



AFRICA BUSINESS ETHICS CONFERENCE

2024

A BRAVE NEW AFRICA

BUSINESS GROWTH IN TIME OF ECONOMIC TURBULENCE

ABRIDGED REPORT

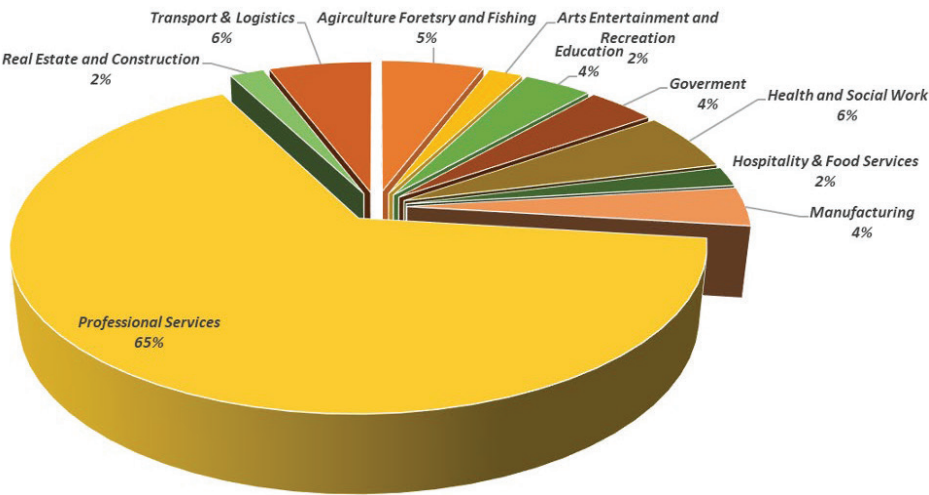


**United Nations
Office on Drugs and Crime**

INTRODUCTION

The 5th Annual Africa Business Ethics Conference (ABEC) took place on December 5th, 2024, at the Villa Rosa Kempinski in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme “**A BRAVE NEW AFRICA: Business Growth in Time of Economic Turbulence**”. Countries represented included Kenya; Nigeria, and Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Botswana, Sweden and Bangladesh and the United States of America (USA). Participants represented diverse sectors, including the private sector, civil society, media, donor organizations, and youth. Of the 185 participants, 142 participants attended the conference physically, and 43 participants who attended virtually via Zoom.

FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY SECTOR



CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES



1

Provide a platform to foster ethical business practices



2

Facilitate collective action to combat corruption through convening key stakeholders including business leaders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), policy makers, global experts, and media



3

Equip Businesses through training, technical assistance and raising awareness on anti-corruption



ABEC 2024
NAIROBI, KENYA

185 participants (94 male; 91 female) drawn from 10 countries spread across 4 continents (Africa, Asia, North America and Europe)



ABEC 2024
NAIROBI, KENYA

2400 views and 1500 reach on Facebook, and 6900 interactions on LinkedIn.

ABEC 2024 CONFERENCE TOPICS

Ethical leadership and corporate governance: Speakers emphasized the importance of ethical leadership in driving organizational integrity and creating a culture of compliance.

Private sector collective action against corruption: The need for collaboration between businesses, governments, and civil society to effectively combat corruption was a recurring theme.

Compliance, anti-corruption, and due diligence: Discussions focused on strengthening compliance frameworks, leveraging technology for risk assessment and fraud prevention, and integrating due diligence practices in all business phases.

Business ethics in the age of tech automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI): Panelists explored the ethical implications of AI and technology in business, emphasizing data privacy, responsible AI governance, and the need for transparent data policies that promote ethical practices.

Youth empowerment and engagement: The conference highlighted the crucial role of youth in driving ethical business practices and combating corruption, advocating for practical business education and meaningful youth engagement in the private and public sectors.

Research and its role in encouraging business ethics: With the main focus on the importance of research in shaping business ethics, informing policy development, promoting accountability, by identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement was underscored.



