

Transparency is the window on public accountability and governance

The importance of transparency in corruption and governance is illustrated by King's (2006) definition of governance.

He indicated that governance is "the manner of directing and controlling the actions and affairs of an entity" that "involves fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency on a foundation of intellectual honesty". From this definition of governance and discussion of transparency, it is clear that transparency is critical for governance.

The degree or absence of transparency plays a critical role within the context of opportunities for corruption.

For example, "within the context of administrative behaviour, the bigger the difference between minimisation of transparency and accountability, on the one hand, and the maximisation of discretionary power and responsibility, on the other hand, the more favourable the opportunities for corruption become" (Coetzee).

LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

"Transparency", "accountability", "discretionary power" and "responsibility" are crucial for the management of corruption.

Coetzee said that "corruption flourishes within 'darkness' where no, or very limited, transparency exists. Transparency provides the 'light' for the exposure of corrupt activities so that it can be tested against some accepted code of conduct.

Transparency is therefore a necessary condition for the control of corruption."

In order to prevent corruption, "transparency is the common



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denominator needed for both good governance and development. Transparency provides access to systemic development outcomes such as social capital, social value and social trust" (Coetzee).

We have recently celebrated World Press Freedom Day and Namibia remains ranked number one in Africa. Unfortunately we have fallen seven places on this index since the previous rating.

Our Honourable President Hage Geingob, has promised that he guarantees media freedom as long as he is President. His promise is very uplifting and inspiring.

However, it is not about the fact that we have media freedom.

It is more about the quality of media freedom in order to create a more transparent government and public service to increase the quality of debating and tolerance for a more peaceful Namibia where all of us can enjoy an improved quality of life.

References

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