

Response to global crises must prioritise zero tolerance for corruption

Berlin, 26 October 2010 -- With governments committing huge sums to tackle the world's most pressing problems, from the instability of financial markets to climate change and poverty, corruption remains an obstacle to achieving much needed progress, according to Transparency International's 2010 *Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI), a measure of domestic, public sector corruption released today.

The 2010 CPI shows that nearly three quarters of the 178 countries in the index score below five, on a scale from 0 (perceived to be highly corrupt) to 10 (perceived to have low levels of corruption), indicating a serious corruption problem.

"These results signal that significantly greater efforts must go into strengthening governance across the globe. With the livelihoods of so many at stake, governments' commitments to anti-corruption, transparency and accountability must speak through their actions. Good governance is an essential part of the solution to the global policy challenges governments face today," said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International (TI).

To fully address these challenges, governments need to integrate anti-corruption measures in all spheres, from the responses to the financial crisis and climate change to commitments by the international community to eradicate poverty. For this reason TI advocates stricter implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption, the only global initiative that provides a framework for putting an end to corruption.

"Allowing corruption to continue is unacceptable; too many poor and vulnerable people continue to suffer its consequences around the world. We need to see more enforcement of existing rules and laws. There should be nowhere to hide for the corrupt or their money," said Labelle.

Corruption Perceptions Index 2010: The results

In the 2010 CPI, Denmark, New Zealand and Singapore tie for first place with scores of 9.3. Unstable governments, often with a legacy of conflict, continue to dominate the bottom rungs of the CPI. Afghanistan and Myanmar share second to last place with a score of 1.4, with Somalia coming in last with a score of 1.1.

Where source surveys for individual countries remain the same, and where there is corroboration by more than half of those sources, real changes in perceptions can be ascertained. Using these criteria, it is possible to establish an improvement in scores from 2009 to 2010 for Bhutan, Chile, Ecuador, FYR Macedonia, Gambia, Haiti, Jamaica, Kuwait, and Qatar. Similarly, a decline in scores from 2009 to 2010 can be identified for the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Madagascar, Niger and the United States.

Financial Fallout

Notable among decliners are some of the countries most affected by a financial crisis precipitated by transparency and integrity deficits. Among those improving, the general absence of OECD states underlines the fact that all nations need to bolster their good governance mechanisms.

TI's assessment of 36 industrialised countries party to the OECD anti-bribery convention, which forbids bribery of foreign officials, reveals that as many as 20 show little or no enforcement of the rules, sending the wrong signal about their commitment to curb corrupt practices. While corruption continues to plague fledgling states, hampering their efforts to build and strengthen institutions, protect human rights and improve livelihoods, corrupt international flows continue to be considerable.

"The results of this year's CPI show again that corruption is a global problem that must be addressed in global policy reforms. It is commendable that the Group of 20 in pursuing financial reform has made strong commitments to transparency and integrity ahead of their November summit in Seoul," said Labelle. "But the process of reform itself must be accelerated."

TI calls on the G20 to mandate greater government oversight and public transparency in all measures they take to reduce systemic risks and opportunities for corruption and fraud in the public as well as in the private sector.

The message is clear: across the globe, transparency and accountability are critical to restoring trust and turning back the tide of corruption. Without them, global policy solutions to many global crises are at risk.

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Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption

Note to Editors: The CPI is a composite index, drawing on 13 different expert and business surveys. Source surveys for the 2010 CPI were conducted between January 2009 and September 2010.

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