation, **development effectiveness risk** - where poor governance and corruption would undermine the impact of development efforts in general and in Bank supported projects and **fiduciary risk** - where Bank resources would not be used for intended purposes.



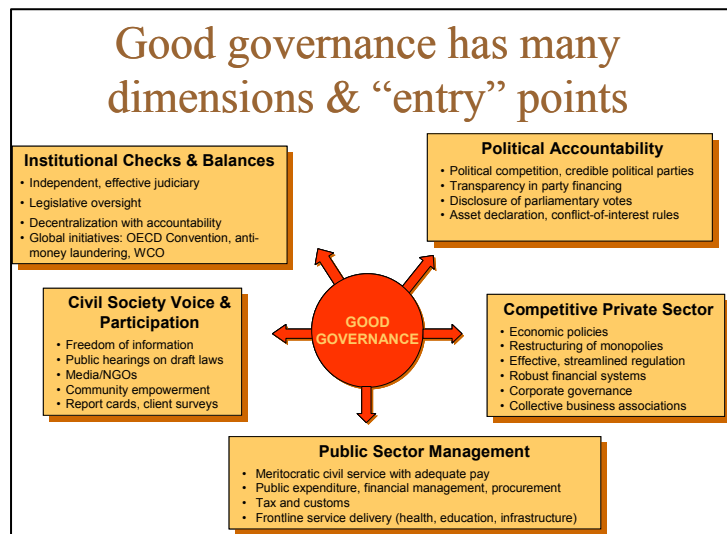
The Bank has over a long period in its institutional history and growth faced difficulties in climbing to the height of actually cultivating interest and formulating a response strategy on bad governance and corruption in countries where it has been operating and in acting upon such a strategy.

Kpundeh disclosed that it was in the second half of the 90s onwards that the Bank, which was influenced by the paradigm shift towards increased democratization on the African continent, gradually adapted itself from an apathetic mood to a proactive one of “broadening and mainstreaming” its governance and corruption intervention. This adaptation, he said led to a major explosion of activities within the Bank exemplified by myriad GAC programs launched across the globe (see illustration above).



In terms of intervention, Kpundeh’s experience is that good governance programming can have many entry points. As in the diagram below, one can start programming and implementation, for example, around the objective of **creating institutional checks and balances in public sector governance** with specific outcomes weaved around *the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary, the oversight functions of the legislature, decentralization with accountability, global initiatives such as OECD convention, anti-money laundering, WCO*, etc.

It may also interest agencies to look at **political accountability** along with its attendant specifics such as **political competition, credible political parties, transparency in party financing, disclosure of parliamentary votes, asset declaration, conflict-of-interest rules**, etc. Other entry points, in Kpundeh’s conceptualization, include **Civil Society Voice and Participation** as well as **Competitive Private Sector and Public Sector Management**.



But in spite of a promising start, an enhanced ‘demand’ pressures for reform, overcoming vested interests against reform, reversing the “culture” of corruption in the



public sector, tackling political drivers of corruption, Kpundeh disclosed that there are still formidable challenges being faced by the World Bank country partners in government. Hence “there is need to tackle deeper issues in order to make impact”, he recommended.

He explained that the Bank’s GAC intervention is being done at three levels – **country level, project level** and **global level**; and there are seven principles guiding GAC implementation by the Bank which include: (1) a focus on GAC is based on the Bank’s mandate to reduce poverty implying that a capable and accountable state creates opportunities for the poor, (2) the Bank’s GAC work must be country driven, (3) there is no “one size fits all” implying that implementation is adapted to individual country circumstances, (4) the GAC strategy requires the Bank to remain engaged so that “the poor do not pay twice”, (5) the Bank aims to engage in its GAC work with a broad array of stakeholders, (6) The Bank works to strengthen, not by-pass, country systems through stronger institutions, (7) the Bank works with governments, donors, and other actors at the country and global levels to ensure a harmonized and coordinated approach.

Bearing the above principles in mind, Kpundeh explained how the World Bank is helping countries to improve governance through the various entry points mentioned inter alia. These, he said, include strengthening cross-cutting public management systems which are budget and financial management, procurement, public administration, tailoring reforms to suit country contexts, measuring progress; mainstreaming governance reform in sectors by systematically addressing sector-specific GAC impediments to delivering outcomes and by enhancing sector-level transparency, participation, accountability; strengthening “demand-side” frameworks and capacity by enhancing information disclosure, CSO capacity, state oversight institutions; working collaboratively with the private sector as an ally for governance reforms; and monitoring progress via results and governance indicators.

He went on to elaborate on how the Bank helps a country with the implementation of GAC using each of the **entry-points** and **levels-of-implementation** scenarios and the framework of monitoring the implementation process for results. He shared lessons on vertical and horizontal accountability, on anti-corruption commissions and on political will, concluding that **international actors can help in these areas by assisting civil society advocates for reform and watchdog groups, strengthening institutions of horizontal accountability with financial and technical assistance, promoting knowledge, understanding, and best practices, cleaning up corrupt practices and transnational corporations.**

Among the strong floor responses to Kpundeh’s presentation was (1) the need for an empowered oversight of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) through capacity building initiatives for parliamentarians along with the ACC Advisory Committee, (2) the strengthening and supervision of complementary institutions, particularly the police and judiciary [David Koroma of the Establishment Secretary’s Office], (3) balancing preventative with the



prosecutorial roles of the ACC without de-emphasizing the prosecutorial role in favour of the preventative role as a dodging tactic on prosecuting members of the regime in power [Dennis Sandy and Gibril Sesay of Fourah Bay College], (4) proper diagnosis of real causes (beyond the perceived causes) of corruption in order to arrive at accurate and result-yielding prescriptions [Dr. Bell, medical Practitioner], (5) strengthening the demand side of accountability with increased *voice-empowerment* of the press and civil society organizations and enabling the legal environment for free flow and access to information [Samuel Kamara, World Bank, Washington], (6) ensuring that *checks-and-balance* mechanisms are instituted to prevent the politicization of political will, particularly by the executive branch of government [Bernard Sesay, Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce], (7) providing fair and just guidelines of asset declaration by politicians and public servants [Sheikh Abu-Bakr Conteh of the Inter-Religious Council].



On the panel with Sahr Kpundeh were Claudius Bert-Williams, Director of the Institute of Public Administration (IPAM) who chaired the occasion, Maurice Williams, Director of Human Resources of the Anti-Corruption Commission and Christopher Juan Costain, Lead Financial Sector Specialist at the World Bank. Here are some of the concluding quotations from the panelists:

**“THE WORLD BANK STRATEGY ON GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION IS A PROCESS THAT HAS BEEN AND IS STILL EVOLVING”** - *Christopher Juan Costain*

**“THERE ARE NO QUICK-FIXES OR SILVER BULLETS TO FIGHTING CORRUTION”** – *Sahr Kpundeh*

**“CREATING COMPETITION IS MEANS OF FIGHTING CORRUPTION AND THE WINNERS ARE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHILST THE LOOSERS ARE IN GOVERNMENT”** - *Claudius Bert-Williams*

Reported by

Mohamed Sidie Sheriff  
Africa Region External Affairs (AFREX)  
The World Bank, Freetown, Sierra Leone

