

Nigeria most corrupt in Africa - TI
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There is a worldwide corruption crisis. That is the clear message from the 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), reports Peter Eigen, chairman of Transparency International. "There is no end in sight to the misuse of power by those in public office and corruption levels are seen to be as high as ever in both the developing and developed worlds."

Releasing the results of this year's CPI, Eigen observed that the index illustrates once more "the vicious circle of poverty and corruption, where parents have to bribe underpaid teachers to secure an education for their children and underresourced health services provide a breeding ground for corruption. The world's poorest are the greatest victims of corruption. Vast amounts of public funds are being wasted and stolen by corrupt officials".

This year's index ranks 91 countries. Fifty-five of the world's poorest countries scored less than five, suggesting high levels of perceived corruption in government and public administration. The most corrupt, those countries with a score of two or less, are Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, Azerbaijan, Bolivia and Bangladesh. Some of the richest in the world - Finland, Denmark, New Zealand, Iceland, Iceland and Sweden -- scored 9 or higher indicating very low levels of perceived corruption.

Africa's least corrupt countries are Botswana with a score of six and Tunisia 5.3. All other African countries surveyed scored less than five.

The TI chairman noted that AIDS is killing millions of Africans, and in many of the countries where AIDS is at its deadliest the problem is compounded by the fact that corruption levels are seen to be very high.

"While it is imperative that richer countries provide the fruits of medical research at an affordable price to address this human tragedy," says Eigen, "it is also essential that corrupt governments do not steal from their own people. This is now an urgent priority if lives are to be saved."

The index reflects the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. Scores of less than five out of a clean score of 10 are registered by countries on every continent.

The CPI, which Transparency International first launched in 1995, is a poll of polls, this year drawing on 14 surveys from seven independent institutions. It reflects the perceptions of business people, academics and country analysts.

The CPI is based on the understanding that a change in the perceived level of corruption can be measured only by a consistent shift in behaviour over a number of years. As a result, it may not give credit to new government leaders who are making determined efforts to counter years of rampant corruption in their countries.

"For example," notes Tunku Abdul Aziz of Malaysia, TI's vice-chairman, "in recent times we have seen new leaders take the helm in Nigeria, Mexico and the Philippines intent upon far-reaching anti-corruption programmes. Relief from the IMF and

increases in aid funding are evidence that the poor ranking of Nigeria in the CPI is recognised internationally "as an inheritance that cannot be overturned in the space of one or two years," he says. "The Nigerian administration has also made great strides in its quest to recover funds looted by the late dictator Sani Abacha."

While the CPI scores of most leading industrial countries are quite high, the CPI focuses on corruption involving public officials. It does not reflect secret payments to finance political campaigns, the complicity of banks in money-laundering or bribery by multinational companies. It is the belief of TI US vice-chairman Frank Vogl that corruption in the most prosperous countries in the world "has many manifestations", and Transparency International is increasing its efforts to secure greater transparency in politics, business and banking.

"We aim to publish a new Bribe Payers Index in early 2002 to shine the spotlight on the propensity of western firms to use bribes in emerging market economies."

TI is reluctant to make year-to-year comparisons that may only result from the changing perception of a country's performance, and also a changing sample and methodology.

RANKINGS

The CPI 2001 score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people, academics and risk analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt). Below is the listing of the first 10 followed by some selected countries and then by African country ratings in the order of: country rank (out of 91), country, 2001 CPI score