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## Instituting Sound Ethical Practices as a Foundation for Good Governance

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Agim: Instituting Sound Ethical Practices as a Foundation for Good Governance

# *Siegel Institute*

*For Leadership, Ethics and Character*

*Journal of Applied Ethics*



**Instituting Sound Ethical Practices as a Foundation for Good Governance**

**By: Ogechukwu Marlyn Agim**

**INSTITUTING SOUND ETHICAL PRACTICES AS A FOUNDATION  
FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE**

**by**

**OGECHUKWU MARLYN AGIM**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This paper seeks to create a better understanding of sound ethical practices in the public and non-profit sector, highlighting these sectors and the issue areas, presenting work and practices that have been executed in the past, and exploring the implications that sound ethical principles have as a foundation for good governance for public servants, non-profit organization employees and even private employees.

Because governance is a term that spreads across all fields, several applications of sound ethical practices will be introduced and discussed in depth in this paper. An extensive study on best practices in the USA and Nigeria will be done in order to evaluate the progress (or the lack thereof) in the established systems. This will be done through the review of works extensively produced in search of solutions to the challenges presented by changing ethical realities.

## **STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Having considered the systems and relationships that are involved in adherence to ethical rules and regulations in the public, and non-profit sectors, it is necessary to evaluate how much of a progression or retrogression that these sectors have experienced, the relationship with the governing practices which are currently in practice, and the cross between good governance and ethics. Looking at the best practices already instituted, research will be carried out in order to discover:

- What is the relationship between good governance and solid ethical foundations in the public, private, and non-profit sectors?

- How can ethical principles be reformed in the public sector in order to highlight the importance of tried and tested ethical standards and principles?
- What more can be done in areas that have not received enough attention? (Specific to the two countries being examined, USA and Nigeria).

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**Ethics:** The concept of ethics has been used by Boss (1998) to mean “a set of standards of right and wrong established by a particular group and imposed on members of that group as a means of regulating and setting limits on their behaviour.” Ethics can also be seen as those values which relate to human conduct with respect to the rightness and wrongness of the motives and ends of such actions. In a more streamlined definition, ethics may be seen as being synonymous with morality, the science or theory of moral practices. Ethics is also thought of as the character or ethos of an individual or a group the hierarchy of values and norms which he/she or they identify for him or herself or themselves against a prevailing moral code (Bresser-Pereira, 1996).

**Ethical principles:** These provide the foundation for various modern concepts for work, business and organizations, which broaden individual and corporate priorities far beyond traditional business aims of profit and shareholder enrichment. Ethical factors are also a significant influence on institutions and public sector organizations, for whom the traditional priorities of service quality and cost management must now increasingly take account of these same ethical considerations affecting the commercial and corporate world.

**Good governance:** Good governance is the embodiment of checks and balances which shape roles and responsibilities, and the balance of power among competing interests, which sometimes impact the ability to reach good decisions with input from stakeholders.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A collection of various works will be used in the course of the paper, to show the significance of instituting sound ethical practices in order to develop good governance.

A major part of this work will be looking at the document compiled by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Public Economics and Public Administration of the United Nations, titled “Promoting Ethics in the Public Sector” (Bertucci, 2000). This document outlines the relationship between the public and the non-profit sector, and lays out relevant observations that help us understand current practices in the public sector, as well as the need for reform in the sector.

For resources specific to the US, we have authors like Eduard Grebe and Minka Woermann (2011) who attempt to shift the focus from codes of conduct, enforcement mechanisms, and individual behaviour, to looking at ethical leadership and developmental integrity from the perspective of an interaction between individual integrity, institutions of integrity, and integrity of institutions.

Dr. Eloy Anello (2006), a pharmaceutical consultant for the World Health Organization (WHO), presents in a working draft, the ways in which unethical practices such as corruption can corrode the ethical infrastructure that has been established over time. After defining corruption, he lays down elements of an ethical framework based on four moral values that are believed to be essential for good governance: justice, truth, service to the common good and responsible trusteeship. These four values were selected because they were identified as core values that directly address prevailing moral weaknesses that create vulnerability to ethical vices such as corruption.

