

# THE AMCHAM POST

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## SOURCING AT MAGIC 2020

5 MADAGASCAR COMPANIES WILL REPRESENT MADAGASCAR IN LAS VEGAS IN FEBRUARY.

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## CORRUPTION AND CLIMATE

# How climate change deniers convince us to delay saving our planet

Last Monday, the United Nations celebrated Anti-Corruption Day. This year, it fell in the middle of the world's most important climate conference, the COP25, underway in Madrid, Spain. According to Transparency International, the world needs to take crucial steps towards a greener future, including protecting forests, improving sustainable transportation and developing renewable energy sources; but these all involve industries with particularly high corruption risks, like construction, forestry and energy. And corruption is a massive obstacle for effective climate action.

Corruption was one of the most important topic discussed during the COP25.

**New international carbon market:** its dependence on local governments favors high risks of corruption.

**Climate change deniers:** They advance intelligent but wrong arguments to hold people back from taking climate action.

**Is climate action a priority for governments?** Developed countries surely have an ethical responsibility to lead the way in cutting emissions, but ultimately all countries need to act at their levels.



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## EDITORIAL

By Hery RASON,  
Executive Director of the NGO Ivory/Integrity For Development

## Fight against corruption, what has been done so far ?

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) on October 31, 2003. The UN general assembly also designated the 09th of December as the International Anti-corruption day to sensitize people about the importance of fighting this phenomenon that jeopardize social and economic development. This year, the UN had initiated a global campaign **#UnitedNationsAgainstCorruption** that focuses on corruption as one of the biggest obstacles to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Malagasy civil society organization specialized in the fight against corruption took part to this global campaign by launching an event that gathered about 200 young people at the University of Antananarivo.



Figure 1: International Anti-corruption Day, University of Antananarivo

Most importantly, the international anti-corruption day is also the opportunity to assess our performance in our attempt to withdraw the payment of bribes, misconduct of public office, active and passive corruption, favoritism and other corruption offences. The question is : *"what has been done, so far? And which challenges requires our attention?"*

#### Decrease of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) over the last five years

The CPI gives us an overall picture of the perception corruption in the public sector according to experts. The index ranks 180 countries for 2018 and uses a scale of 0 to 100. 0 means that the country is highly corrupt and 100 means that the country is clean. Over the last five years, we have seen a diminution of Madagascar's CPI.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018
CPI- score	28	26	24	25
Ranking	123 out of 168	145 out of 176	155 out of 180	152 out of 180

Tableau 1: Evolution of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

One has to admit that according to these statistics, Madagascar still faces many challenges, such as the misuse of public office, unethical behaviour among public servants, favouritism in the award of public contracts, misappropriation of public fund, the absence of ceiling the electoral campaign expenses, etc. The corruption affects most sector in the country: justice, education, healthcare system, public procurement, election, and environment.

#### Progress doesn't just move in a straight line, the fight against corruption in Madagascar is not the exception.

According to the former US President, Barack Obama, "Progress doesn't just move in a straight line. There's a reason why progress hasn't been easy and why throughout our history every two steps forward seems to sometimes produce one step back".

Madagascar had made significant progress in settling an operational anticorruption system in spite of a slight regression of the CPI. Throughout the last five years, we have seen the establishment of the anticorruption bodies like the "Pôle Anti-Corruption (PAC)" as well as the adoption of the laws relating the fight against money laundering, the recovery of illicit asset according to the ESSAMLAG's recommendations. Concerning the adoption of this law, the civil society organization has made a great job in advocating for its adoption since its examination had been postponed three times by the parliament.

#### How can we make fight against corruption profitable and self-finance its activities?

Once elected, the President of the Republic Andry Nirina RAJOELINA outlined the importance of eradicating corruption. To do so, he had launched a program of zero tolerance to corruption and gave priority to the promotion of the e-governance in compliance with the Velirano n°03. By legislating the law relating to the recovery of illegal asset, the President had demonstrated his willing to set up an anticorruption system. In fact, much remains to be done in terms of addressing the corruption phenomenon.

