

# Corruption Survey Report 2022

October 18, 2022



**CENTRALE BANK VAN ARUBA**

**Cover design:**

Our golden tree, our Kibrahacha. Resilient, firmly rooted, and gives a beautiful bloom.

It offers us shade and protection if needed. When it breaks out, it displays an overwhelming yellow, illustrating a brighter and bolder future.

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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 conduct 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 2022.** 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. This survey was conducted online in the period of June - July 2022, as was the case with the corruption survey conducted in 2020. Before that face-to-face interviews were used to collect data in the previous corruption surveys.

**A total of 1,358 residents participated in this survey,** of which 726 male (53 percent) and 632 female (47 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

## Corruption Survey Report 2022

Widespread level of corruption remained practically unchanged, meanwhile respondents indicated increased level of corruption

Government seen as doing badly in fighting corruption as stated by 79 percent of respondents, compared to 77 percent in 2020

Respondents noted a higher bribery rate compared to previous corruption surveys

Corruption acts considered unacceptable by on average 95 percent of respondents, which remained unchanged compared to 2020

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

Similar to previous surveys, again almost half of respondents consider reporting corruption as the most effective thing that ordinary people can do to fight corruption.

Introducing a whistleblowing policy within the public sector viewed to be the most important measure to mitigate corruption

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

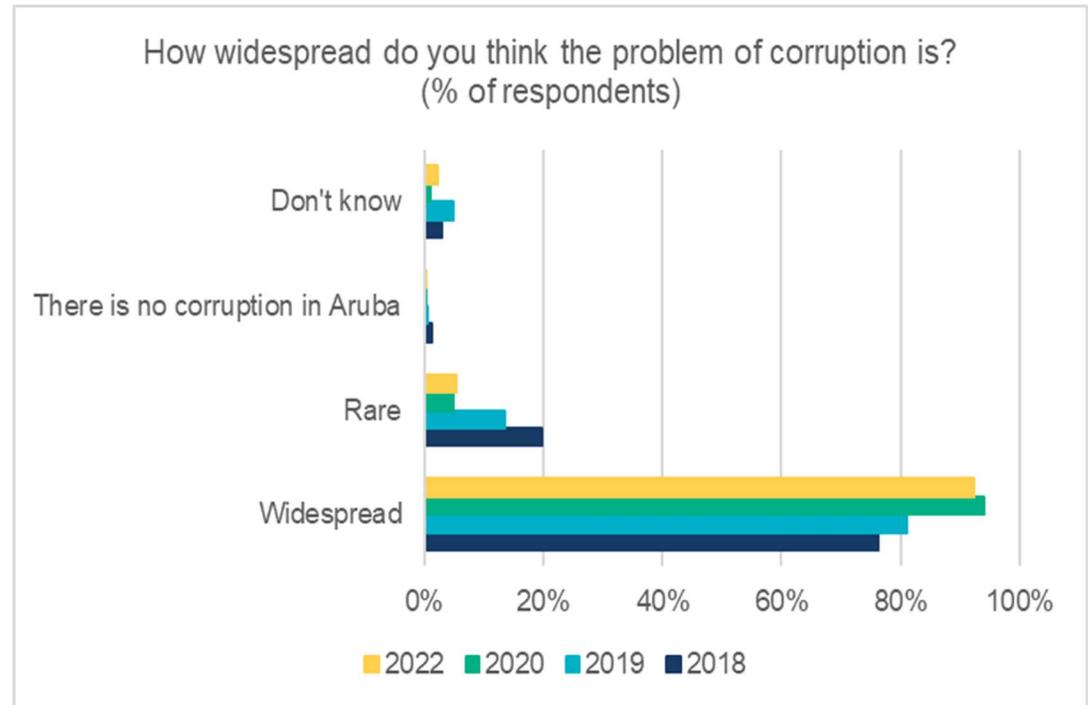
# How widespread is corruption?

**As was the case with previous surveys, a great majority of survey respondents believed that corruption was widespread in Aruba.** The proportion of respondents who thought that corruption was widespread remained practically unchanged, i.e., 92 percent in 2022, down from 94 percent in 2020 (2018: 76%, 2019: 81%).