Zamela Othman and Rashidah Abdul Usman (2011) in “Exploration of Ethics as Moral Substance in the Context of Corporate Governance” conducted a study to find out various ways to embed ethics in promoting morality in corporate governance practices among the corporations in the study. The ethical content developed in the corporations guide the corporate business practices, and, hence, motivates good governance, i.e. accountability, responsiveness, responsibility and transparency. Ethical principles, ethical positions, and ethical structures are the three main elements of ethics that emerged from the analysis of the research data that drive the corporations towards inclusive governance practices.

In the study, evidence indicated that there was an increase of ethical programmes in relation to corporate governance. For instance, Mele, Debeljuh, and Arruda (2006) examined the implementation of ethical programmes and corporate governance practices among 500 companies from three countries (Spain, Argentina and Brazil). The survey results indicate that companies that incorporate ethics usually have multiple formal ethics documents. The study also found that the common formal ethics documents that the companies focus on are code of ethics, corporate mission and corporate value statements. Established codes of ethics, for example, are the most popular ethics document noted that influences the governance practices among the survey companies (Othman & Usman, 2011).

Findings from Othman and Usman’s empirical study (2011) revealed an interesting result related to the ethical principles. The respondents highlight that corporate ethical principles require a navigator, who is positioned in the corporations to guide ethical behaviour among corporate citizens and external parties related to the corporations. The respondents highlighted that there are usually certain individuals who hold positions in the corporation that are able to assist the corporation to realize the corporate philosophy. General findings indicate: 1) top management such

as the chairman, board of directors, 2) middle management such as the company secretary, and 3) external actors such as independent bodies, are actors that are able to establish the corporate philosophy (Othman & Usman, 2011).

Lorie Slutsky and Cass Wheeler (2007) propose thirty-three principles that guide ethical decision-making in charitable organizations and boards. These principles guide sections such as financial oversight, effective governance, legal compliance and public disclosure, responsible fundraising amongst others, thereby serving as guideposts for adopting specific practices that best fit an organization's particular size and charitable purpose.

Congruent with the literature, a code of ethics is empirically proven to influence good governance. For example, Payne and Landry (2005) found that a code of ethics influences good governance practices. Payne and Landry's (2005) study revealed seven core values (consistency, respect individual, autonomy, integrity, justice, utility, and competence) as concepts that serve as professional attributes towards good business practices. Codes of ethics, as perceived by Schwartz, Dunfee, and Kline (2005), include values such as honesty, loyalty, integrity, responsibility, citizenship and fairness. A similar deliberation of codes of ethics in the present study reveals that codes of ethics guide honesty, integrity and responsibility (Othman & Usman, 2011).

Going further into the subject matter specializing in the creation or revitalization of the ethical systems in Nigeria, Goke Adegoye (2005), the Director-General of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, states in his article that the crisis of governance in the Federal Republic of Nigeria is due to the collapse of ethical and professional standards in the national administration. After identifying the shortfalls and lapses caused by ethical breakdown in Nigerian governmental and non-governmental agencies, initiatives and recommendations are proffered as a way to fill these gaps.

Another group of authors, Michael Agba, Grace Ochimana, and Abubakar Yusuf (2013) argue in their paper that the effectiveness of ethical codes of conduct among civil servants and politicians is in doubt, faced with the rise of complacent attitudes to work, embezzlement of public funds, groupthink mentality, insecurity of lives and property, bribe-taking, and similar vices. Inability to arrest these vices in Nigeria has circumvented considerable sustainable development in the country.

Arowolo and Aluko (2012) do a great job in outlining the issues affecting Nigeria in regards to good governance. Being able to find a relationship between the dwindling consideration for democracy the way it was meant to be and the retrogression of good governance, they propose solutions that not only strengthen democracy in public institutions, but that will also restore public trust in said institutions and bring back the much needed attention to sound ethical practices in order to have good governance.

Kwaghga Beetseh (2014) talks about the civil service and the need for retracing footsteps back to adhering to ethical standards, and the need for an ethical reform in the Nigerian civil service in order to return to civil service as it once was, devoid of favouritism, nepotism, corruption and other vices.

