

Forum:	Economic and Social Council
Issue:	Reducing corruption and inequality in the distribution of new technologies in LEDCs.
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Introduction

The World Economic Forum estimates that corruption totals at a cost for the global economy 3.6 trillion dollars per year. For Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), corruption and inequality in the distribution of new technologies is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. In LEDCs, new technologies hold the potential to improve life, such as access to better healthcare, education, and daily necessities, overall increasing the well-being of individuals; hence, its importance is crucial to be combated. Meanwhile, when corruption occurs in a country, it can lead to mismanagement of funds and resources, which can harm a nation's economy and the citizens. For instance, in Bangladesh (LEDC), about one third of their population reported they have been impacted by corruption and of those, 84 percent of households have reported they have experienced corrupt public and private officials directly. Moreover, in Afghanistan (LEDC), 1 billion dollars of the 8 billion dollars donated have suspiciously been lost to corruption, and these funds were originally intended to improve their citizens' well-being by funding education system and various other infrastructure.

Throughout the decades, countries have tried to combat and mitigate the issue through various ways, such as global collaboration and the use of new technologies to monitor corruption and distribution of products. Nevertheless, the issue of allocating resources and corruption still lingers in many LEDCs seemingly unnoticed. Evidently, it is crucial to critically assess the current situation of corruption and misallocation of resources in LEDCs and devise a comprehensive solution to resolve this enduring issue.

Definition of Key Terms

LEDCs

LEDC is a classification given to a country that is less economically developed. Countries that fall under this classification are typically characterized by low GDP per capita; low standard of living; poor infrastructure, especially healthcare and education; and unstable/vulnerable industries such as agriculture and mining.

Corruption

Corruption is the use of entrusted power for personal gain. Corruption is found to and continues to redirect funds, hinder government initiatives, curtail economic growth, and exacerbate inequality.

Inequality

The quality of being uneven in opportunities, status, benefits, and/or rights.

Technological Diffusion

Technological diffusion is the process whereby a technology spreads throughout and between populations, regions, economies, etc. The diffusion process is similar to that of contagious diffusion. Specifically, the technology is adopted by a party and spread to other parties through direct interaction.

Digital Divide

The gap between parties in regards of accessibility to digital, internet-based, and/or communicative technologies. Common social cleavages that run parallel to this divide are urban vs. rural and social class.

Transparency

Transparency is the quality of a body, typically a government, keeping citizens informed about operations and policies. It involves the organization being accountable and honest towards its citizens, refraining from concealing or fabricating information.

Background

Corruption and inequality in the distribution of new technologies in LEDCs

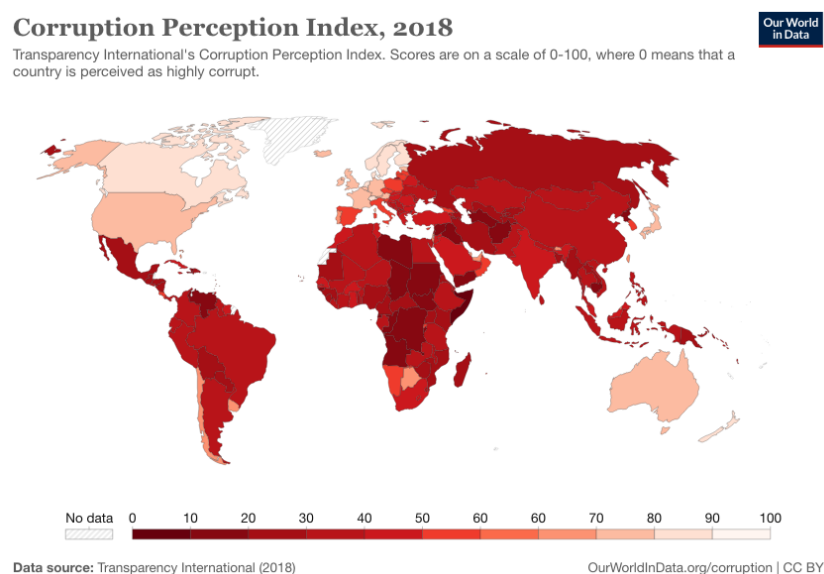


Fig 1. Corruption Index Map

The issue of corruption and inequality in the distribution of new technologies in LEDCs could exist in various forms, which can lead to disparities in access to the quantity and quality of the technologies. These technologies include such as but are not limited to access to healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

Healthcare (Bangladesh)

Healthcare is an essential aspect of distribution of technologies in LEDCs, and corruption was identified in healthcare through various factors, including informal payment, bribery, and absenteeism. In Bangladesh, findings reveal that some pertinent governance issues included corruption of inventory management, and doctors unnecessarily suggesting patients to private clinics. The informal payment reaches 60% largely attributable to the

low and irregular payments, causing increased inequality to access to healthcare. Moreover, bribes were utilized to recruit ad hoc doctors (two healthcare organizations exchange health information), and doctors earned commission agreements with centers, driving up the cost. Research indicates that 42% of the patients encountered corruption while accessing services and 43% faced negligence by professionals, affecting the poorest and causing lack of trust in healthcare and service for the disadvantaged.

