

## ARTICLE

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### **FIGHTING CORRUPTION: A CALL TO ACTION**

U2 star Bono declared corruption as "the biggest killer of them all!"

"Everybody here knows that the biggest killer of them all -- [a] bigger killer than AIDS, TB, malaria, probably the lot together -- is corruption," said the Irish rocker, who co-founded the anti-poverty ONE campaign.

It is with this proclamation as a back-drop that we once again question our roles, and the roles of "the civilised" to stand against the scourge of corruption. Where is our unity in combating man's greatest threat to a just and moral society – why is it that so many people stand by without taking decisive action to prevent the further devastation corruption causes to our society?

As human beings, we are affected by what we see others doing. Increasingly, we witness more voracious greed, deceitfulness, even outright fraud and corruption which is practiced with impunity in government contracting, financial arrangements, political dealings and a host of other public and private activities. Has this become the acceptable "norm" in South Africa?

Corruption replaces the basic concept of what it means to be human, with an insatiable appetite for self-gain and self-preservation. Corruption distorts the essentials prescribed by free market ideology, making it a malignancy in any society, and indeed upon our humanity.

#### **Have we started to rationalise this as acceptable?**

As the nation's moral gauges appear to be 'reset' to what increasingly is justified in our media, our boardrooms and our houses of parliament as being 'acceptable practices', the moral standards for many people has gradually slipped as corrupt business practices have become more brazen, and people more comfortable with their own justifications and rationalisations. As the decay of corruption sets in, it becomes more difficult to adjust our moral compasses to recalibrate our lives and the expected societal morals to that which is good and acceptable. We need to check with ourselves and make sure we do the right thing, making sure our compasses are running right and true! That said, a compass which is not correctly calibrated will mislead you from the direction you need to go!

#### **A call for good, ethical leadership**

We once again challenge corporate organisations and our Government, and all the respective leaders to lead her people in a way which will restore ethical, and good governance practices. This is a tremendous challenge for all our leaders, including our society who behave and react to their environment and its challenges. As leaders, South Africa is waiting for your lead; as leaders, you have tremendous influence and charge! An *accountable social revolution* needs to take place starting with our government and its business leaders, each of these who have been elected and entrusted to lead the country and her people. As our leaders of government and organisations, they need to recalibrate society's compass and set it on a true path.

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### Being bold, and taking responsibility

Anybody or any organisation, which opposes corruption, and fights against its influence, authority and power, exposes themselves to risk. To fight corruption and to reveal it does not only require integrity, modesty, reliability and honesty, it also requires boldness, bravery and perseverance.

When someone has the conviction to follow their morals because of the integrity and principles by which they live, their journey at first may appear quite lonely. However, as people begin to realise the principles, practices and results of doing good by people in our society -- as a universal law -- so one hopes that these values will entrench themselves upon a greater number of people where business agreements amongst other, are fair, transparent and done responsibly.

### A call to commitment and action

Societies across the world are being ravaged by corruption, and it is time for citizens and organisations of conscience to take a stand together, in combating and exposing corruption. Policies and procedures to combat and curb corruption are critical, but what is needed now more than ever, is for organisations and individuals alike to put into action practical tools and solutions that make initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievable. These goals, which remain a global commitment to narrowing the poverty, health and education gap in the poorest of countries; are only achievable when combating corruption is the preferred alternative to our current status quo.

We hereby call on all citizens of conscience -- corporately and individually -- to support the World Without Corruption Programme (see [www.un-wwc.org](http://www.un-wwc.org) ). We call on the essence of what it means to be human, to join this noble cause, and stand together in solidarity, with us and other like-minded organisations, against our common enemy!

Corruption is truly a crime against humanity! We leave you with a quote that speaks about truth and wisdom:

***"All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing!"*** – Burke

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