



SOUTH AFRICA
CIVIL SOCIETY EXPERIENCE IN
ASSET RECOVERY

CIP Asset Recovery and Compensation to Victims Seminar
Maputo, Mozambique: 16 -17 June 2025

Moira Campbell
Joint Interim Leader
Corruption Watch



AGENDA

- 2025 South African Context
- Experiences
- Challenges
- Opportunities for Change
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

2025 South African Context

The persistent challenge of corruption in SA:

- Impacts domestic resource mobilisation, limiting funds for development
- Impedes economic growth / threatens markets
- Undermines public trust
- Deepens inequality
- Destabilises coordinated efforts by government / civil society
- Undermines the global fight against corruption.

2025 South African Context

South Africa's Presidency of the G20 is an opportunity to place corruption-related issues on the agenda.

Theme: Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability.

The country will use the G20 Presidency to advance the priorities of the African Union's Agenda 2063:

In particular, Aspiration 3: An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice, and the Rule of Law, which corresponds to:

the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025

2025 South African Context

G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) is a significant development in G20 cooperation on the issue of corruption. The four priority themes for the ACWG are:

- Strengthen the public sector by promoting transparency, integrity, and accountability
- **Increase efficiency of asset recovery measures**
- Enhance and mobilise the inclusive participation of the public sector, private sector, civil society, and academia to prevent and combat corruption
- Enhance whistle-blower protection mechanisms.



G20
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2025 South African Context

Investigating Directorate Against
Corruption made permanent entity
within NPA

Asset Forfeiture Unit/SIU report that over
R10bn recovered in state capture-related
cases

Twenty of 22 FATF action items in efforts
to exit grey list – Feb 2025

NACAC actively engaging stakeholders
on strategy and proposed reforms

EXPERIENCES



Corruption Watch has participated in:

- **G20 ACWG official meetings:** March / June
- **Anti-Corruption forums** as a strategic intervention. Key objectives:

Foster collaboration across sectors

Support anti-corruption initiatives in sectors vulnerable to incidents of fraud and corruption

Coordinate efforts among law enforcement agencies to ensure that investigative capacity is in place

Ensure that outcomes such as criminal prosecutions, civil recoveries, and any administrative actions are achieved

Ensure that prevention measures are implemented to mitigate fraud and corruption risks in the sector.

EXPERIENCES

“The wide range of institutions within the civil society, public, and private sectors that make up the South African anti-corruption landscape have the potential to facilitate the collaborative “whole of society approach” towards the achievement of the vision of a corruption-free country as envisaged in the National Development Plan.” - SIU



EXPERIENCES



Collaboration with investigative journalists / CSOs on NPA foreign bribery case.

TI / The Sentry / CW / Open Secrets following case of cross-border corruption:

South African whistle-blower in hiding targeted for deportation after exposing cross-border corruption

Former Moti Group legal advisor leaked internal documents revealing illicit payments tied to Zimbabwean elites

CHALLENGES

Summary of challenges in 2025

Lack of progress by National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to prosecute implicated parties in State Capture Commission

Limited capacity to recover stolen funds & criminal assets – e.g. Gupta family

Recent negative media coverage of NPA taints all law enforcement institutions

Political interference and insufficient collaboration between law enforcement agencies (although some recent improvements)

Continued close connections between high profile politicians & leaders with compromised business people

CHALLENGES

Summary of challenges in 2025 (2)

Formation of GNU = lack of clarity on political ownership of anti-corruption efforts & therefore political accountability

Lack of clear coordination across state organs

Increased disregard for rule of law across society

Need for greater participation – and influence – of CSOs in driving policy changes and advocacy

Financial secrecy, including global north countries, make it difficult to trace where illicit funds end up