This law relating the recovery of illegal asset calls for an implementing decree that aims at launching an agency in charge of recovering the illegal. This would make the fight against corruption profitable. Otherwise, the fund recovered would have helped the anticorruption system finance its own activities.

#### At the end, is the fight against corruption on top of the government's agenda?

To be efficient, all anticorruption bodies including the courts of auditors (Cour des Comptes), the BIANCO, the SAMIFIN, the CSI, the PAC as well as the CCFVP or the Commission in charge controlling the funding of electoral campaign, should be correctly supported. With regard of the current national program Plan Emergence Madagascar, the funding dedicated to the fight against corruption only represent 0.03% of total budget. In addition to the lack of mean, these bodies are not able to work properly and provide excellent result. Also, in order to be efficient, the government should emphasis with the promotion of the independence of justice and implement law without considering one's political trend.

Last but not least, most grand corruption comes from the issue of political funding. The CSO advocated a lot in the establishment of a ceiling of political funding. The counterpart of this funding often involves major corruption offences. Hence, it is important that we revise the law regulating the funding of political parties. How can we manage to accept the fact that a presidential candidate in Madagascar had spent 43 million USD during his campaign whereas the majority of the Malagasy lives with a revenue inferior of 2 USD?

Dear young citizen, it is our duty to eradicate corruption. We should not wait for the next generation to make a change. As Michael Jackson said, "Stare with the man in the mirror and ask yourself to change your way"! **#UnitedNationsAgainstCorruption**

## CORRUPTION AND CLIMATE

## How climate change deniers convince us to delay saving our planet

A matter of corruption. Did you know that corruption costs at least US\$2 trillion world-wide every year according to International Monetary Fund? It's huge. Earlier this week, the United Nations celebrated Anti-Corruption Day. The celebration coincided with the COP25 UN climate summit in Madrid where Madagascar was represented by a "small" delegation. One big topic that has been discussed during the summit was the setting of new rules for a new international carbon market: this allows



Corruption was one of the most discussed topics during COP25.

wealthy countries to meet their climate goals in part by buying carbon credits to offset their own emissions. Those credits will be used to fund massive clean energy projects in the developing world. Now the worry is, the system is very dependent on local governments, which are sometimes plagued by corruption. Corruption – that disease that affects us all – was a consistent theme running through this year's summit.

#### What other forms of corruption?

To Mark Maslin, Professor of Earth System Science, University College London, the world's five largest publicly-owned oil and gas companies spend about US\$200 million a year on lobbying to "control, delay or block binding climate policy." Now that a lot of young people, organizations, schools and even governments talk about a "climate emergency," more people are getting aware of the danger, and the media are bringing more support as well. But later the lobbying has changed into "climate sadism", mocking those who stand against climate change. Current lobbying is now described as truly "denial" of scientific and evident facts.

Climate scientists make a clear consensus and present false arguments about the causes of climate change; some even suggest that the impact of CO2 on temperature is non-significant. So today, the message that they want to share is that humans, as individuals, are the main causes of climate change.

Some advance that fixing climate change would cost a lot. Economists suggest that only 1% of world GDP could contribute a lot to face climate emergency. If we don't act now, by 2050, it could cost over 20% of world GDP. Here, 1% is worth the cost.

Climate change deniers would say that global warming can be good for humans: longer and warmer summers in the temperate zone that will make farming more productive. But they tend to forget that this will cause heatwaves in some areas as well. They would add that more people die of the cold than heat. We can be tempted to believe it is true, but if we refer to the "Weather Fatalities 2018" published by the National Weather Service, US, heat-related deaths are four times higher than cold-related ones.

#### How do governments argue they cannot take action against climate change?

They say they are still waiting for other countries, the guilty ones, to lead the action. That is an absurd argument. A point to note is, some countries are contributing more to current climate change than others. 25% of the human-produced CO2 in the atmosphere is generated by the U.S., 22% in the European Union. But the impact is felt worldwide. We can admit that developed countries have an ethical responsibility to lead the way in cutting emissions; but ultimately all countries need to act at their levels.

