



CENTRALE BANK VAN ARUBA

Report Corruption Survey 2020

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Table of Contents

General information	1
Key findings	2
How widespread is corruption?	3
Has corruption fall or rise?	4
Is government doing well or badly?	5
Do people agree with corruption acts?	6
How many people pay bribes?	7
Do people know individuals who have paid bribe?	8
How can ordinary people stop corruption?	9
What anti-corruption actions can the government take?	10
Who should lead the fight against corruption?	11
Concluding remarks	12

General information

Curbing corruption is a high priority for the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA), because corruption has far reaching negative economic and social repercussions. Several international organizations, such as Transparency International, frequently execute surveys on the level of corruption in many countries. To compensate for the fact that Aruba is not part of these international surveys, and consequently important data on local corruption are not available, the CBA has been conducting the corruption survey since 2018.

In this report, the CBA presents the results of its Corruption Survey 2020. Corruption is defined in this survey as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain and includes, among others, bribery, nepotism, exchange of favors, public service fraud, embezzlement, and conflict of interest. With this survey, the CBA collected information, inter alia, on the experience of residents aged 18 and above with corruption in Aruba, their perception about the level of corruption, and gained insight on possible corrective actions and/or measures to combat this. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this survey was conducted online in the period of November- December 2020. Note that face-to-face interviews were used to collect data in the previous two corruption surveys.

A total of 1,236 residents participated in this survey, of which 645 men (52 percent) and 591 women (48 percent). The survey data were weighted to be representative for the population of adults living in Aruba.

The results, including the key findings, reflect the perception of the survey respondents. They are not meant to represent the position or opinions of the CBA nor its staff members.

Key findings

Widespread and increasing corruption as said by the majority of survey respondents

Government seen as doing badly in fighting corruption as stated by three-quarter of respondents

Corruption acts considered unacceptable by on average 95 percent of respondents

Higher bribery rate compared to previous corruption surveys

Rise in the share of respondents who knew someone who paid a bribe compared to previous corruption surveys

Reporting corruption stated as the most effective thing that ordinary people can do to fight corruption by almost half of respondents

Enacting a whistleblowing policy within the public sector perceived to be the most important measure to mitigate corruption

Public Prosecutor's Office and Bureau Integrity Aruba seen as the two top organizations that should lead in fighting corruption

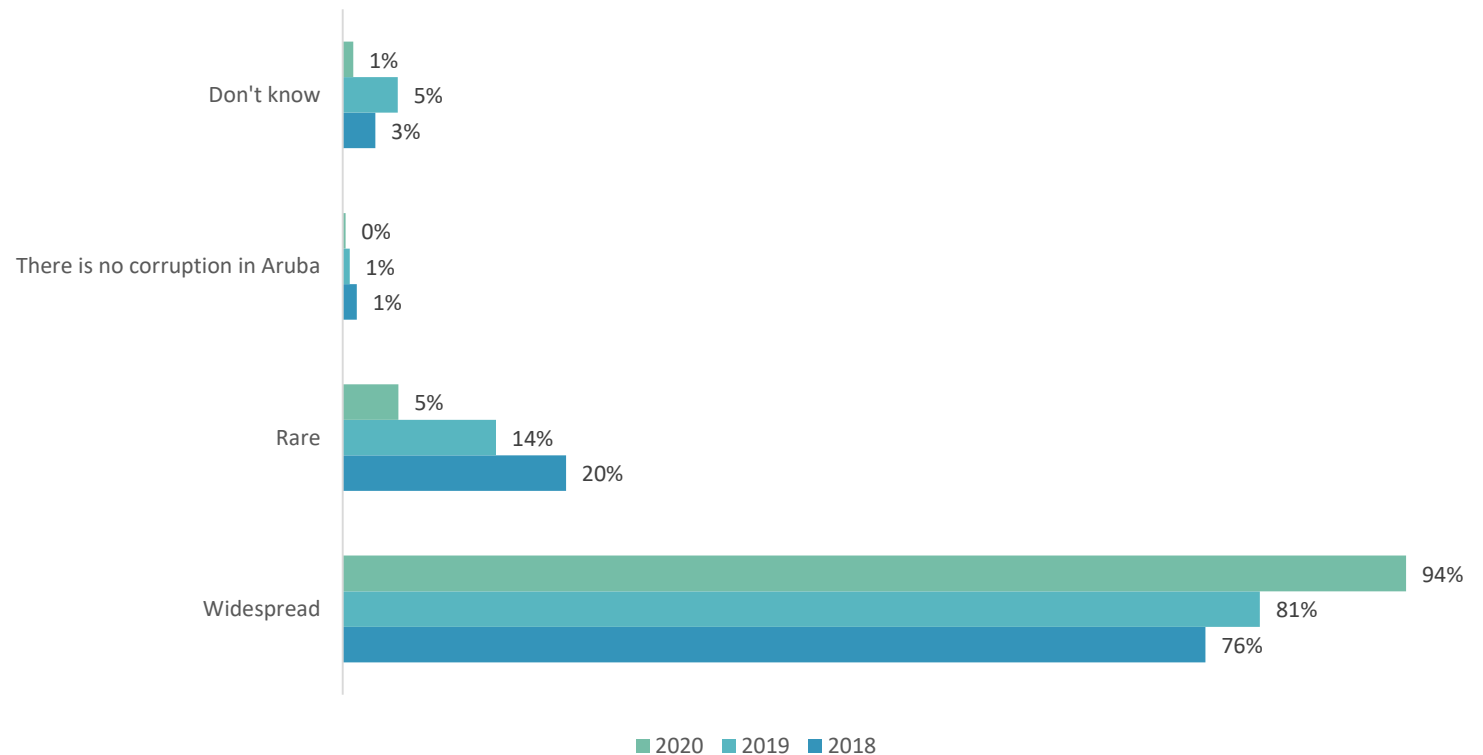
How widespread is corruption?