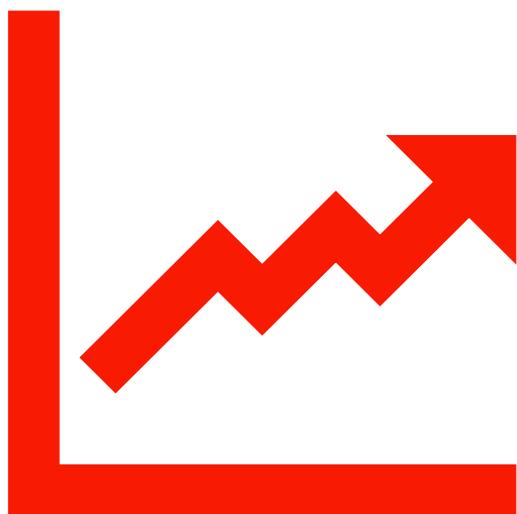
OPPORTUNITIES for CHANGE

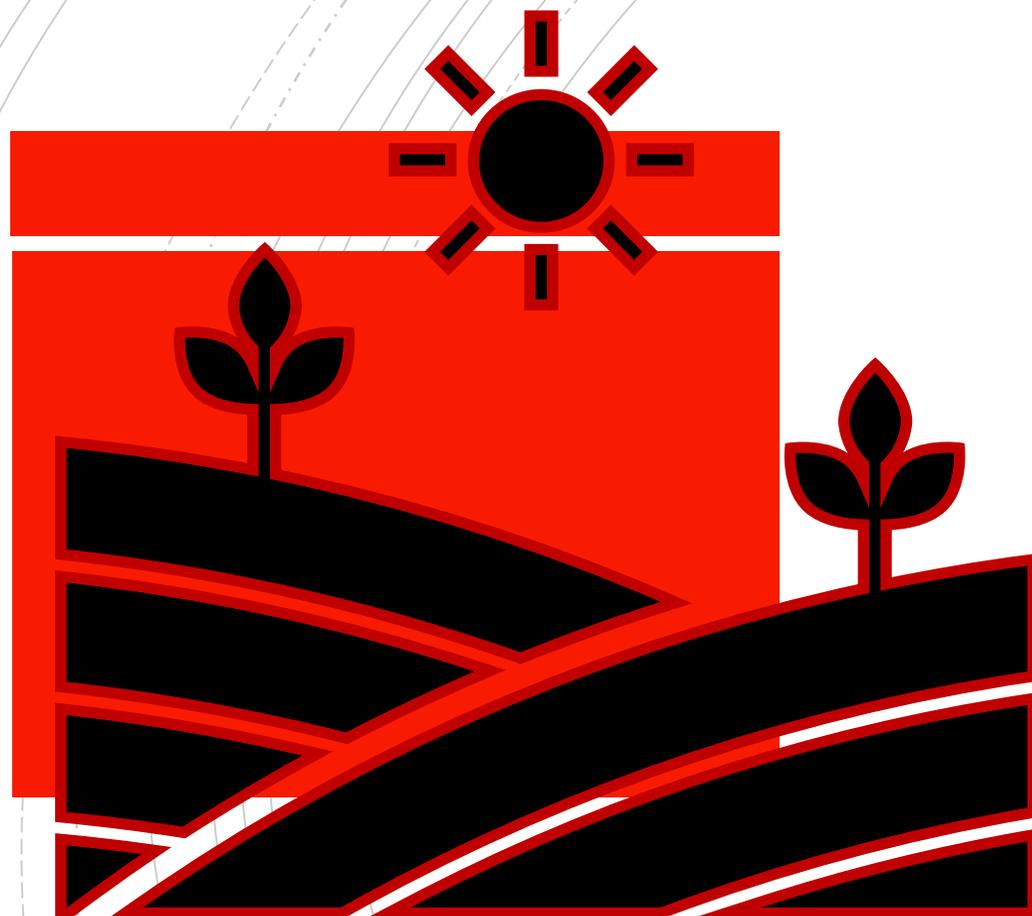
Several opportunities for change exist:

