



Press Release  
24 February 2015

## **Citizens see corruption as loss of their money and want the President to act But few support harsh sanctions for corrupt public officials**

**24 February 2015, Dar es Salaam:** Seven out of ten citizens (69%) see the type of corruption uncovered in the Controller and Auditor General's (CAG) annual report as a loss of their (the people's) money. More than half of citizens (55%) further believe that this type of corruption matters 'very much' to their daily lives and three out of ten (31%) would like to be informed about audit findings in a weekly half-hour radio program.

Citizens also believe that the President should take action on the findings of the CAG report: almost six out of ten (57%) believe that the President is responsible for following up on audit issues. Other institutions that are mentioned as responsible include the cabinet (16%) and the courts (11%). Apart from the President, no institution or individual is named by more than 20% of citizens.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Guardians of accountability: Citizen knowledge and opinions regarding oversight bodies*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,474 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) in September and October 2014.

Despite clear statements on the wrongs of corruption and the need for the President to take action, citizens are more ambivalent when it comes to consequences for misuse of public funds. Only one out of twenty (6%) think that those found to be corrupt should be banned from public office and one out of six (15%) think they should be imprisoned. The most popular penalties were to be fired and lose pension and benefits (32% of citizens thought this was the right sanction) or repaying the money that was misappropriated (30%).

Citizens were also asked about their knowledge and opinions regarding three major institutions of financial oversight, all of which are involved in the process of production and subsequent follow up of Tanzania's annual audit report; the National Audit Office of Tanzania (NAOT), the Local Authorities' Accounts Committee (LAAC) and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

The National Audit Office of Tanzania was the most well-known of the three institutions. One in three citizens (34%) have heard of the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) and one out of six (16%) can correctly explain the CAG's function. For the parliamentary committees responsible for local and national public accounts, the figures are lower. Three out of ten (29%) have heard of PAC and just over one out of ten (13%) can explain its function while one out of four (26%) have heard of LAAC and one out of ten (11%) can explain what this committee does.

For all three institutions, citizens are skeptical of their independence and unaware of their achievements. Less than one out of four citizens believe any of these oversight institutions is fully independent: CAG (25% believe he is fully independent), LAAC (21%) and PAC (23%). And almost no citizens could name any concrete achievements from any of these three institutions. For example, less than 5% of citizens thought that any of these institutions had discovered corruption scandals or brought corrupt public officials to light in the last three years.

The majority of citizens are also certain that there are many different types of corruption within government, but uncertain as to whether these will really appear in the Controller and Auditor General's report. For example, nine out of ten citizens (88%) think that bribes are paid to secure government positions or tenders, while just over three out of ten (34%) think that these will be published in the CAG's report.

Elvis Mushi, Coordinator of *Sauti za Wananchi* commented on the findings *"Citizens are clearly affected by corruption and have little faith in key financial oversight bodies to address their concerns. This is understandable given the regular revelations of large scale corruption in government which seem to meet with limited consequences. Part of the problem is that our institutions of accountability have no real teeth with which to impose penalties on those found responsible for corrupt practices."*

*"At the same time,"* he continued *"citizens are not advocating for particularly strong sanctions against those who misuse public money. There is a disconnect between our desire to decrease corruption and increase accountability, and our unwillingness to make use of tougher sanctions to achieve these goals. What is needed is strong leadership at all levels to ensure that the mechanisms of accountability can function effectively, and to educate the general public and those in power on the processes and means through which accountability should be enforced."*

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**For more information:**

Risha Chande  
Senior Communications Advisor, Twaweza  
e: [rchande@twaweza.org](mailto:rchande@twaweza.org) | t: (+255) (0) 656 657 559

**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)
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