

*SPEECH BY MR A.K UJOODHA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICAC
FOR THE AWARD CEREMONY FOR THE
BEST ANTI-CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK 2005/06
29TH SEPTEMBER 2006*

The Honourable Mrs Juggoo, Member of Parliamentary Committee

Mr Jacques De Navacelle, Chairperson of the Grand Jury

Mr Dennis Zandaza, President of the Mauritian Quality Institute

Dr Jean-Baptiste Elias, President de L'observatoire de lutte contre la corruption
du Benin et Chef de la Delegation de la Republique de Benin

Board Members of the ICAC

The Permanent Secretaries and Head of Private Sector Organisations

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon. Allow me at the very outset to extend a warm welcome to all of you and thank you for joining us in this Award Ceremony. It is indeed an honour for me to address you on the occasion of the first Award Ceremony for the competition of the "Best Anti-Corruption Framework".

Ladies and Gentlemen

Efforts to combat corruption have never and will never be easy. Many still ignore it or tend to benefit from it. But we cannot remain complacent. We must confront it. Evidence from around the world and down the ages confirms that corruption not only has a devastating impact on economic and social development but also threatens the fundamentals of society such as moral principles, fairness, stability

and security. It is known to undermine faith in public institutions, ruin businesses and take away valuable resources aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens. Moreover, corruption facilitates and perpetuates such transnational criminal activities as organized crime, money laundering, drug trafficking and the smuggling of human beings or organs.

The challenge to effectively fight this phenomenon lies in being more than reactive. Experience worldwide points towards the need to supplement law enforcement with

strong preventive initiatives and innovative public awareness activities. To be successful, I believe, we must adopt a system-wide approach. Our actions, especially in the area of good governance and anti-corruption, should not only aim at instilling the right values and attitudes but should go beyond that to strengthening of institutions and processes. Good governance and the fight against corruption should not remain just new catchwords. They represent the keys for successful reform and for equitable and sustainable development. We should continuously strive to enhance our pillars of integrity in order to work towards a corrupt-free society.

Our recently launched three year action plan (2006-2009) for the Corruption Prevention and Education Division has been developed along the above lines where our actions are geared towards enhancing integrity in society and organisations. Our aim is to progressively build a state where honesty and integrity are lived and practiced and where departures from norms are not tolerated. Fighting corruption is a long-term commitment, and results will not come overnight. We rely on the support of each and every stakeholder in society. This requires strong leadership, encouragement and example from the top in

setting the right cultural framework. As spelt out in our Action Plan 2006-2009, it also requires the setting of clear standards for the acceptance of gifts and hospitality and for the conduct of private affairs, backed as necessary by disclosure.

Achieving high standards involves the systematic reviewing of systems to ensure that these processes are open and fair. It means establishing clear lines of accountability and reporting supported by transparent and auditable financial management procedures. It means open procurement processes and much more as dealt with in our Action Plan 2006-2009. And, not least, it means dealing with citizens in an open, fair and objective way.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The philosophy underlined in our Action Plan 2006-2009 joins the commitment of the Government's vision to pave the way for a new culture of efficiency and elimination of wastage. The competition for the Best Anti-Corruption Framework aims at creating an urge for organisations to develop and implement a corruption prevention framework in their organisations thereby enhancing efficiency, achieving cost saving and avoiding loss of confidence. It sets the standards for an anti-corruption management system.

It is a tool to allow for self-assessments of organisations' existing systems with emphasis on corruption prevention and to consolidate their existing systems. It provides enterprises with the possibility to initiate a system for corruption management thereby contributing to an overall improvement in performance and good governance.

Moreover, through the Best Anti-Corruption Framework competition, the aim is to give national recognition to organisations for their drive to fight corruption through systems enhancement and adoption of best practices. Those who are among the best performers can in turn serve as role models to others.

You will recall that the competition for the Best Anti-Corruption Framework was launched on the 17th February 2005. The Award Ceremony ought to have taken place in 2005 itself but since there was no quorum at ICAC for a certain time, this explains the unfortunate delay. But I can assure you that the assessment exercise has respected all the laid down procedures before the findings were submitted to the Grand Jury. I need to stress that for this first “coup d’essai”, the ICAC has been glad to receive the participation of 17 organisations. Here, I wish to congratulate all participating organisations for their motivation and drive for having taken up the challenge. We have been agreeably surprised to receive the participation of small organisations such as the Curepipe Cooperative Credit Union. I wish to stress that participating in such competition put enterprises in what we call a win-win situation.

The level of participation and extent of anti-corruption efforts noted in the application reports of participating organisations is an indication that we are on the right track with the creation of the right synergy among public and private firms to bring corruption to manageable levels.

With the BACF Award we have moved one step further that is from the national sensitization campaign to the enlistment of the commitment and initiation of concrete anti-corruption actions from public and private bodies.

However, we need to point out that organisations in the public sector have been more in the forefront to undertake the challenge and submit themselves to the scrutiny as 14 out of the 17 participants were public sector bodies. We make an appeal to the private sector for a more active participation and commitment in future since we believe that the fight against corruption and good governance have to go hand in hand. For the BACF 2007-2008, the ICAC expects a wind of change and a more balanced participation between the public and the private sector.

The designation of the winners has not been an easy task for the members of the Grand Jury, chaired by Mr. Jacques de Navacelle, in his double capacity as chairman of the Joint Economic Council and also as representative of Transparency Mauritius. I wish to thank the members of the Grand Jury, namely Miss Amrita Maulloo, Mr. Jean Li and Mr. Dev Ruhee, who have given their precious time for this exercise.

Fighting corruption requires a long-term strategy that systematically and progressively attacks the problem. Any strategy for solving the problem requires the commitment and participation of governments, private citizens, and private businesses alike.

In this respect, the ICAC will assume its role as a facilitator also and will provide any form of assistance to public and private sector organisation in such fields as capacity building, auditing, systems enhancement and the empowerment of their staff. I urge you to take advantage of these facilities in the process of making Mauritius a corrupt-free society.

Ladies and Gentlemen with those words, I thank you for your kind attention.