For three consecutive years, a great majority of survey respondents believed that corruption was widespread in Aruba. The proportion of respondents who thought that corruption was widespread increased to 94 percent in 2020, up from 76 percent in 2018 and 81 percent in 2019.

In 2020, considerably less respondents said that the problem of corruption was rare and/or that there was no corruption, compared to the previous two years. Only 5 percent stated that the problem of corruption was rare, while almost no respondents indicated that there was no corruption in Aruba.

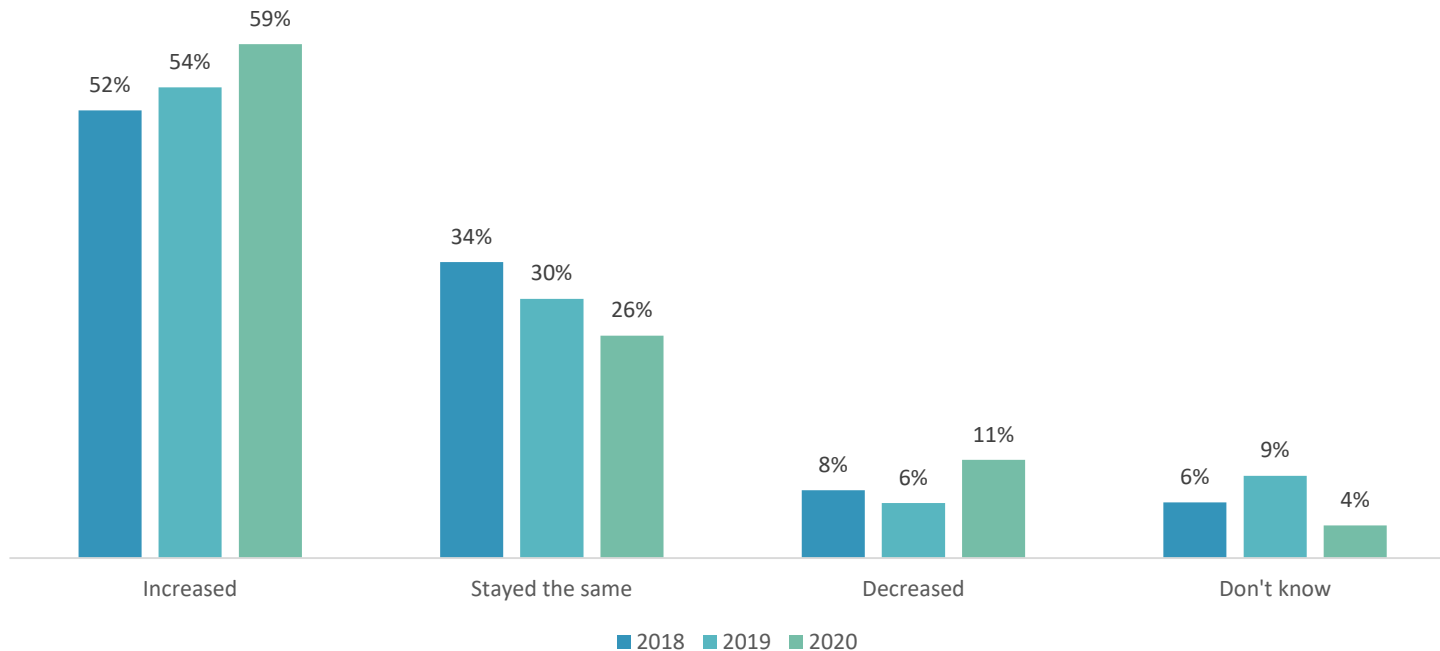
There was no significant difference between the perception of men and women regarding the prevalence of the corruption problem. The same proportions of men and women pointed out that corruption was widespread.