**In 2022, similar to 2020, considerably less respondents said that the problem of corruption was rare and/or that there was no corruption, compared to 2018 and 2019.** 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 an increase in the amount of survey respondents who did not have an opinion.** Compared to 2020, there was a slight increase of 1 percentage point in the number of surveyors who did not have an opinion about how widespread corruption was.

Figure 1



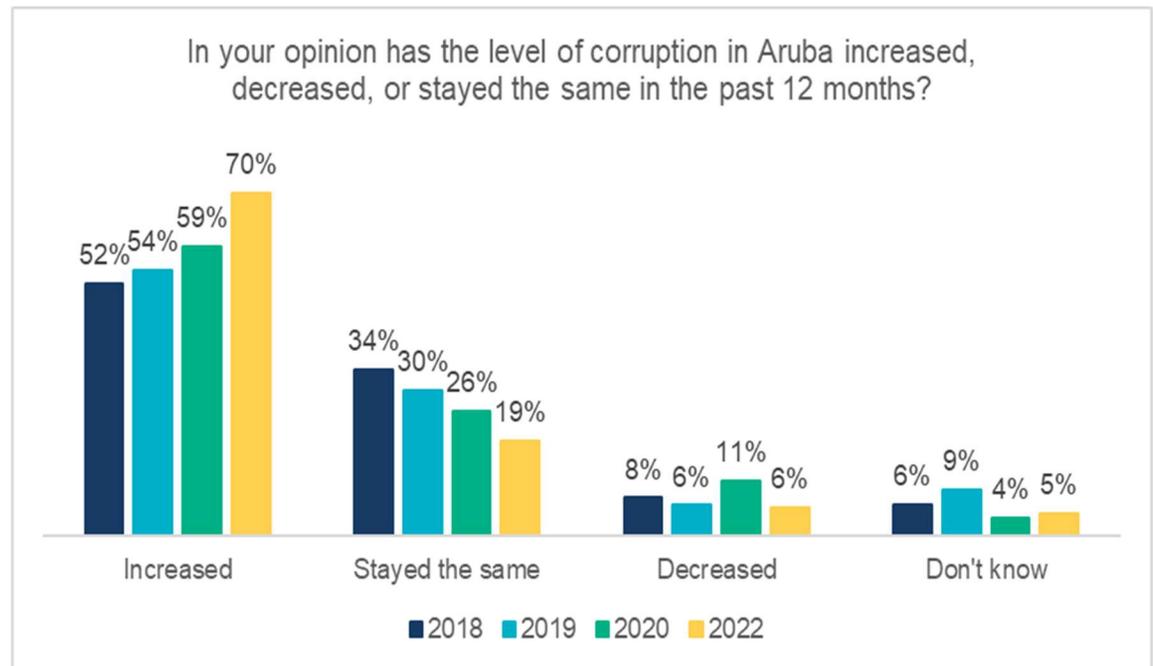
Source: CBA

# Has the perception of corruption fallen or risen?

About 70 percent of respondents indicated that the level of corruption increased in the past 12 months preceding the survey, the highest percentage since the CBA started conducting the corruption survey, up from 59 percent in 2020. The percentage of respondents reporting that the level of corruption stayed the same and decreased declined by 7 percentage points and 5 percentage points, respectively.

Equivalent proportions of men and women thought that the level of corruption rose in the 12 months prior to the survey. Around 24 percent of woman said that the level of corruption increased a lot, compared to 30 percent of men.