Major Sector of an Economy (Oil Bunkering in Nigeria)

Major sectors of the economy are often exploited by corrupt government officials. Nigeria is one the largest oil producer in the Africa continent. In 2007, their oil earning is 85 percent of government revenue and 99 percent of export earnings. Meanwhile, their living standard declined since 1970. The reason behind this corruption is clear. Criticisms surrounding the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) lacks oversight and accountability for the oil industry. Moreover, bunkering (the theft of crude oil directly from pipelines) occurred in many Nigerian pipelines. Findings reveal that 100,000 bpd lost via bunkering in Nigeria, and some sources even estimate that it reaches high as 600,000 bpd. These results were concerning, and many perceived that the government and oil company representatives were involved in such illegal activities. Generally, a group of men were able to execute the bunkering activities overseen by powerful figures. Therefore, these illegal activities result in costs that could reduce the revenues earned by the state used for public services.

Education Corruption (Honduras)

Education is crucial for LEDCs development, yet officials still exploit it for their own benefit. Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America, and the corruption has been prevalent in their education sector. The term 'taxi teachers' was created in Honduras in 2007. The use of the term was to highlight the corruption challenges faced by the nation. Taxi teachers are teachers who are frequently absent from the assigned schools, and travel to various schools to teach while collecting the salary of their assigned school. Furthermore, in 2008, Honduras invested more than 1 billion dollars in education, placing the country 4th largest investor in education in Latin America, while the country's investment per individual continues to be one of the lowest in the world with 90 percent of the education budget spend on teachers. This misallocation of funds causes education funds not being able to reach the individuals intended for.

Ghost Projects (Afghanistan)

Government spending is a considerable aspect of the corruption causing inequality in allocating technologies. Corruption in Afghanistan has been widespread particularly in government spending. This resulted in projects or initiatives that only exist on paper. Between 2012 and 2013, officials realized that many campuses in Kabul did not enroll any students while scientific equipments (distribution of technologies) are still boxed. The U.S. Agency for International Development in Afghanistan (USAD) continue to fund Afghanistan education system despite the lack of financial transparency in the Afghan government. According to a publisher in Kabul, there are no schools in part of the country, but all the expenses are being paid.

‘Hidden Debts’ (Mozambique)

Corruption is a serious issue for many nations. In 2013 and 2014, some Mozambique officials created 3 states owned enterprises that took a debt of 2 million dollars. These funds were intended to construct shipyards, develop tuna fishing, and police the coast with financing major international banks (Credit Suisse, VTB, and BNP Paribas, three major banks). About 1.3 billion dollars was undisclosed until the media reported the funds. This event is just one of the episodes of ‘Hidden Debts’. The impact of the ‘Hidden Debts’ is profound. The event caused an economic downturn for the nation. Growth halved from 7.7% in 2000–2016 to 3.3% in 2016–2019, inflation surged to 17.4% by the end of 2016, and foreign direct investment (FDI) began to exit as investors lost confidence.

Major Parties Involved

The Conference of the States Parties

The Conference of the States Parties (CoSP) is the main decision-making body of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). The UNCAC is a universal and legally binding anti-corruption agreement signed by 140 signatories and 191 parties. The Convention outlines a unique approach to address corruption, notably including policies on preventative measures, international cooperation, and asset recovery, and reforms on criminalization, law enforcement, and legislative/institutional frameworks. The CoSP aids parties and signatories with their capacity to implement the UNCAC, enhances cooperation between states and works with UNODC to facilitate the development and implementation of anti-corruption policies.

United Nation Office of Drugs and Crimes

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a United Nations agency that is tasked with preventing and taking actionable steps to address significant and widespread international crimes, the most notable being that of corruption. The agency pursues these initiatives through providing research, guidance, and support for states to implement recommended policies. Furthermore, the organization’s mission and activities are aided by encompassing agencies of specialization in certain fields, such as the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network, specializing in criminal justice and prevention. The end goal of this agency is to enhance the ability of the state to combat organized crime independently.

Transparency International

Transparency International (TI) is a civil society (non-governmental organization) that aims to combat the injustices of corruption. Transparency International is responsible for notable publications such as the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The organization is a member of many related organizations, such as G20, United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), and United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), in which TI works in conjunction with to expedite anti-corruption initiatives. Having an established base of influence in over 100 countries, Transparency International pursues policy objectives and lobby for legislation that aim to facilitate anti-corruption measures. The organization also fosters public participation through advocacy and campaigning.