How widespread do respondents think the problem of corruption is?
(% of respondents)



Has corruption fall or rise?

How has the level of corruption changed in the 12 months preceding the survey?
(% of respondents)



As said by more than half of respondents (59 percent), the level of corruption increased in the 12 months preceding the survey. Approximately one in ten respondents thought that it decreased, while about one-quarter of respondents indicated that the level of corruption stayed the same in mentioned period.

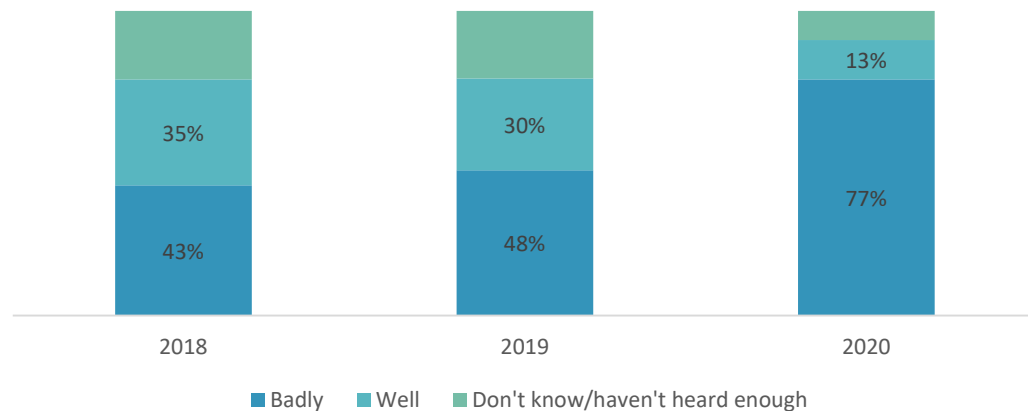
Similar proportions of men and women thought that the level of corruption rose in the 12 months prior to the survey. Slightly less women (59 percent) said that the level of corruption went up, while 60 percent of men mentioned that it edged up in 2020. This meager difference between men and women is, however, not statistically significant.

Is government doing well or badly?

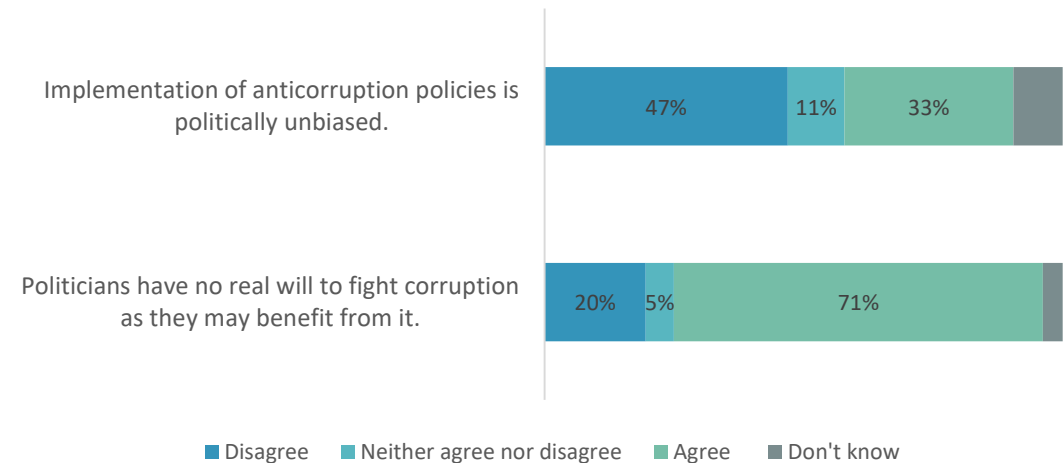
A great majority of respondents said that the government was doing badly in fighting corruption in government. Compared to previous surveys, relatively less respondents noted that the government was doing well in combatting corruption. Moreover, men and women had the same perception about government's performance in combatting corruption.

One in three respondents concurred that implementation of anticorruption policies is politically unbiased, while a great majority (71 percent) thought that politicians have no real will to fight corruption as they may benefit from it.

How well or badly is the current government fighting corruption in government?
(% of respondents)