Figure 2

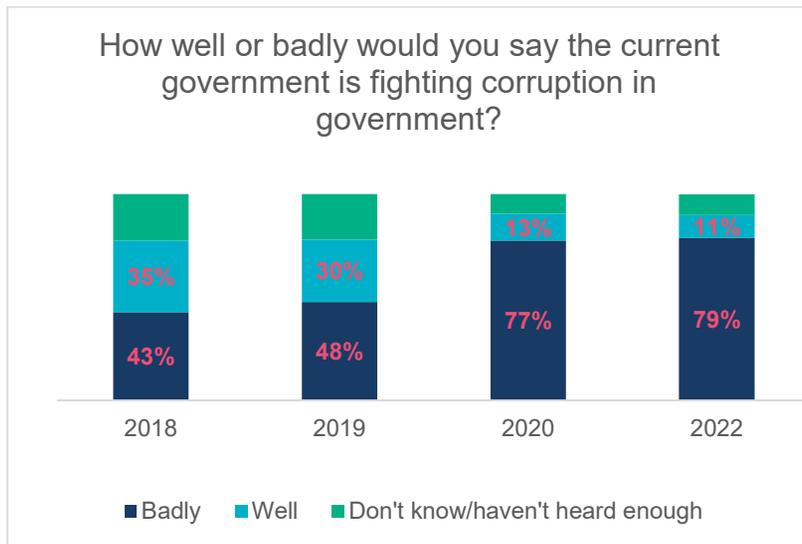


Source: CBA

# How is the government doing?

Following a steady increase since 2018, a greater majority of respondents said that the government was doing badly in fighting corruption in government (from 77 percent in 2020 to 79 percent in 2022). Compared to previous years, less respondents noted that the government was doing well in combatting corruption.

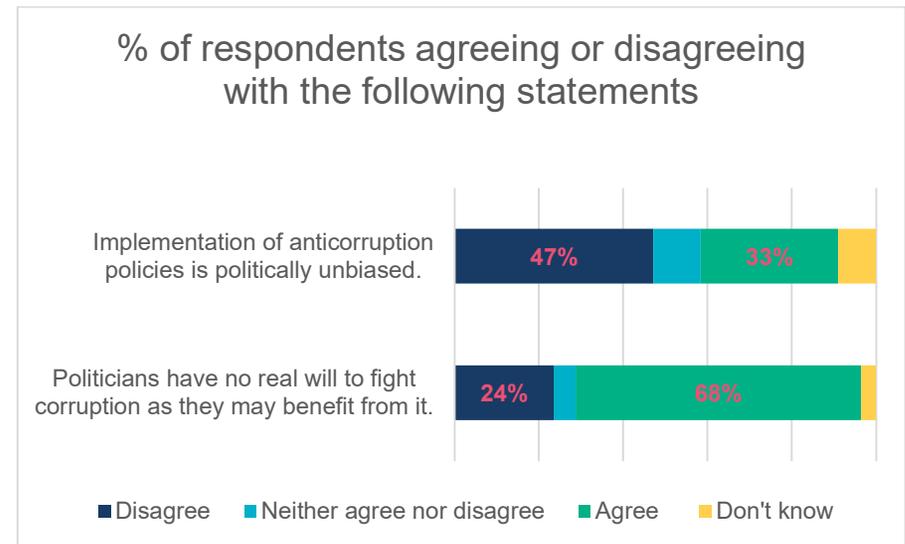
Figure 3



Source: CBA

Almost half of the respondents disagreed with the statement that implementation of anticorruption policies is politically unbiased, while one-third of respondents concurred that implementation of anticorruption policies is politically unbiased. A great majority (68 percent) thought that politicians have no real will to fight corruption as they may benefit from it.