Another argument advanced by climate change deniers is that climate change is not a priority, compared with other aches that humanity is suffering from, such as poverty, segregation, slavery, and so on.

Those are examples of ways of "corrupting" people – maybe in indirect ways but it is corrupting. The planet might be richer in the coming decades, financially speaking; but the world will not have enough means to stop, or even to limit, the impacts of climate change. If today we are not taking action against climate change, it is not because we are not aware of the emergency; it is because we are voluntarily allowing people with the most privilege and power to convince us to delay saving our planet from climate change.

Sources: Forbes – The Conversation

Edited by Kenny Raharison



About the American Chamber of Commerce in Madagascar :  
AMCHAM in Madagascar is a non-profit association of American, International, Local businesses and business people, and is affiliated with the US Chamber of Commerce, the largest business organization representing the interests of more than 3 million businesses of all sizes, sectors and regions.  
For further information about the benefits of membership, please don't hesitate to contact us either via email or phone.  
Email: [es@amcham-madagascar.org](mailto:es@amcham-madagascar.org)  
Phone: +261 20 26 410 34

Our Charter and Sponsoring Member:  Our Sponsoring Member: 

## SOURCING AT MAGIC 2020

## 5 Madagascar companies will represent Madagascar in Las Vegas in February

Sourcing at MAGIC, one of the biggest trade shows in the world will gather textile and handicrafts companies from around 40 countries and will welcome 85,000 visitors, brands and designers, businessmen and investors from all over the world in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Madagascar as among its main missions the promotion of commercial ties between Madagascar and the United States. Backed by expertise and experiences with international trade shows such as Sourcing at MAGIC or Coterie New York, the AmCham will bring 5 companies from the apparel and handicrafts sectors: Haytex Madagascar, PLG Confection, Nivo Jewels & Precious Stones, Diamondra Création and Unik Bags.

Last November, 15, the first pre-departure meeting



Pre-departure meeting of Malagasy participants at the AmCham office.

was held at the U.S. Embassy Andranomena. Two textile experts, J.C. Mazingue and Ben Perumal, shared practical and useful advice to the participants on how it is like to attend a trade show in the United States, how to deal with American people and what kind of products the American market is seeking. The AmCham, through the

AGOA Resources Center Madagascar, delivered training on how to maximize trade show participation. Two young American students, Tim Fallon and Fiona Fitzgerald, trained the participants on how to make an elevator pitch.

A second pre-departure meeting was organized last Tuesday at the AmCham

office in order for the participants to get prepared when it comes to the stay in Las Vegas itself: flights, accommodation and other practical advice.

Madagascar participation to Sourcing at MAGIC is supported by the U.S. Embassy in Madagascar and Ethiopian Airlines as official carrier.

It is not the first time for Madagascar to take part in this international event. The AmCham brought Madagascar companies 6 times so far. A point to note is, Sourcing at MAGIC is not an event for selling products, but for exhibition and taking orders. From AmCham's experience, attending trade shows in the United States is the best way to having access to the US market and building trust with customers. Good luck to our 5 participants!

Edited by Kenny Raharison

## CORRUPTION

## Colin Kaepernick Kneels to Take a Stand

The National Football League, or NFL, is one of the United States' largest corporations. During football season, every Thursday, Sunday, and Monday millions of fans visit stadiums for live sporting events and tens of millions more tuning in to watch on television. Before every game, the National Anthem of the United States is played over the intercom and fans, players, and coaches stand erect with their hands over their hearts for the duration of the song: the Star Spangled Banner. The tradition is carried out across all major sports in the U.S. and is the standard for Olympic Medalists of any country. When the song finishes, the game can officially commence. Colin Kaepernick, ex-quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, broke the mold. He started to kneel during the Anthem in protest of police brutality against African Americans. Whether this protest is appropriate, right, wrong, or otherwise is not going to be discussed in this article; rather the corruption that black people in America face on a daily basis.