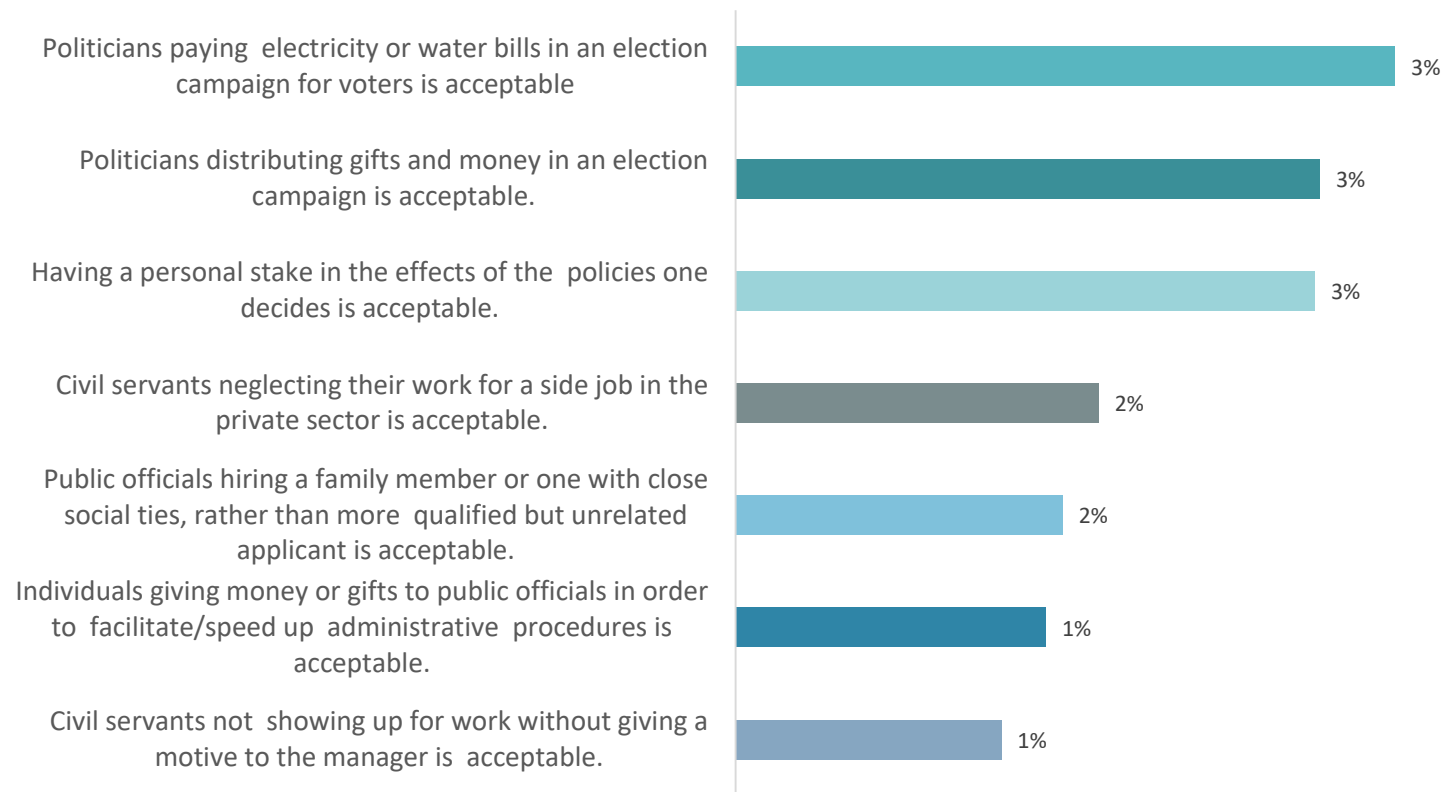


% of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements



Do people agree with corruption acts?

% of respondents agreeing with the following statements



In general, a great majority of survey respondents (on average 95 percent) mentioned that several corruption acts are not acceptable (see statements in the figure to the left). Nevertheless, between 1 to 3 percent believed that these acts are acceptable.

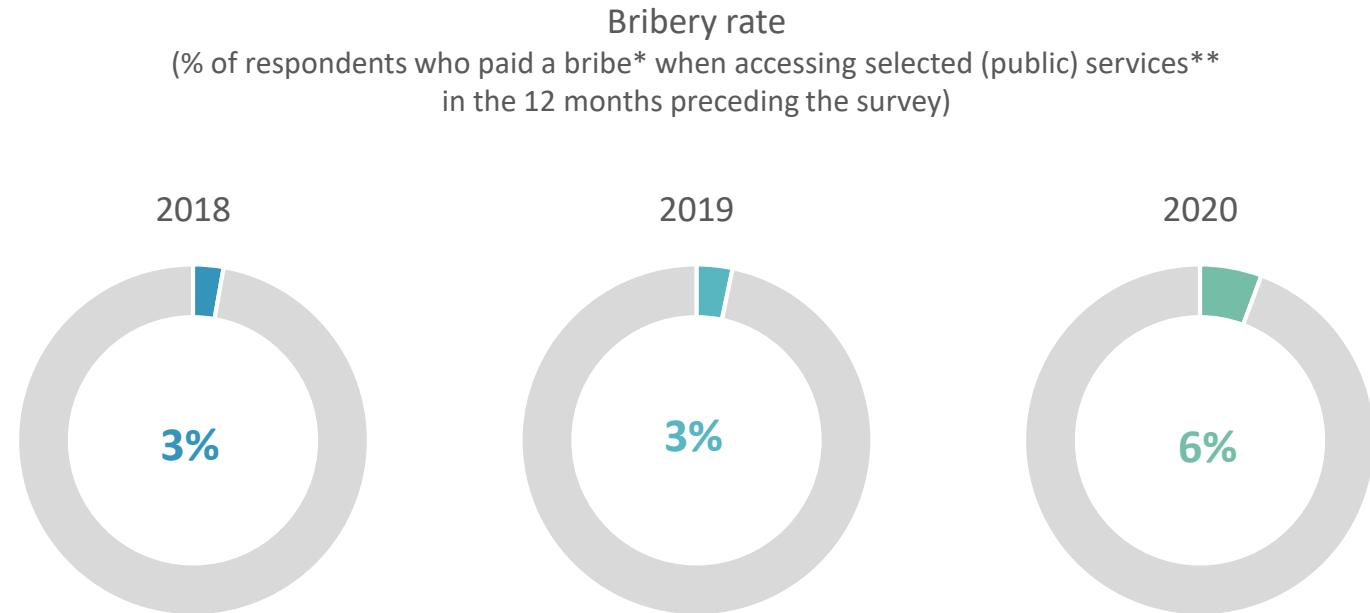
About 3 percent of respondents agreed that it is acceptable in an election campaign for politicians to pay electricity or water bills for voters and to distribute gifts and money. This percentage represents around 2,700 people of the 18+ population.

