

# **PRESS CONFERENCE TO LAUNCH TI'S 2008 CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX (CPI 2008)**

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**VENUE:** GHANA INTERNATIONAL PRESS CENTRE, ACCRA

**BY:** GHANA INTERGRITY INITIATIVE (GII), LOCAL CHAPTER OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL (TI)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Distinguished members of the Media, Partners in the Anti-corruption struggle, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of Ghana Integrity Initiative, I wish to express my appreciation for your acceptance of our invitation to this Press Conference to launch Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2008.

About an hour ago, the CPI was launched in Berlin by the TI's international secretariat and almost simultaneously around the globe by TI's country chapters in many of the countries covered by the report. Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), the Ghanaian chapter of TI, is also performing this role now. Transparency International (TI), which is the leading international non-governmental organization (NGO) devoted solely to the fight against corruption worldwide, has continued to publish the CPI every year since 1995 with the aim of drawing country government's attention to the citizens' perception of the status of corruption in their countries. GII has also launched the CPI since its inception in 1999.

## **2. GHANA'S PERFORMANCE**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, you are eager to know Ghana's score. Ghana scored 3.9 out of the maximum possible score of 10 and ranked 67 on the list of 180 countries included in the 2008 index. This represents an improvement over Ghana's 2007 ranking of 69 with a score of 3.7 just as last year's score was an improvement over the 2006 performance. This 2008 score takes Ghana back up to its highest score ever of 3.9 which it obtained in 2002. What accounts for this improvement? There are various factors but I will mention important ones that have accounted for this.

The enactment of laws aimed at promoting transparency and accountability and, hence, curbing corruption is definitely basic in the fight against corruption. Ghana scores highly on this. The creation and support of anti-corruption and/or accountability institutions not only by government but also by our development partners such as GTZ, DANIDA, USAID & DFID, have played an important role in getting Ghana this score. One should also mention pronouncements by government officials about what government is doing to curb corruption.

However, one would also ask: Why has Ghana still not reached the pass mark after eight years of zero tolerance for corruption? Why has Ghana taken five years to return to its first time high attained in 2002 and why did it not surpass that score? Obviously, at the current rate, Ghana will reach the 50% mark in ten years or more.

The low levels of enforcement of anti-corruption laws, the newspaper reports about alleged corruption that the government does little about, and the impunity with which public officials react to such allegations, no doubt explain Ghana's failure to score even 4.0. on TI's Corruption Perception Index

Thus, while we might rejoice at the improvement of scores from 3.7 to 3.9, we should recognize that there is more to be done. In fact, the trend should awaken us to the fact that we are far from winning the fight against corruption, which also frustrates our fight against poverty reduction, disease, ignorance and efforts to meet the MDGs and the middle income status. In spite of some gains, corruption remains an enormous drain on Ghana's limited resources which can better be used for education, health and infrastructure.

### **3. GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS OF CPI 2008**

I would like to highlight a few cases, both globally and in Africa:

- Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden share the highest score of 9.3, followed immediately by Singapore at 9.2.
- In 2007, Denmark (9.4) was also at the top with Finland (9.4) and New Zealand (9.4) maintaining their rank with much higher scores, indicating very low levels of perceived corruption. Singapore performed better (9.3) in 2007 than it did this year but Sweden has retained its 2007 score of 9.3.
- Bringing up the rear in the 2008 CPI is Somalia at 1.0, slightly trailing Iraq and Myanmar at 1.3 and Haiti at 1.4. It is noteworthy that these are all deeply troubled countries.
- 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. There were significant declines in the scores of Bulgaria, Burundi, Maldives, Norway and the United Kingdom over the 2007 scores.
- The good news is that there have also been statistically significant improvements over the last year in Albania, Cyprus, Georgia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, South Korea, Tonga and Turkey.

### **4. AFRICA'S PERFORMANCE IN 2008**

- Of the African countries, covered by the CPI report for the year, Botswana (5.8), Mauritius (5.5), South Africa (4.9) and Namibia (4.5) maintained their good rankings and scores. Botswana and Mauritius have even improved upon their 2007 performance of 5.4 and 4.7, respectively. Namibia maintained the same score, although South Africa's performance dropped from 5.1 to 4.9.
- Swaziland comes immediately below Ghana with a score of 3.6, followed by Burkina Faso (3.5), Morocco (3.5), Madagascar (3.4) and Senegal (3.4). Swaziland and Madagascar have improved upon their 2007 scores of 3.3 and 3.2, respectively while Morocco (3.5) has maintained its 2007 score and Senegal's performance has deteriorated.
- It must be noted that Ghana's northern neighbour, Burkina Faso, has improved upon its previous scores just as Nigeria has improved this year, scoring 2.7 and

ranking 23 among the African countries but 121 globally with Togo and three other countries. Nigeria, often cited as the most corrupt country, improved from 1.9 in 2005 to 2.2 in 2006 and 2007, an apparently steady increase.