At the beginning of the 2016 NFL season, Kaepernick knelt for the first time. It raised a few eyebrows and he was questioned about the act in a post game interview. His response: "I have to stand up against police killing black people." The movement began to take a life of its own. Soon after Kaepernick's solo protest,



Colin Kaepernick kneels during the National Anthem in protest of police brutality against African Americans

more and more players around the league began to kneel. On September 24, 2017, 200+ players knelt before their respective games. Kneeling was spreading like wildfire. High School athletes, women's soccer players, hockey players, and college athletes alike all started to join the protest. The President began tweeting and condemning the act which stoked the fire even more. Regardless of sides, the movement was making people talk about corruption and racism.

In 2013, a young African American named Trayvon Martin was shot and killed by a civilian named George Zimmerman. The details of the case have been told, retold, and told again. The one consistent fact is always this: Trayvon Martin is dead. George Zimmerman went to trial and was eventually acquitted for his actions. In lieu of this, an organization

called Black Lives Matter was borne. The hashtag '#blacklivesmatter' has trended on Twitter time and time again since 2013. Over the following years, events such as Martin's continued to develop. In Ferguson, Missouri an unarmed black teenager was killed by a white police officer. In New York City, an unarmed black man was strangled to death by multiple police officers for selling cigarettes without tax stamps. He was wrestled to the ground where he declared eleven times "I can't breathe." He was pronounced dead an hour later. In Baltimore, Freddie Gray sustained injuries during an arrest that put him in a coma for 24 hours until he died the following day. After each of these events, communities protested in the streets. Often, like in Baltimore and Ferguson, the protests can turn violent - which ironically demands a police presence.

Police corruption is something that happens in every country. When the people who are meant to protect and serve are corrupt, a society is in danger. This is not to take away from the heroic work the police departments in the United States often do. They are on the front lines in an emergency situation. Dialing '911' when in danger is and should always be the common practice. However, the scenarios listed above show a trend that needs to be stifled. Honor and integrity should be synonymous with police work; minorities in America do not see this as the case. The atrocities that African Americans have faced throughout America's long history are hard to conceptualize for someone who has never faced discrimination. Whichever side of the fence one falls on, Colin Kaepernick has created a dialogue for those who feel oppressed, and he has paid the price for his actions. It has now been 3 NFL seasons since Kaepernick threw a pass. The league has cast him out for the baggage that a political activist brings. He might not be a professional athlete right now, but he has done his part to start the conversation on police corruption in America.

SOURCES:  
NBCNews.com,  
NBCBayarea.com,  
nytimes.com,  
Baltimoresun.com  
Written by Timothy Fallon and Fiona Fitzgerald

## STARTUP LIFE

## Geoazul helps the environment ... and its workers



Yarelys Gomez prepares seedbeds using compost recycled from organic waste. (© Geoazul)

While working as a consultant in Panama, Yarelys Gomez often saw trash being buried or burned. Gomez, who worked as an adviser on environmental matters, knew that getting rid of trash those ways creates polluted water and air. In many ways, she says, Panama measures up to strong environmental standards. But the country didn't have proper ways to treat organic waste.

The problem inspired Gomez to start Geoazul, a firm that hires paroled prisoners to recycle food and brush into compost and mulch. The company sells their final products to gardeners. Now "we are the only company in Panama who is recycling organic waste," said Gomez.

Gomez, 30, launched Geoazul last year after graduating from the U.S. WEAmericas Initiative in 2017. Started in 2012, the initiative supports women entrepreneurs with training in management, networking and leadership. The Geoazul business is Gomez's collaboration with Franklin Ayón, an ex-inmate who started a prison recycling program five years ago. The International Committee of the Red Cross credits that program with boosting living conditions inside Panama's La Joyita Prison while assisting the rehabilitation of inmates.

Now Geoazul helps people under a conditional release from prison to continue that rehabilitation on the outside. The company pays workers a salary as they gain experience that will help them apply for future jobs. "They start with us and then grow to other, bigger companies," Gomez said.

