**13th Regional Conference of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in the Commonwealth Africa**

**“*Uniting Commonwealth Africa in the Fight Against Corruption*” \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Savoy Hotel, Seychelles, 15th - 19th May 2023.**

Heads of anti-corruption agencies in Commonwealth Africa meet annually for the Regional Conference of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in the Commonwealth Africa, hosted by different member countries on a gyrating basis. Since 2011, a total of 13 meetings have been held, with the current one being in the Mahe, Seychelles. The theme of conference is **“*Uniting Commonwealth Africa in the Fight Against Corruption*”**.

Officially opening the conference, President Wavel Ramkalawan of the Republic of Seychelles the said he was delighted that the island of Mahé was selected to host the conference. He said that the challenges faced in combatting corruption called for a broad collaboration of agencies, stakeholders, experts and citizens. He stated that strides in fighting corruption were recognised but that more could still be done. President Ramkalawan urged all to play their part stating “we are all gathered for a reason: to come together as one family united through common aspirations; that is, the fight against corruption and the battle we endure when corruption tries to fight back.”

Chief Executive Officer of Anti-Corruption Commission of Seychelles, mentioned that, it is significant for us to fight corruption, but it is equally vital for us to unite when corruption fights back. She urged the delegates to unite in sharing of expertise, skills and resources and noted that, that can be achieved through partnership amongst Anti-Corruption agencies, international partners who will assist in any way they can. Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Baroness Patricia Scotland stated that, “Corrupt money associated with bribes received by public officials from unindustrialized and transition countries is estimated at $20 billion to $40 billion per year—a figure equivalent to 20-40 percent of flows of official development assistance (ODA). She further stated that there is a need to take swift and decisive action to improve transparency and accountability, and to build confidence that institutions and systems are corruption-free.

This year’s annual conference is graced by representatives from Botswana, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia providing a prospect to interchange ideas and best practices among the agencies and encourage sharing of expertise. During his presentation at the conference, Professor Franceschi of the Commonwealth Secretariat emphasized the importance of countries that are stern about fighting corruption and bringing back stolen assets need to have very close working relationships with other law enforcement agencies in other countries. He concluded by giving a word of encouragement that, “The job that is done to fight corruption is a noble and important one and that we cannot let the cycle of corruption continue or else our future generation will bear the consequences”.

Dr Roger Koranteng, Head of Public Sector Governance, Commonwealth

Secretariat said that, “This conference provides an opportunity for Heads of AntiCorruption Agencies to collaborate and advance progress towards strengthening anti-corruption institutions across Commonwealth Africa to achieve SDG 16.” There were presentations by different development partners and anti-corruption agencies.