How many people pay bribes?

Consistent with the survey results, somewhat more than one in twenty (6 percent) of respondents paid a bribe for the use of (public) services in the 12 months prior to the survey. When applying this bribery rate to the adult population of Aruba, it means that around 5,000 people paid a bribe in mentioned period.

The bribery rate of the 2020 survey was much higher than that of the previous two surveys. Possibly, respondents are more willing to admit that they paid a bribe in an online survey, compared to during the face-to-face interviews in the previous two surveys.

According to the outcome of the survey, men were more likely than women to pay bribes when accessing selected (public) services. Somewhat less than one in ten men and approximately one in thirty-five women said that they paid a bribe in the 12 months preceding the survey.



* Note, the word bribe is used in this document to refer to bribe, gift, and favor.

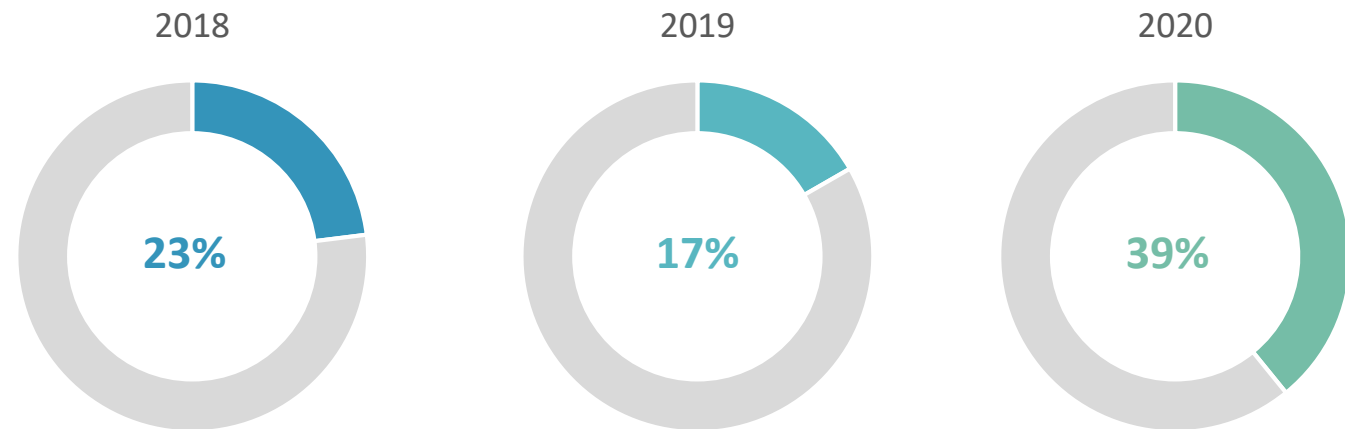
** Schools, medical care, government departments issuing identity or other official documents and land in long lease, government departments in charge with residence/work or building or business permits, public agencies in charge with social security benefits, public utility companies, police, and courts.

Do people know individuals who have paid bribe?

The percentage of respondents noting that they knew someone who paid a bribe more than doubled compared to the 2019 survey. In the 2020 survey, almost two-fifth of respondents (39 percent) said that they knew someone who paid a bribe in the 12 months preceding the survey, compared to 17 percent in the 2019 survey.

Men are more likely than women to know someone who paid a bribe. Nearly half of male respondents and one-third of female respondents said that knew someone who paid a bribe.