Figure 4



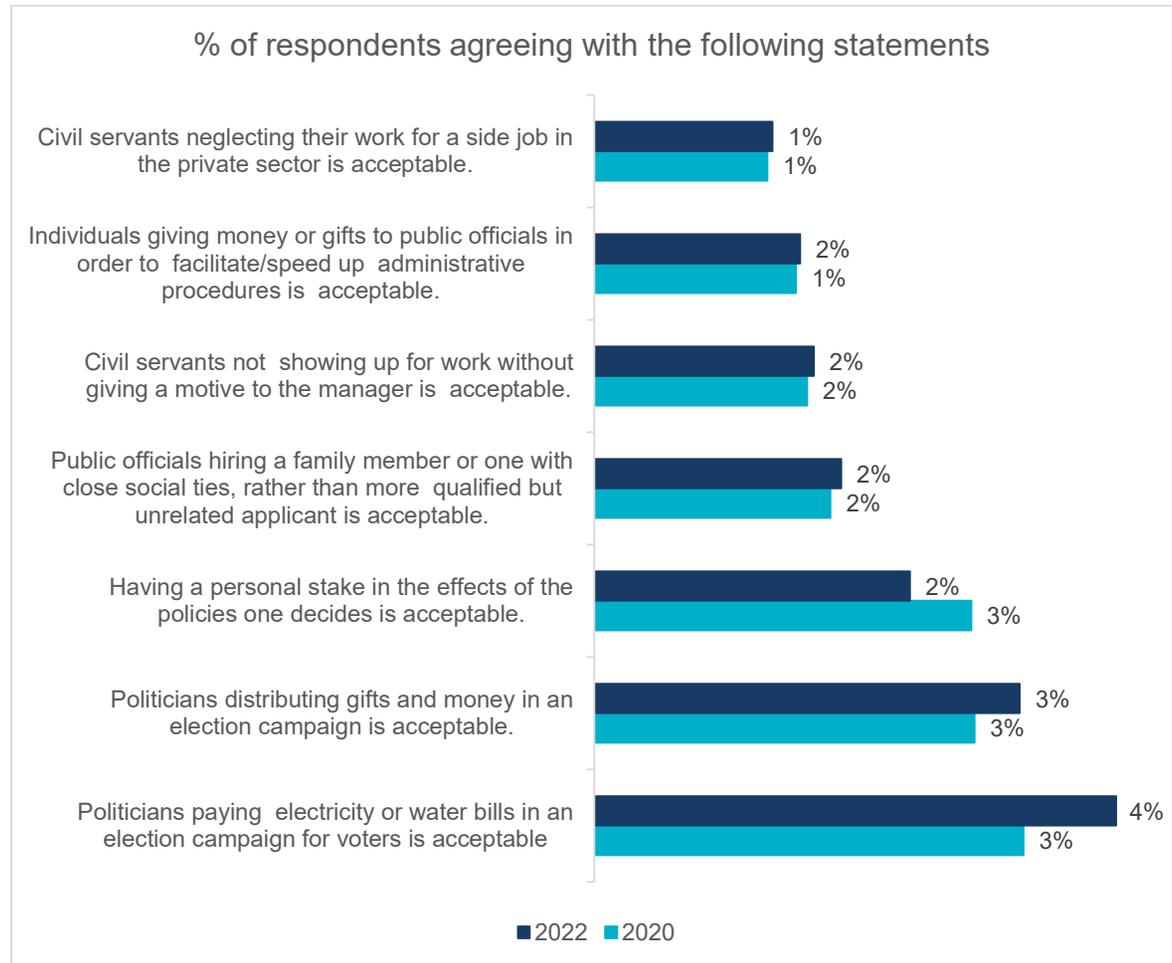
Source: CBA

# Do people agree with corruption acts?

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 4 percent believed that these acts are acceptable.

About 4 percent of respondents agreed that it is acceptable in an election campaign for politicians to pay electricity or water bills for voters, which is one percentage point more, compared to the 2020 survey. While 3 percent of respondents agreed that it is acceptable to distribute gifts and money in an election campaign.