"As we leave today, may we carry forward the lessons learned and take actionable steps to promote transparency, accountability and sustainability in our respective spheres of influence."

Fatma Elmaawy,
Convener and Founder
Africa Business Ethics Conference



KEY DISCUSSION POINTS AND CONSENSUS

Collective Action and Collaboration: Participants widely agreed that collective action and collaboration between businesses, governments, media, and civil society are essential to effectively combat corruption.

Knowledge Sharing and Best Practices: There was emphasis on the importance of establishing platforms to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration between stakeholders from both the supply and demand side (private and public).

Research and Advocacy: Participants emphasized the critical need for a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy encompassing an agenda, an advocacy plan for its implementation, and the integral role of research to inform policy changes, promote awareness, and strengthen anti-corruption frameworks through evidence-based advocacy and dissemination of findings.

Ethical Leadership and Corporate Governance: The session underscored the importance of ethical leadership and robust corporate governance in fostering a culture of integrity and accountability within organizations. This should include;

- Prioritizing ethical behavior and set a strong example, organizations should develop and implement comprehensive codes of ethics and anti-corruption policies.

- Promoting transparency and accountability at all levels of management.

Compliance and Enforcement: The session underscored the need for strong compliance mechanisms and effective enforcement to deter and address unethical behavior. ;This includes firstly, strengthening internal compliance systems with clear procedures for reporting and investigation, leveraging on technology to enhance compliance monitoring and risk assessment. Secondly, encourage open reporting and appropriate disciplinary actions are taken.

"By addressing corruption, we empower businesses, create a level playing field, and unlock opportunities for Africa's youth and economic growth."

Francesco Totti,
Team Lead
Africa Anti-Corruption Hub (UNODC)



Technology and Innovation: Participants recognized the transformative potential of technology and innovation in promoting ethical business practices and combating corruption. Key actions include establishing ethical AI governance guidelines, ensuring data privacy, addressing potential biases in AI systems, and investing in robust tech systems to protect business assets.

Youth Empowerment and Engagement: The session agreed on the crucial role played the youth in shaping a more ethical and transparent business environment. Priority actions include integrating ethics and integrity education into school and university curricula, actively involving young people in discussions and initiatives related to business ethics and anti-corruption efforts, and establishing a culture of recognizing persons of integrity that youth can model after.

Capacity Building and Training: The session highlighted the importance of capacity building and ongoing training to equip individuals and organizations with the knowledge and skills to promote ethical business practices and combat corruption. Also supporting initiatives that build capacity within organizations and communities to address ethical challenges and promote good governance.

RESULTS OF THE PRE-CONFERENCE SURVEY VIA MENTIMETER

What can help the private sector to do better in instilling business ethics?

The following proposals reflect the views of participants on what the private can do to instill business ethics;

1 **Emphasis on Action & Accountability through Implementation,**

Enforcement & Compliance Actions: The most dominant action proposed was the call for direct action – implementing policies, enforcing compliance, taking audits seriously, saying no to bribery, and generally walking the talk which was proposed by 31% of the participants that filled the mentimeter survey.

2 **Importance of Voice through Advocacy, Awareness & Speaking Out:**

Constituted the second largest category (22.4%). There's a clear trend towards needing external communication and potentially naming and shaming or calling out unethical behavior.

3 **Strength in Numbers:**

Collaboration and collective action represent a significant trend (15.5%). Respondents see value in partnerships, industry collaboration, and using associations to fight corruption, indicating that these challenges are often seen as requiring a united front.



4 **Ethical Culture as a Foundation:**

Building an ethical culture and strong leadership (10.3%) is recognized as a crucial underlying factor for sustainable ethical practices.