% of respondents who knew someone who paid a bribe when accessing selected (public) services* in the 12 months prior to the survey



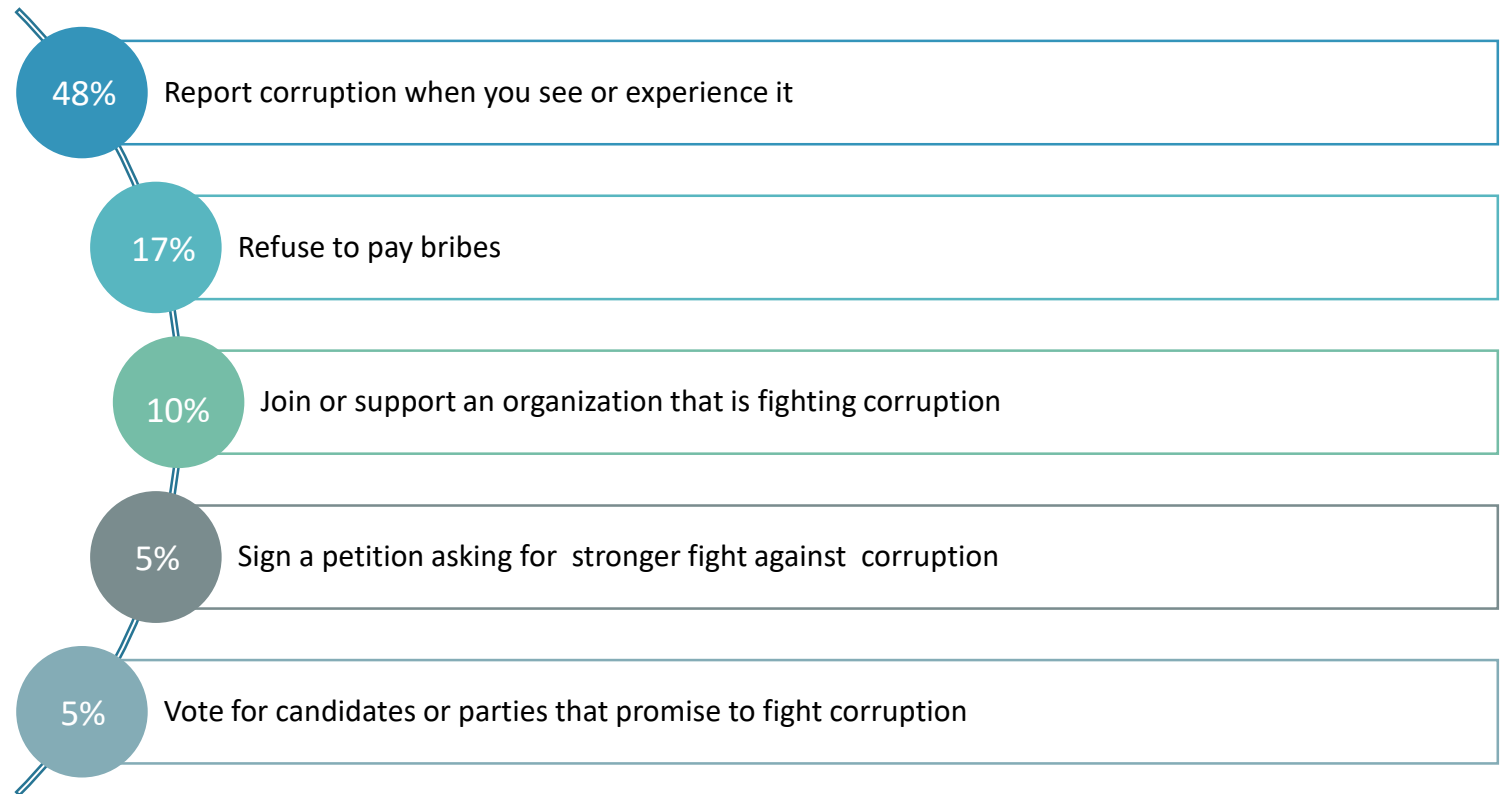
* Schools, medical care, government departments issuing identity or other official documents and land in long lease, government departments in charge with residence/work or building or business permits, public agencies in charge with social security benefits, public utility companies, police, and courts.

How can ordinary people stop corruption?

Almost half of respondents said that reporting corruption is one of the most effective things that ordinary people can do to fight corruption. The top 5 things (out of 9 options) that ordinary people can do to combat corruption (see figure to the right) were mentioned by 84 percent of respondents.

Another 5 percent of respondents said that ordinary people cannot do anything. The remaining respondents mentioned the following options (i) speak out about the problem, for instance by calling a radio program or writing a letter (3 percent), (ii) participate in protest marches or demonstrations against corruption (3 percent), and (iii) talk to friends and relatives about the problem (1 percent). A small group (5 percent) didn't know which options to choose or selected the category 'other'.

