



Highlights of [GAO-04-506](#), a report to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on African Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

### Why GAO Did This Study

In October 2000, Congress passed the International Anticorruption and Good Governance Act (P.L. 106-309). The purpose of this legislation is to promote good governance by helping other countries combat corruption and improve government transparency and accountability. U.S. agencies spent about \$33 million per year in fiscal years 2001–2002 providing anticorruption assistance to 22 sub-Saharan African countries. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided the majority of this assistance, along with the Departments of the Treasury, Justice, Commerce, and State.

To help Congress oversee management of anticorruption programs in sub-Saharan Africa, GAO was asked to examine (1) what is known about the extent of corruption in the region, (2) the factors that give rise to corruption in this region, (3) the anticorruption assistance U.S. agencies have provided, and (4) the lessons about anticorruption assistance that U.S. agencies and other international organizations have learned.

USAID provided written comments on a draft of this report and the Departments of the Treasury, Justice, and State provided informal comments. These agencies generally agreed with our presentation of the issues and conclusions.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-506](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-506).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David Gootnick at (202) 512-3149 or [gootnickd@gao.gov](mailto:gootnickd@gao.gov).

## FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

### U.S. Anticorruption Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa Will Require Time and Commitment

#### What GAO Found

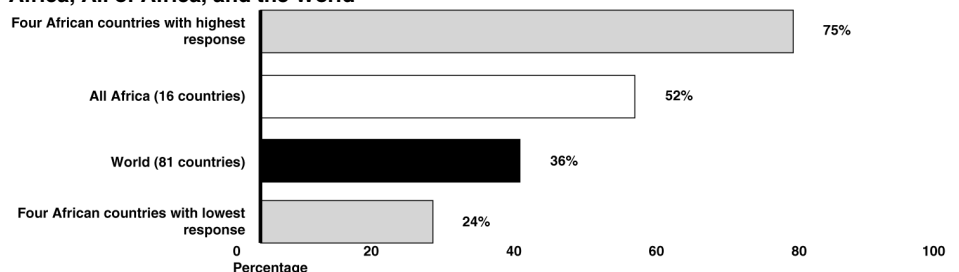
Indexes, surveys, and studies indicate that corruption in sub-Saharan Africa is pervasive, but assessing it is inherently difficult. Indexes published by the World Bank Institute and Transparency International have limitations; for example, both focus on perceptions of corruption, and both recognize their measures to be imprecise. Regional surveys indicate that many businesses are affected by corruption, although perceptions of corruption levels vary among countries (see figure). According to country-level surveys and other information, households view corruption as rooted in the police, judicial system, and health services, although perceptions of the most and least corrupt institutions vary by country.

Sub-Saharan African countries share some fundamental challenges that can give rise to corruption. According to studies and U.S. agency officials, these challenges include low civil service salaries, a lack of transparency and accountability in government operations, ineffective legal frameworks and law enforcement, weak judicial systems, and tolerant public attitudes.

U.S. anticorruption programs cover a range of issues. Funding for these programs represented about 2.4 percent of U.S. assistance to sub-Saharan Africa in fiscal years 2001–2002. The programs have focused on supporting civil society; encouraging legal, judicial, and regulatory reform; privatizing government functions; enhancing government accountability; supporting elections; establishing anticorruption agencies; and providing law enforcement assistance. However, U.S. legislative restrictions on foreign law enforcement assistance limited agencies' activities in this area. These programs are relatively new and early evaluations and our analysis suggest prospects for sustainability are unclear.

Lessons learned from anticorruption efforts include the importance of (1) political will from public and private leaders; (2) widespread public support; (3) programs tailored to country conditions; (4) multipronged efforts that incorporate prevention, education, and law enforcement; (5) access to government information; and (6) time and commitment to address the difficult nature of these problems.

**Businesses Reporting That Bribes Are Essential to "Get Things Done" in Sub-Saharan Africa, All of Africa, and the World**



Source: World Business Environment Survey 2002.