- Zimbabwe (1.8), Democratic Republic of Congo (1.7), Equatorial Guinea (1.7), Chad (1.6), Sudan (1.6), Guinea (1.6) and Somalia (1.0) are at the bottom not only of African countries but also globally with the exception of Afghanistan (1.5), Haiti (1.4), Iraq (1.3) and Myanmar (1.3), which are largely war-torn countries.

## **5 FIGHTING CORRUPTION IS FIGHTING POVERTY**

At the launch in Berlin, TI chair, Madam Labelle emphasized that, “Stemming corruption requires strong oversight through parliaments, law enforcement, independent media and a vibrant civil society. 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.” Across the globe, stronger institutions of oversight, firm legal frameworks and more vigilant regulation ensure lower levels of corruption, allowing more meaningful participation for all people in their societies, stronger development outcomes and a better quality of life for marginalized communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge facing Ghana in its fight against corruption is the ineffectiveness of societal and governmental institutions, as in most poor countries, which are often plagued by corrupt law enforcement agencies, politicians and political parties, judiciaries and other service providers as well as ineffective parliamentary oversight. In the fight against corruption, Ghana’s foremost challenges are weak oversight by Parliament and weak law enforcement.

Our judiciary is still challenged despite many good reforms they have undertaken over the years and judicial decisions are difficult to understand, especially by ordinary people who end up attributing them (probably wrongly) to corruption and political interference. Some sections of the media are doing enormously well in fighting corruption but others are disappointing when they take sides not based on professionalism.

Civil society, although vibrant, also has its problems and some organizations are beginning to fall prey to corruption. These are the challenges facing Ghana and we may never reach the 50% score if this is not adequately addressed. This is not only necessary for Ghana to obtain a higher score on the CPI but also, and more importantly, for Ghana to achieve its poverty reduction targets and a better life for the majority of its citizens. As world leaders, including our own President Kufuor, gather in New York to talk about the MDGs, it is important to remind ourselves that corruption is a threat to the achievement of these goals.

Pressures from foreign businesses also contribute to the level of corruption. As the TI statement indicates wealthy countries, display evidence of insufficient regulation of the private sector, in terms of addressing overseas bribery by their countries, and weak oversight of financial institutions and transactions.

## **6. THE 2008 ELECTIONS**

Distinguished guests, as 2008 is an election year, we at GII would like to take this opportunity also to comment on the corruptive practices of competitive politics. Election-related corruption takes many forms including private entities providing resources to a party or candidate in return for subsequent (or previous) benefit; vote buying and manipulation, and abuse of incumbency where state resources are used for political party/candidate electoral purposes.

Primary contestations, especially between the dominant parties, have been fraught with allegations of corruption, not to talk about violence. Corruption has also manifested itself in the recent registration process where under-aged voters have been encouraged to register to vote.

Democracy is the loser and chaos is the winner when electoral processes are corrupted. Officials who are elected as a result of classical electoral corruption or by abuse of resources are less likely to contribute to, or create, a political environment of integrity through accountability and transparency. The ultimate result, therefore of electoral corruption is business as usual.

This December, it is important that the people's choice is transparently and clearly made and respected. We expect honesty and integrity from our leaders. Ghanaians must also vote according to their conscience and desire for a good leadership and not because of monetary inducements or fear and intimidation. Once again, we call on the leaders of the political parties to preach peace and call their supporters to order and curb the isolated clashes taking place in some parts of the country.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Once again, Ghana has improved over the previous year's score and rank but other countries have also improved. But we at GII expect and demand more than this, especially as we have still not hit the half way mark score of five. Some critics may even argue that the situation on the ground is different from what our report says, especially with the current political party campaigns, throwing accusations and counter-accusations at each other.

Finally, GII wishes to spell out what needs to be done, both by President Kufuor and whichever government takes over from him come January 2009:

- To fast-track the passage of a Freedom of Information law;
- To ensure that the Assets Declaration law is complied with and that disclosures can be verified;
- To ensure that the outgoing President, his Vice and all Ministers declare their assets before they leave office;
- To ensure that the incoming President, Vice-President and Ministers declare their assets as required by law.
- To review ensure proper monitoring and enforcement of the Public Procurement Act to ensure value for money and curb corruption in the procurement process;

- To empower and adequately resource accountability institutions to investigate allegations of corruption and ensure that officials found guilty of corrupt practices are dealt with according to the laws of the country.
- To do what is necessary to ensure that Ghana gets an independent public prosecutor who would not protect party gurus engaged in corrupt practices.
- To ensure that the weaknesses in the Whistle-blower Act, 2006 (Act 720) are addressed for the adequate protection of the whistleblower and encourage citizens to take advantage of the law and save this country from the canker of corruption.
- To separate party from government and ensure that state resources, including funds, vehicles, and employees, are not used for party activities.

On this note, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Transparency International and the Board and Staff of the GII, I hereby declare the Corruption Perception Index, 2008, duly launched in Ghana.

We would be grateful if you have some comments, questions and suggestions.

THANK YOU!

\* For full details of the TI CPI 2008, visit <http://www.transparency.org/surveys/index.html#cpi>

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