Gabriel Gundu (2011) in his research paper titled, “Nigeria’s experience in dealing with public service ethical dilemmas” elaborates very helpfully the challenges presented for both civil servants and government officials so far, as well as what has been done to curtail the downward spiral presented by the moral and ethical decadence in our society today. These issues present a continuum of the growing global concerns for promoting ethical fitness as an underpinning topic for sound public service and better governance not only in Nigeria, but in the world as a whole.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research model for this work will be a secondary and archival research, done through the perusal of secondary sources such as academic articles, conference papers, case studies and book chapters to study the historic trend of the subject matter, to identify lapses (if any), and recommend ways to bring the desired results to life.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ethics is gaining prominence in the discourse about governance today. There is a public notion that standards in public life are rapidly declining. This brings about questions about the repercussions of misconduct by those who have been entrusted with guarding public interest and resources. These consequences are loss of public trust and confidence in public institutions, as well as loss of resources that were supposed to support the economic and social development of nations and people. It is imperative that action is taken to restore a measure of trust and integrity in public institutions and officials, to safeguard democracy, and promote better governance (Beetseh, 2014).

One could argue that the perception of a fall in public standards is linked to the shifting role of the state, which is undergoing tremendous reform. Globalization, technological advances, spreading democratization and fiscal crises are challenging states to deal with strong external forces, be smart in serving its citizenry, decentralize power and rid it of obsolete activities. As a result, the public service is under pressure to transform itself to respond to these daily advancing changes. As public servants are asked to take on new and often times conflicting roles, there is a need for a cost-effective structure as well as an encouraging culture to enforce standards that guide their behavior.

## **WHY GOVERNANCE?**

The public image of any organization should accurately reflect its culture. It follows, then,

that good governance should be in the bloodstream of the organization as this will be reflected in the culture. To carry the analogy further, in the same way that healthy blood and bones are reflected in the naturally healthy look of a person, so an organization whose internal functions are healthy will naturally look so from an external perspective. In considering the three sectors: public, private, and nonprofit, there are commonalities such as ethical considerations, alignment of goals and objectives which when arrived at, lead to the creation of a suitable stakeholder decision-making model, and most importantly, instituting reporting systems structured to provide transparency and accountability.

Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. Good governance is responsive to the present and future needs of the organization, exercises prudence in policy-setting and decision-making, and that the best interests of all stakeholders are taken into account. These following parameters of good governance will be defined:

- Accountability
- The Rule of Law
- Participation
- Transparency

Accountability in the most rudimentary term refers to the financial accountability of an organization or government, ensuring effective, transparent, and publicly accountable system of managing (public) funds, while carrying out the duties and responsibilities, as well as having auditing systems which meet (inter)national standards and are open to public scrutiny.

The rule of law element ensures that a fair, predictable and stable legal framework be established and applied so that businesses, governments, and individuals will be able to access economic opportunities and act on them without fear of arbitrary interference.

Participation is an essential element in securing commitment and support for projects and enhancing the quality of their implementation, through granting civil society and communities the opportunity to participate during the formulation of development strategies and gives directly impacted communities and groups the opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of social programs and projects.

Transparency refers to the disposition an organization or government has towards being honest and open concerning its economic and overall decision-making processes, as well as the availability of information and clarification of rules and regulations (IFAD, 1999).

Good governance, although defined differently in cultural, social, and religious contexts, should incorporate the abovementioned parameters, because this sets the tone for the establishment of sound policies and ideas which can be implemented in ways that are accountable, effective, and efficient (necessary especially for the public and nonprofit sectors).

## **UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Good governance is understood as a combination of the responsibilities shared by the leadership of any public or private institution and organization to ensure it is effectively run, as well as how the leadership is supported in the establishment and implementation of policies and regulations. Good governance brings many benefits such as keeping the organization true to its identity, vision and values, motivating staff, volunteers, and members by showing exemplary leadership qualities, contributing to the impact of the work that has been undertaken by the organization, reassuring stakeholders about the way the organization is being run, maintaining and

restoring wider public confidence in voluntary and community organizations and the private sector. Investing time and effort to strengthen the governance of our organizations is something which should take a high priority (Lipson, 2010).

Good governance practices encompass the important role of leadership in ensuring that sound governance policies are instilled throughout the organization and puts responsibility on all public servants to apply governance practices and procedures in their day-to-day work. Good governance comprises both performance—which is how an agency uses governance arrangements to contribute to its overall performance and the delivery of goods, services or programs, and conformance—how an agency uses governance arrangements to ensure it meets the requirements of the law, regulations, published standards and community expectations of probity, accountability and openness. This means that, on a daily basis, governance is typically about the way public servants make decisions and implement policies (Briggs, 2007).

