

National action plan on corruption in the offing

By Guardian reporter

THE government is formulating a national plan of action to combat corruption in a war declared by President Benjamin Mkapa at the beginning of his reign.

The Minister of State in the Vice-President's Office, Mr Wilson Masilingi, yesterday revealed this when opening a three-day international meeting of Moral Rearmament Association (MRA) at the Diamond Jubilee Hall in Dar es Salaam.

He said: "This meeting has

been called at a time the government is formulating a national anti-corruption action plan to fight against corruption."

He said the government was eager to put into practice the war against corruption. The minister, however, did not go into details of the plan and its timetable.

Mr Masilingi said the government was encouraged by the people initiatives through non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations to find ways to combat the evil in the society.

He urged other organisations to emulate the MRA example of supporting government action by educating the people on their own role in the war against corruption.

The minister said the war against corruption could not be successful if people themselves did not learn to hate the evil.

"People should hate soliciting and giving bribes themselves," he stressed.

Established by Frank Buchman in 1938, MRA believes in solving social problems through the principle of

"changes starting with ourselves."

Mr Masilingi commended the association for being open to people of all religions.

At the beginning of his term, President Mkapa appointed a special commission to probe loopholes which led to corruption in the country.

The commission, under the chairmanship of Judge Joseph Warioba, later issued a report implicating some top government officials with the corruption.

However, the government has been blamed for not taking

any action after the Warioba probe report was made public.

A recent Corruption Perception Index report, issued by Transparency International, which ranked Tanzania fifth from bottom, gave boost to the people's complaints.

Speaking at the same occasion yesterday, an MRA member from Somalia, Dr Yusuf Al-Azhari, suggested that Africans should convene a serious fact-finding conference to solve current civil strifes in the continent.

He said the conference, which would involve former

heads of state and governments who were still alive, their closest advisers, recognized traditional leaders, highly qualified learned administrators and other selected individuals, could be spearheaded by the founder President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

According to the MRA President, Ambassador John Mhina, the meeting, which continues today at the Tanzania Episcopal Conference head office at Kurasini, focuses on peace, corruption and reconciliation.

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