Top 5 most effective things that ordinary people can do to help combat corruption
(% of respondents)

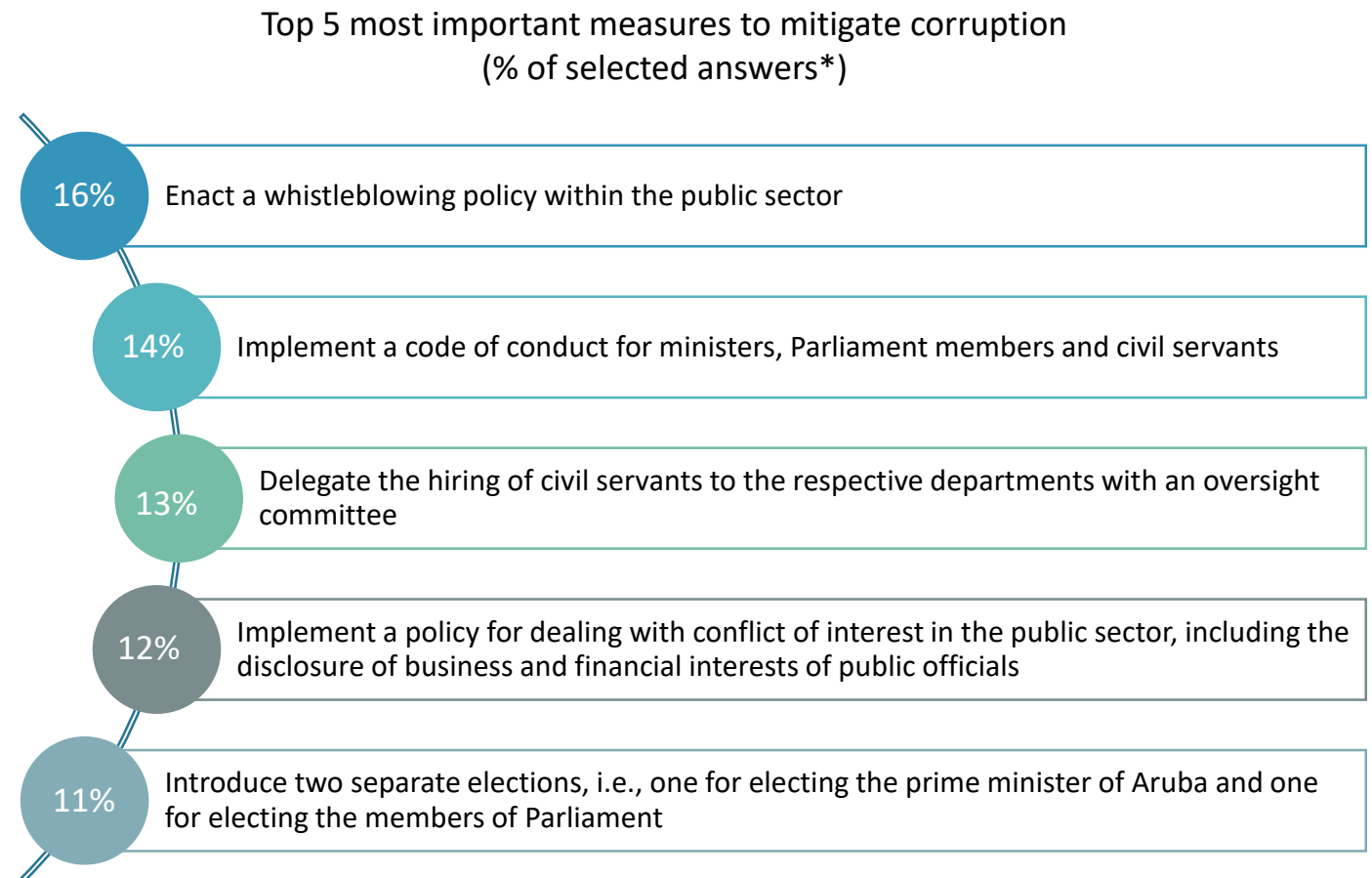


* Each respondent could have selected three answers.

What anti-corruption actions can the government take?