According to the UK Report: “Good Governance: A Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector” developed in 2005, an effective board will provide good governance and leadership by understanding their role, ensuring delivery of organizational purpose, being effective as individuals and a team, exercising control, behaving with integrity, and being open and accountable (Lipson, 2010). These codes are general in nature, and can be applied in organizations, regardless of the culture and country. Only the practice and procedures will vary, depending on the type and size of the organization. Underlying each principle is the additional principle of equality - ensuring equality, diversity and equality of treatment for all members of the community (Lipson, 2010).

The focus on ethics in governance usually concentrates on ethical structure as a mechanism to improve governance. For a framework of moral values and ethical principles to have a

significant and sustainable impact on the professional conduct of public servants an “ethics infrastructure” is required. The basic components of this infrastructure are:

- A framework of moral values and ethical principles
- A code of conduct
- Established administrative procedures
- Mechanisms for whistle-blowing
- Ombudsman services
- Management, coordination and evaluation of an ethical infrastructure

Some of these components on the list are based on the values approach and the rest are based on the disciplinary approach. To be effective in addressing the problem of corruption, an ethical infrastructure must integrate both approaches in a coherent and balanced system (Anello, 2006).

The components of a framework of moral values and ethical principles is dependent on the individual and the level of development of his moral values, approach to ethical issues, as well as the adaptation of those ethical principles to the challenges found within the organization at any given point in time.

## **UNEARTHING THE FACTORS THAT WORK AGAINST GOOD GOVERNANCE**

To be able to understand why the principles of good governance are not being respected or reflected in the public sector today, it is useful to look into the factors that facilitate such regression. Corruption, as defined by Transparency International (2010), is “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain.” Conflicts of interest are often the motivating force generating unethical behavior. Three types are frequently encountered in public institutions that tolerate corrupt behavior, for example when a public servant has vested personal interests in contracting a particular company, practices nepotism or favoritism when hiring personnel, and/or receives post-employment benefits

from a contracted company (Anello, 2006). Other acts range from an act of bribing someone to skipping a queue or bribing a traffic officer to avoid a speed fine to serious conduct as the irregular award of tenders or even buying political patronage (Madonsela, 2010).

Public institutions often limit their concern about unethical practices to these three forms of corrupt behavior, by establishing policies and procedures that attempt to prevent these types of conflicts of interest. Unfortunately other forms of corrupt practices exist that are sometimes ignored by public institutions, and become part of the unofficial institutional culture. Not only is this critical to the effectiveness of resource use and the reduction of corruption and waste, but it also goes a long way in ensuring public trust in the policies and decisions made on a daily basis.

### **IMPACT OF UNETHICAL PRACTICES ON GOOD GOVERNANCE**

According to Anello (2006), unethical practices lead to negative consequences such as the wastage of public funds, which reduces the government's ability to provide good quality essential services, hence depriving the citizens of their basic human needs and rights. There is also an economic impact when large amounts of public funds are wasted. When the focus is taken off obeying the call to serve the people in political office, toward other ventures that profit only one individual, it leads to a negative impact on the image and trust of the organization, as inefficiency and lack of transparency reduce public institutions' credibility, erodes the trust of members of the public and donors, and lower investments in countries.

In a specific illustration, picture an organization where unethical practices are consistently carried out, where there is no attempt made in ensuring transparency or public participation in the formulation and implementation of policies that will affect members of the public, and where corruption is the order of the day. Firstly, among the employees in the organization there will be a dwindling respect for law and order, and then there will be acts of impunity, because of the belief

that there is no punishment for wrongdoers. Among management, there will be a growing sense of loss of control not only of the employees, but of the organization as a whole, because corruption and vices which work against good governance have no loyalty to any one party or faction. It is clear to see that unethical practices benefit no one in the long run.

### **APPRAISING THE ETHICAL STRUCTURE OF NIGERIA'S PUBLIC SECTOR: CHALLENGES, ACHIEVEMENTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability, and a recurring legitimacy crisis. Public participation in government and electoral processes has been low because citizens perceive it as irrelevant to their lives, and will not yield the necessary outcomes anyway. In the absence of support from civil society, the effective power of government seems eroded. Benefactor – benefiter relationships have taken a prime role over the formal aspects of politics, such as the rule of law, well-functioning political parties, and a credible electoral system (Fagbadebo, 2007).

