

KICK BACKS AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

“You mean a simple work like this can cost that much? You must be joking.”

These sentiments are heard when the value of certain goods, works or services is not in tandem with the open market practice.

Sounding familiar with the practice, one would respond, “*Wina wadyapo pamenepa* (Somebody must have personally benefited from the transaction). I actually found the same product somewhere going at *mwakuti* (Such such a price). But since it’s the government procuring, I am not surprised... *inali deal imeneyo* (it was a connived arrangement to rip off the government)”.

Such reactions reflect a violation of principles of fair and transparent procurement. As a principle, procurement should be economical. The moment someone raises the eyebrows and says *wina wadyapo apa* or *inali deal imeneyo*, it shows that the procurement process has violated the practice of the open market to become expensive for the personal gain of the supplier and the procurer involved in the transaction. The supplier might have either flouted the rules of engagement or failed to survive the competitiveness of the open market and resorted to making unsolicited offers of ‘*kangachepe*’ (a little something)’ to win the contract.

Alternatively, the procurer might have forsaken acceptable professional conduct to benefit from the transaction knowing that in the end, it would not be personal money involved but the government’s. Such unethical officers justify their immoral conduct by saying “*Nanga boma tidzalidyera chani?* (What shall we personally benefit from the government?)

Best procurement practice demands that public procurement should result in the best quality of goods, works or services supplied in the right quantity, of the right quality and price and made available at the right time. All public procurement activities should therefore be governed by integrity on the part of both the procurer and the supplier.