According to the respondents, the most important measure to mitigate corruption is to enact a whistleblowing policy within the public sector. Note that the top 5 most important measures (see figure to the right) accounted for two-third of the answers. Below, the percentage of answers for measures not mentioned in the figure to the right are mentioned:

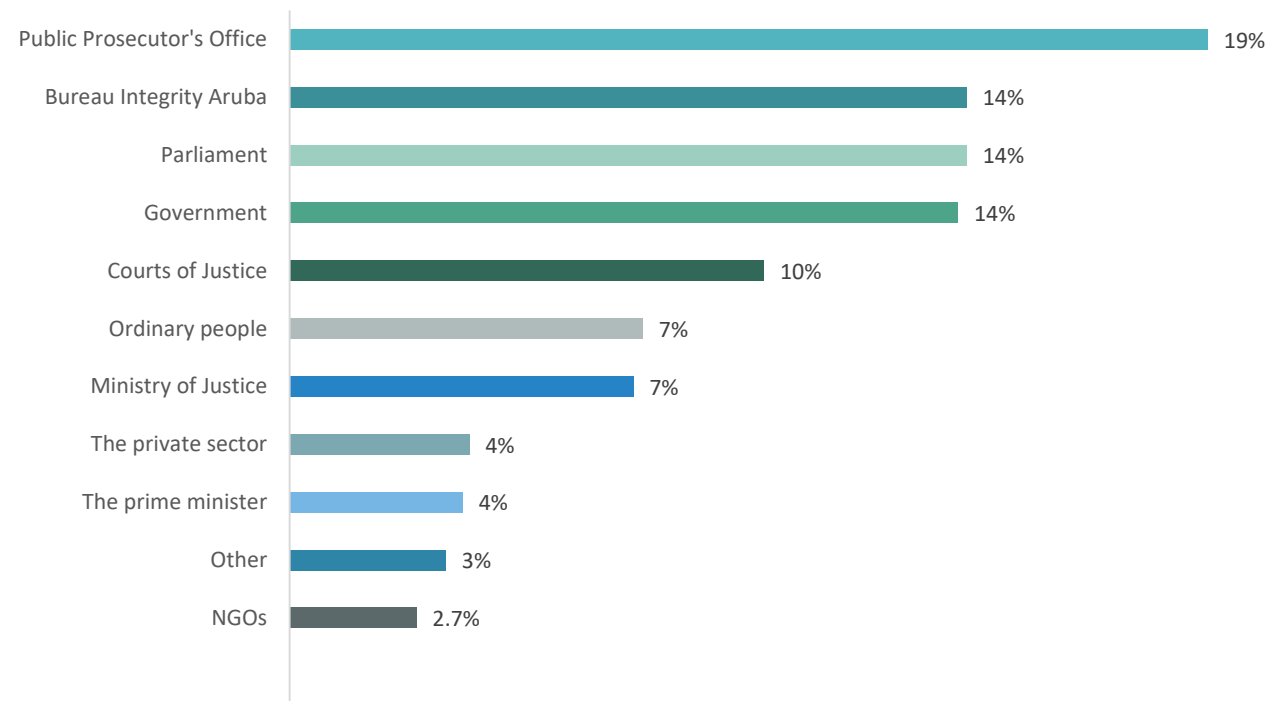
- (i) making government data available to all (8 percent),
- (ii) using referendum for important decisions (7 percent),
- (iii) introducing an integrity chamber in charge with advising on integrity policy (6 percent),
- (iv) implementing the legislation with regard to the financing of political parties (6 percent),
- (v) introducing legislation with regard to corporate governance of state-owned enterprises (4 percent), and
- (vi) using media campaigns to promote public integrity and raise awareness of the risk of corruption (3 percent).



* Each respondent could have selected three answers.

Who should lead the fight against corruption?

Who should lead the effort to combat corruption?
(% of answers*)



When asked about who should lead the effort to combat corruption, the most selected answer by the survey respondents was the Public Prosecutor's Office. Noticeably, Bureau Integrity Aruba is the second most selected answer, indicating the high expectation of the respondents with regard to this relatively new organization.

Similar proportions revealed that Parliament and the government should lead the fight against corruption. Remarkably, almost half of the answers in the category "other" comprised respondents indicating that the Netherlands (Dutch government) should lead the effort to combat corruption in Aruba. The latter accounted for less than 2 percent of total answers.

* Each respondent could have selected three answers.

Concluding remarks

Consistent with the outcome of the previous surveys, the Corruption Survey 2020 showed that corruption was a major problem in 2020. A majority of respondents thought that corruption was widespread and on the rise. When asked about their own role in fighting this phenomenon, they said that reporting corruption was one of the most important things that they could do to fight corruption.

Fighting corruption should, therefore, be one of the top priorities of the government of Aruba (GoA), because corruption has negative consequences for all economic actors, the whole economy, and society in general. For instance, corruption affects negatively the drivers of (inclusive) economic growth, influences negatively income equality, discourages financial development, weakens tax base, debilitates public finances, and undermines outcomes in, e.g., education and health. The CBA acknowledges steps taken by the GoA but more decisive steps need to be taken to effectively and measurably achieve a major reversal in the current systemic corruption problem in the public sector.

One precondition for terminating corruption in Aruba is by building a community that is resistant to corruption. This could be achieved by, among others, promoting a whole-of-society culture of integrity, and educating everyone on how to prevent and deter corruption from occurring in the future, but also by creating the conditions necessary for ordinary people to report corruption when they see or hear about it without fearing the negative consequences of doing so.



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