Figure 5



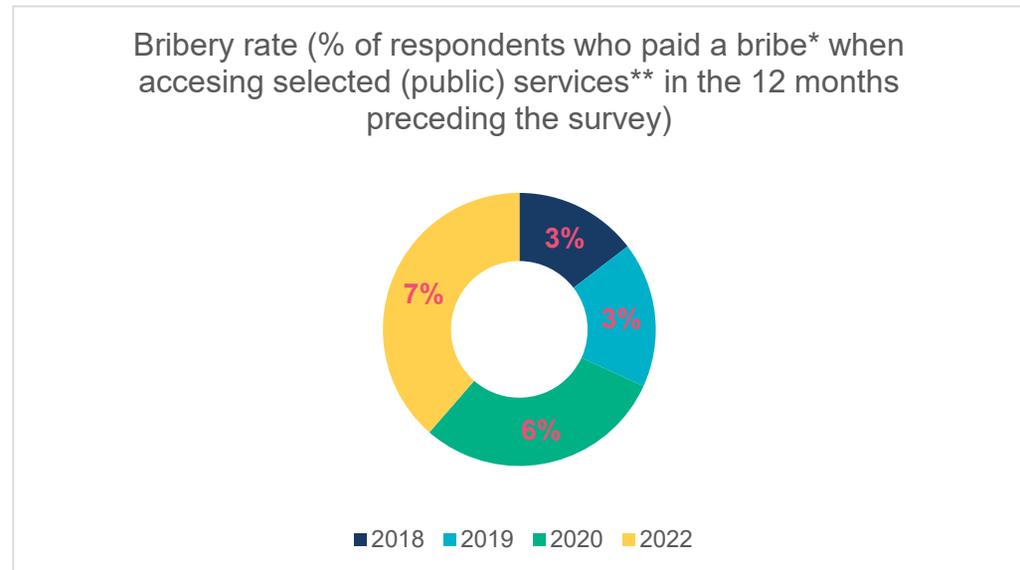
Source: CBA

# How many people pay bribes?

**Consistent with the survey results, an estimated 7 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, this would imply that approximately 6,000 people paid a bribe in mentioned period.

**The bribery rate increased considerably in the last two surveys compared to the surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019.** 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 first surveys.

Figure 6



Source: CBA

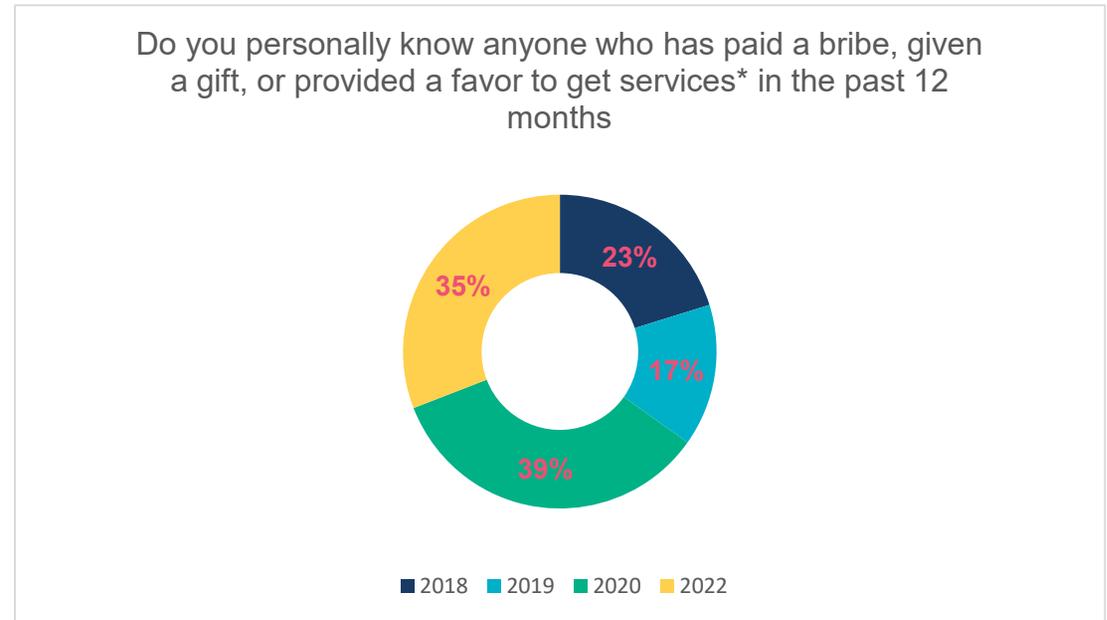
\* Note, the word bribe is used in this document to refer to bribe, gift, and favor.

\*\* 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 reporting that they knew someone who paid a bribe noted a steep decrease in 2022, compared to the increase in 2020.** In the 2022 survey, 35 percent of respondents said that they knew someone who paid a bribe in the past 12 months, which is 4 percentage points less, compared to the 2020 survey.