5 **Supporting Mechanisms:**

Training/Education, Policy/Standards, and Recognition/Rewards appear as important supporting mechanisms (roughly 7%, and 3% respectively), but less frequently mentioned than direct action, advocacy, or Collaboration

Time is neutral. Anything you invest in today in terms of business ethics and integrity will become your history and the foundation for the future.



Lola Adekanye,
Deputy Regional Director for Africa
&
Country Director for Nigeria
CIPE

CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

The conference concluded with a set of resolutions aimed at guiding future actions and promoting ethical business practices across Africa:

- ★ Unite and take initiative for sustainable change through collective action and leadership.
- ★ Align the fight against corruption with business needs to foster growth and sustainability.
- ★ Engage the youth in the fight against corruption by leveraging technology and fostering an ethically driven ecosystem.
- ★ Standardize anti-corruption laws across Africa to strengthen the continent's collective fight against corruption.
- ★ Enhance collaboration between public and private sectors to create effective solutions for tackling corruption.
- ★ Promote ethical AI governance and due diligence across businesses, emphasizing regulatory frameworks and internal governance structures.
- ★ Reward and recognize businesses upholding ethical practices to encourage integrity as a standard.



Together, we can create a future where businesses thrive, communities prosper and our continent takes its rightful place as a beacon of integrity and progress at the global stage; so Africa, let's move forward.

Ms. Jacqueline Mugo EBS
CEO & Executive Director
Federation of Kenya Employers

"By addressing corruption, we empower businesses, create a level playing field, and unlock opportunities for Africa's youth and economic growth."

Lawrence Jenga,
Head of Corporate Communications
and Marketing
Kenya Association of Manufacturers



CALL TO ACTION

The second plenary session provided a comprehensive roadmap for promoting ethical business practices and combating corruption in Africa, with responsibilities assigned to various stakeholders noting that;



ETHICAL LEADERSHIP & CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- i. Leaders should prioritize ethical behavior and set a strong example for others to follow by being ethical leaders and enforcing codes of conduct.
- ii. Organizations should develop and implement comprehensive codes of ethics, anti-corruption policies, and guidelines. Periodic training ethics should be inculcated in businesses as a standard practice.
- iii. Transparency and accountability should be promoted at all levels.

RESPONSIBILITY

Board members. CEOs, Senior management & small business owners & entrepreneurs

PRIVATE SECTOR COLLECTIVE ACTION
AGAINST CORRUPTION

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Strengthen platforms such as ABEC to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration between stakeholders both from the supply and demand side (private and public) & establish others. The same platforms can be utilized to facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge, skills and information on best practices between organizations and stakeholders to promote ethical business conduct.

RESPONSIBILITY

Private sector associations/CSOs, Think Tanks and other relevant government agencies.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Develop an anti- corruption agenda and an advocacy plan for its implementation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Private sector associations/CSOs, Think Tanks and other relevant government agencies.



Integrity binds longevity” and
ethical practices must be
non-negotiable.

Tom Shivo
Chief People Officer
Kenya Airways

COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Strengthen internal compliance Systems & Procedures through training, monitoring & mentoring have elaborate enforcement mechanisms.

RESPONSIBILITY

CEOs, Senior management &; small business owners & entrepreneurs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Leverage on technology to enhance compliance monitoring and risk assessment.

RESPONSIBILITY

CEOs, Senior management &; small business owners & entrepreneurs, ICT Authority, Private tech businesses

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iii. Encourage internal open reporting of unethical behavior through the use of technology and ensure that appropriate disciplinary actions are taken as outlined in the organization Code of conduct & policies.

RESPONSIBILITY

Audit, HR department; FKE, PSO/Associations

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iv. Promote open reporting: Encourage organizations to openly report unethical conduct to prevent repeat offenders and create a culture of transparency that penalizes corrupt practices & rewards compliance.

RESPONSIBILITY

EACC and Office of the Ombudsman



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Establish ethical AI governance guidelines for the development and use of AI and other emerging technologies to combat unethical practices and promote.

