

# **SHARING EXPERIENCE OF MEASURES TAKEN BY ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL AND EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF "COVID 19 FUNDS"**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since over one year, the world has been hit by a pandemic of Corona Virus (Covid19). It has occurred data moment when the world was unprepared for its seriousness and rapid spread. It then called on States to take urgent measures to block its spread and protect their citizens.

These measures include raising awareness, implementing preventive measures, purchasing protective equipment and fighting against the different forms of corruption during the period of containment.

In order to avoid being caught in the trap of the corrupters, African Governments have adopted strategies to prevent the corrupters from getting in their way by regularly monitoring the management of the Covid19 crisis by the relevant stakeholders and their capacity to deal with the crisis.

Given the risk of mismanagement of the pandemic, it is important to implement mechanisms for the good governance of these financial resources. The culture of transparency and ethics in the management of Covid 19 should be the guiding principle.

In the context of sharing experiences in the fight against corruption during the Covid 19 period, some AAACA member institutions shared with us their experiences on the measures taken for the transparent management of Covid 19 funds. This is notably the Republic of Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Tunisia.

### **1°. The Ivory Coast**

In pursuance of articles 33, 34, 41, 42, 56 and 67 of law n°2013-660 of 20 September 2013 on preventing and combating corruption and related offences, the High Authority for Good Governance requests that public structures and services, local authorities or bodies involved in the administration of public funds or assets set up to deal with the health crisis provoked by Covid 19, to administer such funds or assets in strict compliance with the rules of transparency, responsibility, ethics and probity.

To this end, the High Authority for Good Governance encourages the persons and structures benefiting from these funds to report to the control and supervision authorities or any failure to meet their obligations. In order to ensure that the whistleblower does not encounter difficulties in reporting cases of mismanagement or misappropriation of Covid 19 funds of which he/she is aware, the High Authority for Good Governance has provided a hotline as well as an e-mail. In addition, press releases to encourage people to report mismanagement and misuse of funds are regularly broad cast through official information channels such as the press, TV spots, national radio, etc.

From the foregoing, it should be noted that Ivory Coast, through the High Authority for Good Governance, has implemented preventive and repressive measures including implicating the population to denounce it to ensure that Covid 19 funds are properly managed in strict compliance with the rules of transparency, responsibility, ethics and probity. (See to this effect, the annexes to the press releases).

## **2°. OCEP/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

In order to fight corruption in the management of Covid 19 funds, the Democratic Republic of Congo started from the fact that:

The Corona virus pandemic is a worldwide tragedy that devastates human lives by the thousands and has then established a TASK FORCE, bringing together the Technical Secretariat of the Riposte, under the direction of Doctor Jean Jacques MUYEMBE, an epidemiologist.

Aware that managing the risks of corruption should not be ignored, as this could weaken the momentum of the campaign against this pandemic, preventive measures had to be set up that would require the promotion of ethical values, since the significant sums allocated to the Pandemic Care Structures in some countries around the world could render them ardent hotbeds of anti-values and mainly of corruption, within which all kinds of abuses denounced by the populations are committed.

**For OCEP, the following potential risks may undermine the administration of the Covid pandemic19 :**

- ❖ Manufacture of drugs to imitate the molecule;
- ❖ Prolifération of so-called quack healers;
- ❖ Hijacking of patients by certain health care personnel, who direct them to their private centres;
- ❖ Modification of certificates and granting of false screening certificates;
- ❖ Closure of large commercial spaces and soaring prices in the local markets that disadvantage the poor to the benefit of bigger companies.

**To prevent these risks, OCEP has already taken preventive measures which can be outlined as follows:**

Conserving moral reinforcement activities, through television spots for the vulgarization campaigns against the Covid-19 to those of moral reinforcement with ethical values, for the attention of the different stake holders involved in the riposte, in particular:

- Dedicated Personnel ;
- The Partners and ;
- The State, with a view to promoting the ethics of responsibility among these different actors who must be irreproachable persons.

**This is accompanied by the signing of ethical commitment agreements, as appropriate;**

- ❖ Incorporate surveillance and control mechanisms into the process of procuring medical equipments and pharmaceutical products, through to their delivery and use, in order to discourage fraudulent Commissionaires;
- ❖ Ensuring faultless management, in the support of health care personnel and in the supply of hospitals, because their failure can harbour the seeds of corruption.