Figure 7



Source: CBA

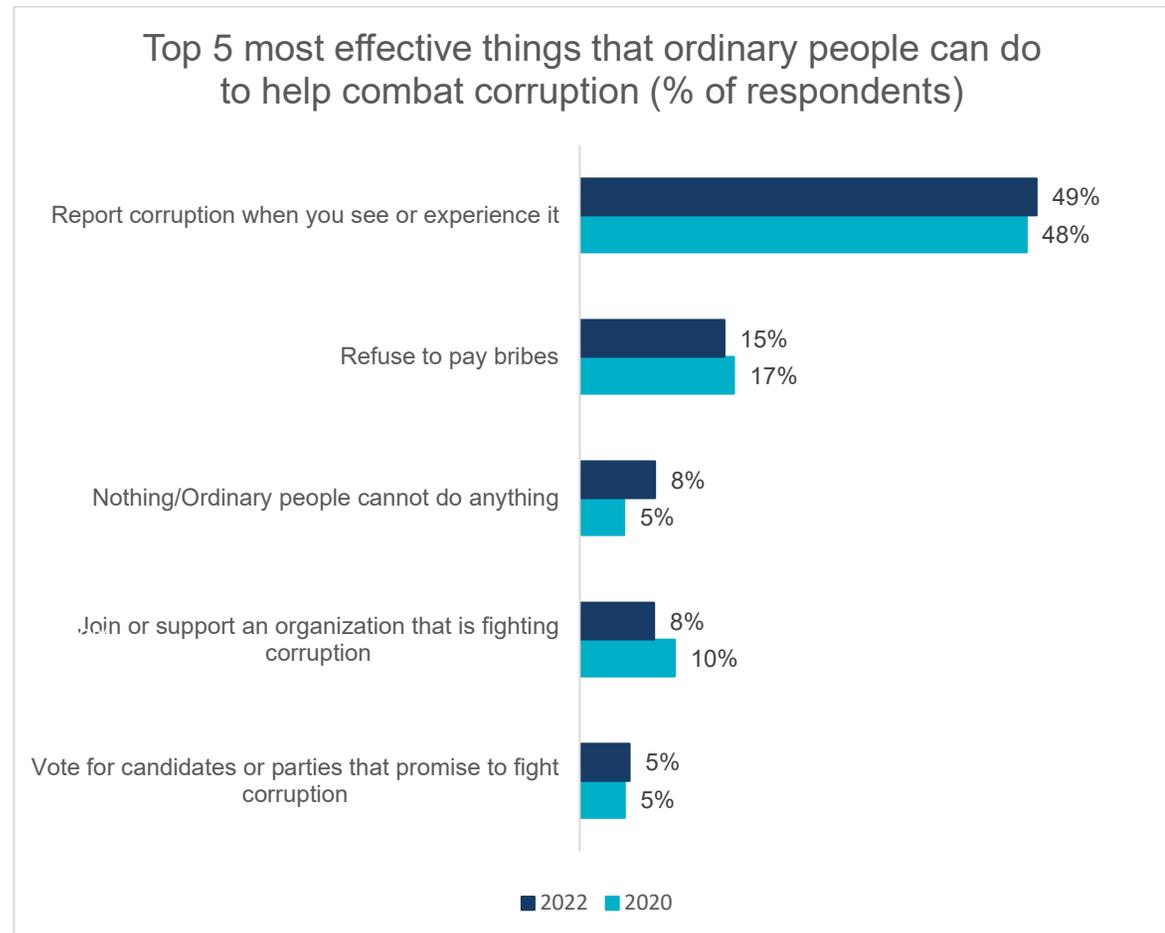
\* Schools, medical care, government departments issuing identity or other official documents and land in long lease, government departments in charge with residence/work or building or business permits, public agencies in charge with social security benefits, public utility companies, police, and courts.

# 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, almost the same as in the 2020 survey. The top 5 most effective things that ordinary people can do to help combat corruption is shown in Figure 8.

About 8 percent of respondents said that ordinary people cannot do anything to combat corruption in Aruba. Other options mentioned by respondents were (i) refuse to pay bribes (15 percent), (ii) join or support an organization that is fighting corruption (8 percent), and (iii) vote for candidates or political parties that promise to fight corruption (5 percent). A small group (4 percent) didn't know which options to choose or selected the category 'other'.