Several factors have been identified for this dysfunctional state of Nigeria and the third world. Kesselman, Krieger, and Williams (1996) blamed this on three principal factors- scarce resources, weak legitimacy and patron-client or what is commonly known in Nigeria as “godfather” politics. Scarce resources engender poverty, inequality, and a weak position in any economic system. State control of limited resources provides the opportunity for both political and bureaucratic officers to manipulate government spending to advance their personal fortunes. This has led to weak legitimacy, as the citizens lack faith in their political leaders, and, by extension, the political systems. In order to break this cycle and ensure good governance, accountability and transparency must be guaranteed (Fagbadebo, 2007).

One of the notable challenges faced with the decline in democracy and good governance in Nigeria is political violence. Effective legislature contributes to good governance. The legislative arm of government that would have provided adequate checks and balances on abuses of power by the executive and recklessness of the opportunistic politicians has shown to be also inefficient and ineffective.

The negative effects of a lack of transparency, accountability, public participation, and consensus-building are telling on the nation: there is dormant and potential rancor and acrimony which heat up the political system. This is so as political violence restricts free competition and cripples political participation while promoting mediocrity. The effects of political violence on democracy are many, and include disenfranchisement of qualified Nigerian voters, election of irresponsible political leaders, and political violence which destroys the viable future of the Nigerian youths by enlisting them into political gangs and consequently turning them to armed robbers, hired political assassins, and insurgents (as in the case of the terrorist group Boko Haram) (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Corruption and bad governance were the two major reasons often cited by the military to rationalize their incursion into politics in Nigeria (Adekanye, 1993). However, the succeeding military regimes could not stem the tide of corruption, and insatiate good governance.

There has been a massive quelling of the potential of responsible and responsive future leaders as youths of today are being exposed to unethical behaviors and practices and have neglected the important aspects of compromise, negotiation, conciliation, and sportsmanship found in democratic governance (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012). Electoral fraud has also been discovered to be a major impediment to economic development and unity in recent times in Nigeria. In fact, other disorders gravitate around electoral fraud, such as public unrest and

insurgency resulting from the perception of political officeholders taking positions that they do not merit.

Having looked at challenges, it is necessary to commend the progress that has been made in moving Nigeria from a place of political complacency, to a place of awareness and sensitization to political matters. Through the establishment of watchdog institutions such as the Electoral and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent National Electoral Commission, Nigerians now have models to look up to, which are charged with ensuring that all political and community decision-making processes follow constitutional and statutory laws.

Having considered the issues, a recommendation has been made towards achieving legitimate democracy and good governance, in the form of electoral reform. Electoral reforms will completely eliminate political violence, sit-tight syndrome, corruption and ineptitude and improve political participation. Reform is also capable of bringing about good governance, as meritocracy rather than mediocrity determines who occupies what position. The inseparable synergy between politics and economy makes reform in electoral processes a matter of necessity. Political stability creates economic stability. To evolve robust economy therefore, it is desirable to have electoral reforms geared towards political stability (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012).

The judiciary should also be strengthened and be alive with its responsibility. Judiciary should be bold enough to give a verdict in favor of those who truly won elections. The psychological implication of this is: Firstly, it will deter politicians from wasting money, time and energy on hiring thugs and stock-piling arms. Secondly, it will bring about the emergence of responsible political leadership. Thirdly and finally, it will divest the youths of destructive tendencies and encourage political participation and free exercise of franchise on the part of the

electorate. Electoral reforms should also be backed by the political will to implement and enforce and should be done intentionally, with the public at the heart of this innovation (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012).

To perform its oversight function effectively, the Nigerian legislature should be empowered to shape the budget and means of overseeing or checking the executive power beyond the ultimate power of impeachment, as a legislature that is capable of oversight function is more likely to manage the available funds to achieve the objectives of the state with minimal or no wastages, and this engenders transparency, openness, and accountability which represent the tripod of good governance (Ogundiya, 2010).

In navigating through the labyrinths of ethical dilemmas, Nigeria's public servants have had to be creative and artful whilst relying on guidance from the country's adopted framework of mechanisms for enthrone sound ethical fitness. In furthering the agenda needed to facilitate a return to sound ethical practices in Nigeria, there is a need to continue sensitization programs on standard ethical values, leadership by example for public officeholders, promoting administrative accountability, and the establishment and accordance of legal support to moral and ethical watchdog institutions (similar to INEC and EFCC) (Gundu, 2011).