In a year, Geoazul has grown to employ 150 workers. While they collect trash for compost or shred branches for mulch, Gomez relies on management skills she learned in WEAmericas. "The program helped me to delegate work and [learn] how to make a budget," she said.

Gomez still works as an environmental consultant. (She says WEAmericas taught her that entrepreneurs can work on many projects at once.)

The U.S. Embassy in Panama runs numerous programs to support local startup businesses. Recently, Gomez attended an embassy seminar during Global Entrepreneurship Week. She has also applied for the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative, which brings entrepreneurs from Latin America to train at U.S. businesses.

But she already has a sense of fulfillment with her work. "I feel actually now that I'm having the greatest success," Gomez says. "I am very complete, because I have not only the environmental part but also the social one" by helping prisoners rebuild their lives.

Source: ShareAmerica (by Dave Reynolds)

## ANNOUNCEMENT

## AmCham Business Trainings I Call for Trainers

Backed by a strong expertise and solid experience generally focused on business market access, business advocacy and promotion of English speaking, the American Chamber of Commerce in Madagascar now more than ever understands the role of the private sector in the Malagasy economy; thus is willing to reinforce its strength.

In 2020, the Chamber will open trainings to a larger public of individuals and/or businesses, members and/or non-members, to inhouse businesses or to exporters.

With this in mind, the Chamber calls for Trainers applications in the following fields:

- Finance and Investments
- Business Management
- Project Management
- Leadership and Entrepreneurship
- Personal Development

Applicants should submit their resume, motivation letter, and module proposals at [elodie@amcham-madagascar.org](mailto:elodie@amcham-madagascar.org)

**For further information, contact AmCham at 020 26 410 34.**

## TIP CORNER

Pursue a Passion  
Outside of Work

We are often told to pursue work we're passionate about, but for many people, this simply isn't feasible. Luckily, research shows that doing something you care about outside of work can benefit both your personal life and your career. Look for ways to craft your job to allow for more time for non-work passions. For example, if you have some autonomy over your hours, start your day early to make more time in the evening for cultivating other interests. These extracurricular activities can be a way to develop skills, meet new people, or decompress. To find the right activities, ask yourself what you care about that you haven't been able to pursue in your job. Outside of work, you have the freedom to try new things out, so experiment. Remember that passions can wax and wane over time, and it's okay to stop one activity and pick up another. Find other people who care deeply about your shared interest so you can build a sense of community. Only a privileged few are able to match their passion to their job, but leading a full life outside of work allows us to bring our best selves to the office — or anywhere we go.

This tip is adapted from "The Unexpected Benefits of Pursuing a Passion Outside of Work," by Jon M. Jachimowicz, Joyce He, and Julián Arango

## ANNOUNCEMENT

## AMCHAM YOUTH

As a reminder, the American Chamber of Commerce is non-profit organization based in Madagascar and dedicated to both US and Madagascan businesses. AmCham started working in November 2008 and was officially recognized by the Government of Madagascar in February 2010.

AmCham's missions are to:

- Strengthen trade relations between United States and Madagascar
- Support the establishment of high-quality standards of commercial practice
- Support the expansion of an English-speaking, Anglophone business community in Madagascar

The American Chamber of Commerce in Madagascar is pleased to welcome in 2019 YOUTH INITIATIVES among its members.

As an AmCham Youth member, your organization will have the opportunity to:

- Develop a high level network
- Reinforce your credibility as an organization
- Upgrade your international visibility
- Receive technical support from the AmCham team

Ready to apply? Please verify that your organization:

- Supports at least one SDG goal
- Is led by (a) young person/people aged between 18 and 35 years old
- For startups, is less than 5 years of fiscal activities.

The membership fee is **100 000 Ariary per year**

**No individual application allowed**

**For further information, contact AmCham at [info@amcham-madagascar.org](mailto:info@amcham-madagascar.org) or at 020 26 410 34.**

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