In the event of the detection of facts likely to reveal mismanagement or misappropriation of Covid 19 funds, the Government of the DRC has set up a multidisciplinary team composed of the Services specialized in investigations, detection, smuggling, customs, cross-border healthcare and the Congolese National Police, with a view to achieving synergy in order to track down the corrupters and corrupted in their dealings.

In view of the foregoing, it should be noted that the Democratic Republic of Congo is aware of the consequences that can result from the mismanagement or misappropriation of Covid funds<sup>19</sup>, which is why it has put in place preventive and repressive measures to ensure the healthy and transparent management of these funds. **(See annex).**

### **3°. OFNAC/Senegal**

In order to reduce the risks of corruption, the Senegalese Government has adopted a number of texts with a view to reconciling two fundamental principles: promptness and transparency in the fight against the pandemic. These are :

- ❖ **Decree 2020-884 of 1 April 2020 creating and establishing the modalities of organization and functioning of the fund for riposte and solidarity against the effects of the Covid-19 called "Covid-19 Force".**

This decree creates within the Ministry of Finance and Budget a riposte and solidarity fund against the effects of the Covid-19 called "Covid-19 Force" whose mission is to finance the expenses related to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and to support the sectors of activities affected by the pandemic. It also enables to have a transparent organization of the afore mentioned funds.

- ❖ **Decree 2020-977 of 22 April 2020 appointing the monitoring committee for the implementation of "Covid-19 Force" operations.**

This committee, whose mission is to monitor and control the implementation of the operations of the riposte and solidarity fund against the effects of Covid-19, is composed of a multidisciplinary team from various spheres (Ministries, National Assembly, High Council of Territorial Collectivities, Economic Council, Social and Environmental Council, Associations of elected territorial representatives, Political parties, Civil society, Trade unions, Employers' organizations, Consumer organizations, private sector). This collegial monitoring committee makes the authorizing officers accountable for their actions. It also guarantees that development aid is properly allocated for the benefit of the most needy.

- ❖ **Decree n°2020-781 of 18 March 2020 granting an exemption from the public procurement code for expenditure relating to the fight against Covid 19**

The decree provides an exemption from compliance with the rules of procedure for awarding public contracts. However, it should be noted that despite this derogation, many ministries have issued tenders to ensure transparency.

The National Office for the Fight against Fraud and Corruption, for its part, remains faithful to its usual anti-corruption standards to promote integrity and transparency in the management of the health crisis.

It remains very attentive to complaints and denunciations related to the pandemic. However, it has not adopted a specific strategy to fight fraud and corruption during the pandemic.

#### **4°. National Anti-Corruption Authority (INLUCC)/Tunisia**

Since the outbreak of the Corona virus pandemic, the National Anti-Corruption Authority (INLUCC) has adopted strategies to fight corruption during the pandemic. In fact, it has set up an anti-corruption program focused on the promotion of transparency and accountability in order to tackle different forms of corruption that may lie behind the fight against the Covid 19. These strategies include

- The establishment of a hotline ;
- The Covid 19 response centre;

The centre was created to tackle offences relating to monopoly, the manipulation of the prices of medical products and basic foods, the overlapping of goods distribution channels, favoritism in the distribution of material subventions and mainly irregularities in public procurement and contracts.

In addition, for an effective fight against corruption in the management of the pandemic, the INLUCC involved citizens with strong civic participation in playing their role as watchdogs to protect public assets during the pandemic crisis. Also, the INLUCC is carefully managing the cases of corruption received. **(SeeAnnex).**

#### **Conclusions**

Since the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic crisis, National Institutions have adopted strategies to prevent and punish corruption and related offences in the management of 'Covid funds'19. Given that the management of the pandemic crisis required urgency in the purchase of medicines and other materials necessary for the effective fight against the pandemic, there was a need to prevent corrupters and corrupted persons from gaining access to them.

In addition, the coronavirus pandemic is likely to have a transformative effect: the impact on the multiple dimensions of governance that should be prepared to respond quickly to curb all corrupt practices. In this way, a rapid and effective response will help attenuate the effects of the crisis on the economy and ensure its rebound.

Also, it has been noted that the citizen is an actor of change in the fight against corruption in the management of Covid 19 funds and plays the role of "watchdog" in the proper management of funds.