

MESSAGE FROM TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

Corruption is present in almost any country, but has the most devastating effects in developing economies, because it hinders any advance in economic growth and in democracy.

Corruption wastes resources by distorting government policy against the interests of the majority and away from its proper goals. It turns the energies and efforts of public officials and citizens towards easy money instead of productive activities. It hampers the growth of competitiveness, frustrates efforts to alleviate poverty and generates apathy and cynicism. The harms caused by corruption, which are as numerous as the shapes corruption can take, have destroyed well-intentioned development projects in the South and undermined political and economic transitions in the East.

Whereas in a developed country corruption may prevail in a single component of the body politic, in a developing country, which often has weaker administrations and political institutions, the corruption problem can actually become part of the system. In Ecuador, its proliferation has endangered the country's democracy. In Tanzania, corruption has been found in all sectors of society and has appeared as the main source of public discontent.

Dealing with corruption is far from being simply a matter of law enforcement. The casualties of corruption include the country's integrity system itself, and therefore reform of the national integrity system has to take place.

In this effort, it is important from the outset that the political will is present to obtain legislative or administrative changes effective enough to contain corruption. It is also essential to have the three main actors of society working together: the government, the private sector and the civil society. The energies of all three are needed to assure changes in moral and ethical attitudes and to achieve meaningful reforms.

The role and the importance of international institutions in dealing with corruption have increased dramatically within the past few years. At the national level as well as internationally they have declared war on corruption and taken concrete steps to minimise its prevalence.



Agreements over recommendations and international conventions (OECD), the introduction of specific procurement guidelines (World Bank, OECD DAC) and the development of projects promoting greater monitoring, transparency and accountability (UNDP, USAID) in countries in which donor agencies work, are examples of very effective measures towards the banishment of corruption.

This publication will provide the reader with a clear idea of the approaches mentioned above, what their strengths are and how they can weaken corruption practices. Corruption is multiple and needs to be fought on different fronts simultaneously. I therefore feel a certain relief and encouragement to see so many dedicated people and institutions, providing support and commitment to eradicate corruption.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the OECD Development Centre and to UNDP's Programme for Accountability and Transparency for having provided us, during the conference on Corruption and Integrity Improvement Initiatives in the Context of Developing Economies, with a valuable opportunity for presenting and exchanging ideas, perspectives and approaches toward the analysis of the corruption problem generally and in specific cases, as well as with regards to ways of acting to curb this scourge.

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