Figure 8



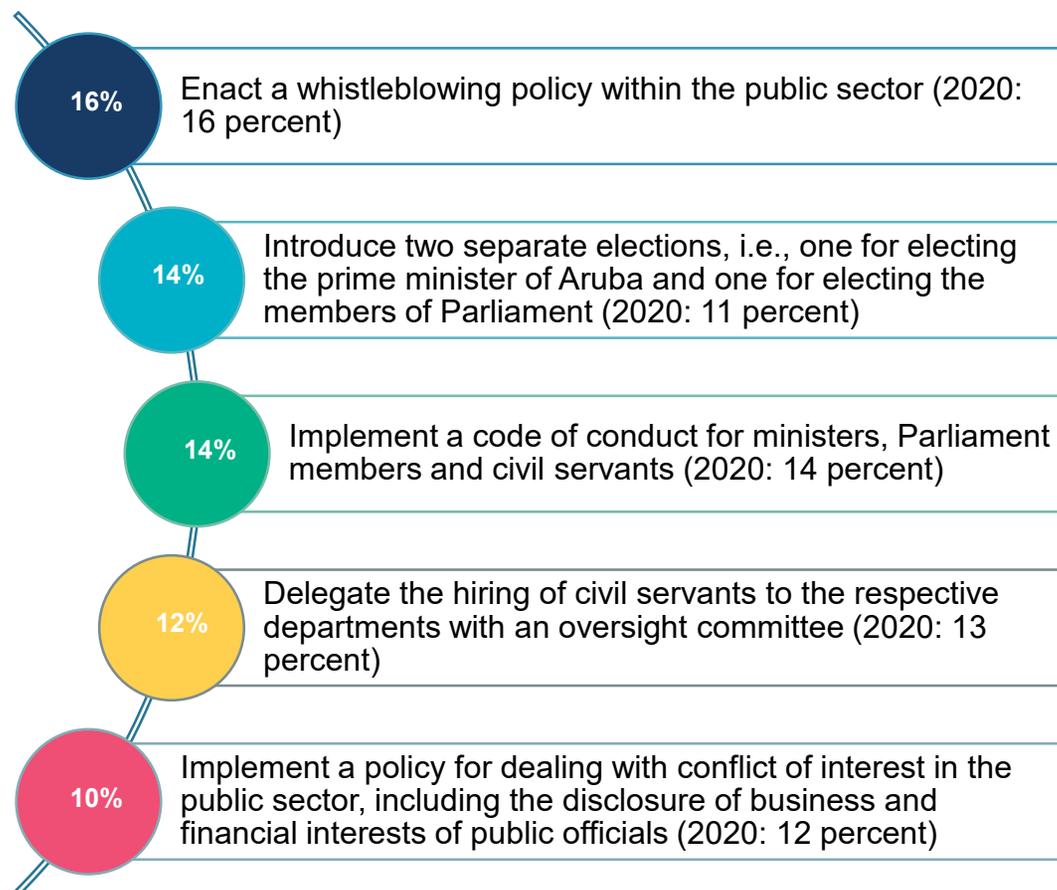
Source: CBA

# What anti-corruption actions can the government take?

**Most respondents (about 16 percent) view the enactment of a whistleblowing policy within the public sector as the most important measure to mitigate corruption.** Note that the top 5 most important measures (See Figure 9) accounted for two-third of the answers. Below, the percentages of answers for measures not mentioned in Figure 9 are listed below:

- (i) making government data available to all 9 percent (2020: 8 percent),
- (ii) using referendum for important decisions 6 percent (2020: 7 percent),
- (iii) introducing an integrity chamber in charge with advising on integrity policy 5 percent (2020: 6 percent),
- (iv) introducing legislation with regard to corporate governance of state-owned enterprises 5 percent (2020: 4 percent),
- (v) implementing the legislation with regard to the financing of political parties 5 percent (2020: 6 percent), and
- (vi) using media campaigns to promote public integrity and raise awareness of the risk of corruption 2 percent (2020: 3 percent).