Generally, the country's framework of mechanisms resonates the contemplation of Article 23 of the Charter for Public Service in Africa, which enjoins public functionaries to refrain from, "inter alia", abuse of office and any act(s) inimical to ethics and morality. Perpetrators of political violence and corrupt practices should be brought to book against all odds, as this will serve as deterrent to others and rid democratization process of violence.

## **ANALYZING THE ETHICAL SYSTEM IN PLACE IN THE USA PUBLIC SECTOR: TAKING A LOOK AT THE LITERATURE**

In taking a look at the literature presented by the authors on the ethical standards in US public institutions, several commonalities abound: in order to have a system firmly in place within any organization (whether public or private), there is a need to have established and implementable rules and regulations.

IT professionals Payne and Landry (2005) lay out principles which are applicable in the public, private, and non-profit sector, if only modified and tailored to suit the demands of the particular sector. Similar to the other literature presented for Nigeria, there is a need for a reform of the ethical practices in certain domains, as well as a call for the development of ethical standards in other domains. These principles are consistency, respect of individual, autonomy, integrity, justice, utility, and competence. There is a need for a system that incorporates these elements, and continuously reflects them, as it is easy to forget what was never etched into memory.

In looking at how to deal with the conflict that stems from power holding and distribution, we introduce John Gaventa's (1980) theory of power, which states that decision-making power must be observable, with straight-forward mechanisms, and widely understood rules. He further lays out conditions that encourage conflict, such as ambiguity about relative power, status inconsistency, zero-sum thinking, and the (limited) availability of leadership, as well as the conditions which discourage conflict, such as consensus about norms, segregation (physical and psychological), as well as physical and social barriers to communication (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). The former and latter conditions point out the importance of developing interpersonal

communication and team-building exercises, easily adaptable to the sector or institution for which the ethical reform is required.

Addressing specifically the non-profit community, Slutsky and Cass (2007) state, as has been endorsed by other authors in the literature section of the paper, “the best bulwark against misconduct will always be a well-informed vigilance by members of the nonprofit community themselves, including a set of principles they could adopt, promote sector-wide, and improve over time.” This again points to the necessity of having an educated community to avoid the tendency of unethical practices and the often debilitating consequences that arise from it.

## **SEEKING SOLUTIONS: RESTORING SOUND ETHICAL PRACTICES INTO THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

This question is a fundamental one that must be asked: What will it take to end anti-ethical practices such as corruption and to ensure good governance? One of the (arguably) most important factors in the fight against corruption and reinstating good governance is the human element. In other words, we need to address human values and behavior to bring about a lasting change in the institutional frameworks of not only Nigeria, or the US, but in other nations aiming to address and conquer the challenges of good governance. Needless to say, having transparent governance and administration systems in place are also important elements.

A huge part of the human element that is critical for promoting good governance involves the values of the community within which we seek to fight corruption. According to Mandonsela (2010), there are three dimensions to the human element. These are the values of each individual, community values, and political will at all levels of leadership. It is particularly important that the community’s understanding of corruption and consensus on what is inappropriate is in sync with

those that are formally charged with combating corruption, here speaking of anti-corruption agencies and ethical watchdog organizations. The corruption tolerance levels of the community can also be a force for or against corruption. In order to raise awareness of the community in regards to debilitating effects of unethical practices, education is required. This community education and awareness will provide a fertile ground for the practice of meritocracy, which is a sound ethical principle of governance involving the appointment of government officials on the basis of merit and ability. This is the exact opposite of vices such as nepotism or favoritism.

Other efforts so far to address the issue of the deviation from sound ethical practices in governance, in glaring cases such as corruption and improper conduct in execution of duties in the public sector have focused on the application of two basic strategies, one being a legislative reform approach, which establishes laws against corruption with appropriate punitive consequences for violations. This approach is often referred to as the “discipline approach”, which attempts to deter corrupt practices through the fear of punishment. The second strategy, often termed the “values approach”, attempts to increase institutional integrity by promoting moral values and ethical principles as a way of motivating public servants to behave ethically. Experience with these two strategies has shown that neither is sufficient if used alone and coordinated use of both is required to have a significant impact on establishing ethical practices within an institution (Anello, 2006).

In conclusion, good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. It typically involves well-intentioned people who bring their ideas, experiences, preferences, and other human strengths as well as shortcomings to the policy-making table. Good governance can only be achieved through an on-going discourse that attempts to capture all of the considerations involved in assuring that stakeholder interests are addressed and reflected in policy initiatives (Governance Pro, 2010).

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