African Union

With the continent of Africa having the lowest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score, averaged between all 54 states, African countries are generally characterized by high levels of perceived corruption in the government and its many institutions. In conjunction with the many LEDCs in the continent of Africa, special emphasis is placed on African countries and, by extension, the African Union concerning the issue at hand. The African Union (AU) is continental body of 55 member states. Key issues that the African Union strives to address are to promote good governance and equality. The union is a much more direct forum concerning the cooperation of African states, allowing for more effective and consistent governmental reforms and collective actions.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

In the past decade, governments and organizations have taken actions to solve and address the growing concerns of corruption and inequality in the distribution of technologies in LEDCs. The concern can be solved through various means with different organizations collaborating with the nation's government that focuses on reducing corruption to increase individuals' access to healthcare, education, and justice.

From 2011, the UN initiated the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) which ended in 2020 with its successor now named as The Doha Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries. The IPoA focused on ensuring LEDCs graduate by the year 2020. The program's first principle is "leadership of and the primary responsibility for their development lies with least developed countries themselves", emphasizing the role which the government plays in ensuring the development of a nation. Moreover, it stresses the idea of "equity at all levels" within a country. Of its 8 priorities, priority 5 is responsible for human and social development, and priority 8 is good governance at all levels. In 2010, the number of users per 100 inhabitants in LEDCs was merely 4.47, but in 2014, that number rose to 8.64 users per 100 inhabitants, indicating the program's utility.

Nationwise, the World Bank has assisted countries to combat corruption, and it is helping countries to build transparency at a local, national, and a global level to implement new anticorruption programs because the fundamental issue of corruption comes from government officials, causing citizens to lose trust. Furthermore, the World Bank also utilizes the lessons gained to improve on contemporary technologies to help nations to combat corruption. In Somalia, the World Bank is collaborating with the IMF and other organizations to create a joint Somalia Government, leading to significant saved expenditure for the government. The World Bank also uses digital tools to monitor municipal deliveries.

Possible Solutions

- Delegates should consider how the solutions they propose present multifaceted complications in the application, feasibility, or obstacles that hinder such solutions. Considering these realities are essential to

ensuring comprehensive and logical solutions that can effectively address all aspects of the issue in question.

- Delegates should consider both long-term and short-term solutions to the issues at hand. Consider if the solution proposed is sustainable in the long term. If not, propose another solution that works off the foundation of the initial initiative. Ideal short-term solutions should work in conjunction with future long-term solutions, in which it should establish the right foundations or contextual situation for the long-term solution to be applied effectively.
- There is no doubt that legislation and/or policies are difficult to be comprehensively and actively applied/enforced in all states the resolution concerns. Delegates should investigate the political culture, ideologies, and attitudes of the states that are most concerned within this pressing issue. African, Middle eastern, Eastern European, and Asian states are all scattered on the political continuum, ranging from authoritarian to democratic states, radical to reactionary, socialist to free-market with moderate welfare in the middle. Consider how characteristics of the major states in concern will influence the application and feasibility of your solution.
- When thinking of long-term solutions, it is important to acknowledge that solutions in these categories should be generally a measure to establish a continuity of what a previous short-term policy worked towards. Many long-term solutions can encompass a multitude of goals that many short-term policies worked for before it. An example to consider is ensuring transparency in the government. It facilitates a system of checks and balances between the state and society. For example, Interest groups specializing in healthcare may use the transparent nature of the government to ensure adherence to set standards. All in all, think of solutions that institutionalize continuity. But not all long-term solutions have to adhere to this rule.
- In regards to short-term solutions, they should be the propellant of change. Delegates should consider all aspects mentioned above and below in order to craft a comprehensive solution to the problem. In the context of reducing corruption, potential short-term solutions could be establishing a dispute mechanism. This has been implemented before, though under different context. The Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) is a mechanism for settling disputes between foreign companies and the member states of the late NAFTA. It established an impartial tribunal that does not allow for potential bias towards the host state to have an impact on final decisions. In application for reducing inequality or corruption, a similar mechanism may be used to hold officials accountable to the citizens. The point is to think about solutions that initially change the current nature of the states in concern, so to establish foundation where long-term solutions can be locked in.
- Delegates commonly make the mistake of including clauses that are entirely optimistic and idealistic. Such clauses would and should be called into question. A common example is a clause for international cooperation. Delegates should refrain from “calling for” **all** states to provide assistance, goods and services, etc. Not all states are equal on the world stage, especially with the continued trends of dominance from one or more hegemonic powers, and not all have the capacity to adhere to suggestions. If delegates wish to include clauses for international cooperation, delegates should consult other delegations on their

proposal. If some believe their state has the necessary capacity to provide, specify in the clause the respective states that have agreed to such measures.

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