

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Persistently high corruption in low-income countries amounts to an “ongoing humanitarian disaster”

Short version

Berlin, 23 September 2008 - With countries such as Somalia and Iraq among those showing the highest levels of perceived corruption, Transparency International's (TI) 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), launched today, highlights the fatal link between poverty, failed institutions and graft. But other notable backsliders in the 2008 CPI indicate that the strength of oversight mechanisms is also at risk among the wealthiest.

The Transparency International CPI measures the perceived levels of public-sector corruption in a given country and is a composite index, drawing on different expert and business surveys. The 2008 CPI scores 180 countries (the same number as the 2007 CPI) on a scale from zero (highly corrupt) to ten (highly clean).

Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden share the highest score at 9.3, followed immediately by *Singapore* at 9.2. Bringing up the rear is *Somalia* at 1.0, slightly trailing *Iraq* and *Myanmar* at 1.3 and *Haiti* at 1.4.

While score changes in the Index are not rapid, statistically significant changes are evident in certain countries from the high to the low end of the CPI. Looking at source surveys included in both the 2007 and 2008 Index, significant declines can be seen in the scores of *Bulgaria, Burundi, Maldives, Norway and the United Kingdom*.

Similarly, statistically significant improvements over the last year can be identified in *Albania, Cyprus, Georgia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, South Korea, Tonga* and *Turkey*.

“Stemming corruption requires strong oversight through parliaments, law enforcement, independent media and a vibrant civil society,” said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International. “When these institutions are weak, corruption spirals out of control with horrendous consequences for ordinary people, and for justice and equality in societies more broadly.”

This also calls for a more focussed and coordinated approach by the global donor community to ensure development assistance is designed to strengthen institutions of governance and oversight in recipient countries, and that aid flows themselves are fortified against abuse and graft.

Prof. Johann Graf Lambsdorff of the University of Passau, who carries out the Index for TI, underscored the disastrous effects of corruption and gains from fighting it, saying, "Evidence suggests that an improvement in the CPI by one point [on a 10-point scale] increases capital inflows by 0.5 per cent of a country's gross domestic product and average incomes by as much as 4 per cent."

On the other hand, the continuing emergence of foreign bribery scandals indicates a broader failure by the world's wealthiest countries to live up to the promise of mutual accountability in the fight against corruption.

###

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

Media Contacts:

Gypsy Guillén Kaiser
Tel: +49-176 101 21 661
Fax: +49-30-3470 3912
ggkaiser@transparency.org

Jesse Garcia
Tel: +49-30-34 38 20 667
jgarcia@transparency.org