- SA has the legislative, policy, and institutional armour to address the country's corruption challenges
- There is scope for better use of these anti-corruption tools
- Civil society has played a key role in exposing corruption – Civil Society Working Group (CSWG) against state capture
- NACAC appointed to oversee implementation of Zondo recommendations and drive an all-of society approach to the roll out of the NACS: key interventions (OPI, Whistle-blower legislation)

OPPORTUNITIES for CHANGE

- Opportunities for civil society in allocation of Criminal Assets Recovery Account (CARA) – money & property deposited into the CARA funds projects or directly compensates victims
- Investigative journalism and corruption exposure: journalists played a key role in exposing Gupta complicity; media is a critical stakeholder
- Closer collaboration between journalists and CSOs to expose corrupt and criminal activities, follow the money & assets – can assist law enforcement agencies and mobilise CSO advocacy campaigns
- Dedicated public servants to root out corruption





RECOMMENDATIONS

- More robust financial transparency mechanisms to boost accountability and asset recovery efforts
- Continued collaboration between law enforcement agencies re: prosecutions, recovery of assets, and compensation of victims
- More robust use of beneficial ownership register as a link to tracing criminal assets and IFFs
- Strong presence and participation of civil society in multiple spheres / activities:
- G20 / ACWG / DWG / CoSP11
- CSOs to act as facilitators between involved states and victims of corruption-related activities / monitor return of assets
- CSOs are also well-placed to engage with WB and act as mediators between them and the judicial apparatus, or by initiating legal action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

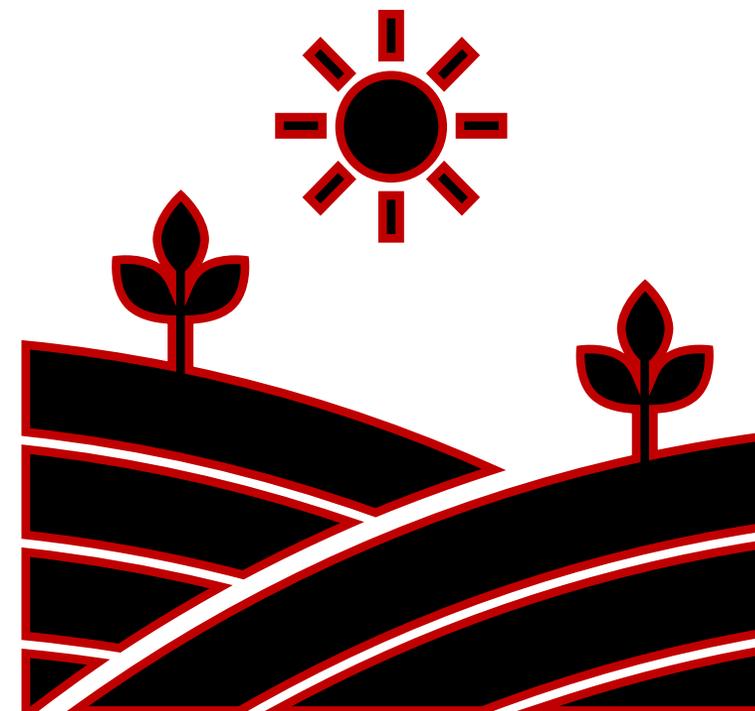
CSO engagement with whistle-blowers and mediation with judicial apparatus / initiate legal action.

Coordinated actions across CSOs – within and across borders

Cooperation with citizens, local communities and the media, + strategic partners in foreign jurisdictions.

Targeted campaigns with investigative journalists to expose criminals / criminal assets

Collectively raise awareness, conduct research, and advocate for asset recovery, while managing expectations and being realistic about capacity.



CONCLUSION

- Asset recovery is a complex and time-consuming process, so it is important for civil society organisations to scope the extent of their activities and timing of their advocacy and awareness raising strategies





THANK YOU