



## Rwanda: Activists Say Sexual Corruption a Threat to Economic Prospects

BY EMMANUEL NYANDWI, 6 JUNE 2013

Reluctance to report cases of sexual advances in exchange for jobs, mainly over fear of reprisal, complicate efforts to tackle the crime, activists have said.

The observers, who spoke during the launch of a campaign to tackle gender-based sexual corruption early this week, said this kind of corruption handicaps all sectors of the country since it is not simple to find any evidence.

The campaign, which is being undertaken by the African Parliamentarian's Network against Corruption (APNAC), Rwanda chapter in collaboration with Transparency International Rwanda, the National Women Council, Profemme-Twese Hamwe, among other partners, will be taken to eight districts.

"Victims [of sex corruption] are challenged with lack of evidence when the matter is taken to courts," said Francine Umurungi, in charge of Institutional Development and Advocacy at Transparency Rwanda.

She however, called upon every individual to act as one team towards eradicating the crime.

"If all institutions- from the police, Parliament, legal and religious institutions, civil society, private sector- and individuals collaborate in the efforts to tackle sex corruption, it will be stopped," Umurungi said.

About 85 per cent of victims of gender based sexual corruption are female, a study conducted two years ago by Transparency International Rwanda has revealed.

The study also states that gender-based corruption in workplaces exists in Rwanda and particularly affects women in search for jobs and the private sector.

But despite the findings, the problem remains unspoken, according to Senator Marie Claire Mukasine who chairs African Parliamentarian's Network against Corruption (APNAC)-Rwanda.

"This is a big issue but people seem to pay less attention to it," Mukasine said. "I believe this is affecting efforts to end it".

With the aim of involving members of the community, the campaign will target especially the youth and females, according to officials. It would involve selected panellists who will engage the population on the issue.

"Through discussions we collect testimonies and ideas on how we can tackle the problem. We also share the importance of speaking out against such malpractices and reporting them as everyone stands for their rights," Mukasine said.

While launching the campaign in Muhanga District, a primary school teacher said she was asked to offer sexual favours before she could be offered a well paying job.

"I had promises to be paid Rwf 250 000 a month but for me to get that job I had to first sleep with the boss," the woman, who earns only Rwf 40,000, testified. "I refused the offer."

Rwanda is credited for being the least corrupt country in the Eastern Africa Region and is also revered for its impressive progress in the promotion of gender equality.

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