RESPONSIBILITY

ICT authority in partnership with private sector associations/BMOs; Tech hubs/tanks; small business owners & entrepreneurs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Ensure and prioritize data privacy and implement robust data protection measures to safeguard sensitive information

RESPONSIBILITY

PSO/association; Office of Data protection commission, small business owners & entrepreneurs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iii. Address potential biases in AI systems and promote diversity and inclusion in technology development to mitigate biases and discrimination.

RESPONSIBILITY

ICT authority in partnership with private sector associations/BMOs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iv. Investment in robust tech systems to protect business assets

RESPONSIBILITY

Board members. CEOs, Senior management ; small business owners & entrepreneurs.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Integrate ethics and integrity education into school & university curricula to instill ethical values in young people prepare future generations for ethical business conduct

RESPONSIBILITY

MoE-Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development; research and academia, Schools association, Youth network.



PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Actively involve young people by engaging them in discussions and initiatives related to business ethics and anti-corruption efforts such as ABEC.

RESPONSIBILITY

Private sector associations/CSOs, Think Tanks, universities & youth associations and other relevant government agencies.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iii. Establish a culture of recognizing persons of integrity that youth can model after by e.g. holding an integrity award.

RESPONSIBILITY

Coalition of like-minded organizations like WBN, TIK, UNGC and UNDOC & other associations.

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Conducting research to gather data and insights on ethical business practices and the impact of corruption such as the Corruption Risk Mapping, TI CPI Index.

RESPONSIBILITY

Coalition of like-minded organizations like WBN, TIK, UNGC and UNDOC & other associations.



ETHICAL PRACTICES MUST BE AT THE HEART OF BUSINESS STRATEGIES TO BUILD TRUST WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PARTNERS INVESTORS, AND COMMUNITIES.

Patricia Arua,
Director
State Department
for
Investment Promotion

PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Use research findings to advocate for and implement evidence based-policy changes and stronger anti-corruption frameworks.

iii. Disseminate research findings and best practices to raise awareness and promote ethical business conduct.

RESPONSIBILITY

Media- print, electronic and social platforms led by private sector associations like KEPSA, FKEs, KNCCI, KAM, KFC, Think Tan.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

PRIORITY ACTIONS

i. Invest in training programs on ethics, compliance, and anti-corruption measures for employees at all levels.

RESPONSIBILITY

Training institutions and universities, CSOs, professional bodies

PRIORITY ACTIONS

ii. Develop and provide access to resources and tools that support ethical decision-making and promote a culture of integrity such as Tool kits

RESPONSIBILITY

Board and CEOs, BMOs

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iii. Support initiatives that build capacity within organizations and communities to address ethical challenges and promote good governance.

RESPONSIBILITY

Donors & Corporates

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND BEST PRACTICES

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Invest in training programs on ethics, compliance, and anti-corruption measures for employees at all levels.

RESPONSIBILITY

Training institutions and universities, CSOs, professional bodies

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RESPONSIBILITY

Board and CEOs, BMOs

PRIORITY ACTIONS

iii. Support initiatives that build capacity within organizations and communities to address ethical challenges and promote good governance.

RESPONSIBILITY

Donors & Corporates

CONCLUSION

ABEC 2024 successfully fostered dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders, contributing to the advancement of ethical business practices and the fight against corruption in Africa. The conference effectively addressed critical issues, provided valuable insights, and generated actionable resolutions. The emphasis on youth engagement, technological application, and collective action demonstrated a forward-looking approach to tackling ethical challenges in Africa's evolving business landscape. ABEC continues to play a crucial role in shaping a future where businesses thrive, communities prosper, and Africa takes its rightful place as a beacon of integrity and progress on the global stage.



ETHICAL PRACTICES MUST BE AT THE HEART OF BUSINESS STRATEGIES TO BUILD TRUST WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING PARTNERS INVESTORS, AND COMMUNITIES.



Patricia Arua, Director State Department for Investment Promotion



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