

Keep the millennium development promise – fight corruption

Berlin/Dhaka, 16 September 2010. Transparency International (TI), the global anti-corruption organisation, warns that the failure by governments to address corruption is threatening the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It calls on governments, donors and non-governmental organisations to adopt anti-corruption measures in all their MDG action plans in order to reach the goals in the next five years and sustain progress beyond the 2015 timeline.

TI's report, *The Anti-Corruption Catalyst: Realising the MDGs by 2015*, demonstrates that increased transparency, accountability and integrity translate into better MDG outcomes on education, health and water, three of the eight areas targeted by the MDGs.

“Governance breakdowns and corruption are significantly slowing down the progress towards the MDGs,” said Huguette Labelle, Chair of TI. “As we take stock, it is clear that anti-corruption and good governance measures need to be fully integrated in all future development efforts.”

The report demonstrates that effective measures to promote transparency and accountability can not only reduce corruption, but also facilitate better achievement of MDG goals. “We have been able to demonstrate in Bangladesh that participatory social accountability tools designed to promote integrity and disclosure of information can improve performance at the service delivery levels in key MDG sectors like education, health and safety nets”, said Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Analysis of access to drinking water in 48 countries, for example, suggests that lower levels of bribery translate into improved availability of clean water. Similarly, countries with good marks on anti-corruption legislation show reduced rates of maternal mortality. There is also a strong correlation between greater public access to information and higher literacy rates for a nation's youth. What is most revealing about the findings is that these positive results hold true, no matter how wealthy a country is or how much it spends on the sector.

The report also shows that when bribery and other forms of corruption are not effectively countered, the costs are high. These costs can be explicit, implicit or hidden:

- **Explicit:** MDG related funding may be embezzled by staff in a ministry, school or clinic.

- ***Implicit:*** Basic services may be unattainable for citizens due to bribery and other illegal payments that are demanded for clean water, schools and healthcare.
- ***Hidden:*** Chronic absenteeism among teachers and doctors leave public schools and clinics understaffed and compromise the provision of education and healthcare.

The responsibility for dealing with corruption falls squarely on all parties from governments and donors to civil society and citizens. TI calls on all governments to take the first step to solving the problem by implementing the UN Convention against Corruption. The convention is the most comprehensive global legal framework for combating corruption, which has specific articles that can advance pro-MDG policies.

TI also urges donors to open up their books to allow for greater public oversight of where and how their money is spent. This will help citizens to hold to account governments receiving the funds.

“Introduce greater transparency and you have a chance to eradicate corruption and help the poor and marginalised. It is time for anti-corruption to be accepted as an integral part of all MDG initiatives rather than addressed through separate, piecemeal approaches,” said Labelle.

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Transparency International (TI) is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. TI-Bangladesh is the accredited national chapter of TI in Bangladesh.

Notes to editors:

World leaders are meeting for the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals 20-22 September 2010 in New York. The Millennium Development Declaration was adopted in 2000 by all 189 UN member states.

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