Figure 9



Source: CBA

# Who should lead the fight against corruption?

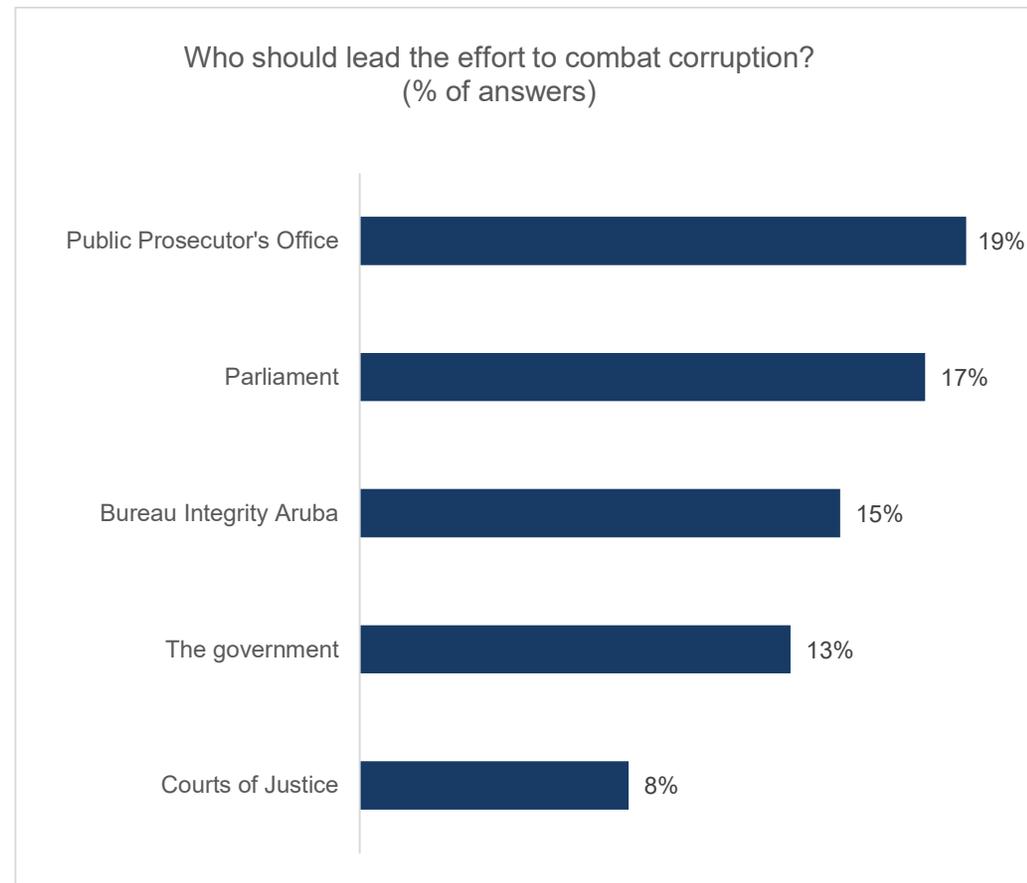
**When asked about who should lead the effort to combat corruption, the most selected answer by the survey respondents was the Public Prosecutor's Office, i.e., 19 percent of total respondents. Parliament is the second-most selected answer, with 17 percent of the total respondents.**

The Bureau Integrity Aruba, the government, and the courts of Justice came out, respectively, 15 percent, 13 percent and 8 percent of total respondents. Below, the percentages of answers by respondents not mentioned in figure 10:

- (i) ordinary people (7 percent),
- (ii) Ministry of Justice (7 percent),
- (iii) the private sector (4 percent),
- (iv) Prime Minister (4 percent),
- (v) NGOs (3 percent), and
- (vi) other (3 percent).

Remarkably, the category "other" is comprised of respondents indicating that the Netherlands (Dutch government) should lead the effort to combat corruption in Aruba.

Figure 10



Source: CBA

# Concluding remarks

**Consistent with the outcome of the previous surveys, the Corruption Survey 2022 showed that corruption remains a fundamental concern and challenge in 2022.** 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 when you see or experience it is one of the most important things that they could do to fight corruption.

**Fighting corruption should, therefore, be one of the top priorities not only for the government of Aruba (GoA), but also for the Aruban community, because corruption has negative consequences for all economic actors, the whole economy, and community in general.** For instance, corruption affects negatively the drivers of (inclusive) economic growth, influences negatively income equality, discourages financial development, weakens the tax base, debilitates public finances, and undermines outcomes in, e.g., education and health. More decisive measures need to be taken to effectively and measurably achieve a major reversal toward the perceived growing corruption problems in Aruba.

**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 corruption from occurring, introduce the corporate governance code without further delay, as well as whistleblower policy within the government, but also by creating the conditions necessary for ordinary people to report corruption when they see, experience or hear about it without fearing the negative consequences of doing so.



**CENTRALE BANK VAN ARUBA**

J.E. Irausquin Blvd 8  
P.O. Box 18  
Oranjestad, Aruba  
Phone: (+297) 5252 100  
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