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PRESS RELEASE

**2020 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX REVEALS WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION
IS WEAKENING COVID-19 RESPONSE**

28th January 2021: The 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) released today by Transparency International, the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption, reveals that persistent corruption is undermining health care systems and contributing to democratic backsliding amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Countries that perform well on the index invest more in health care, are better able to provide universal health coverage and are less likely to violate democratic norms and institutions or the rule of law. "COVID-19 is not just a health and economic crisis. It is a corruption crisis. And one that we are currently failing to manage," Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chair of Transparency International said. "The past year has tested governments like no other in memory, and those with higher levels of corruption have been less able to meet the challenge. But even those at the top of the CPI must urgently address their role in perpetuating corruption at home and abroad."

Global Highlights

The CPI uses a scale of 0-100 (where 100 is the cleanest and 0 is the most corrupt). Countries and territories are ranked based on their perceived levels of public sector corruption. The report is a composite index, a combination of surveys and assessments of corruption which is collected by a variety of reputable institutions.

The 2020 edition of the CPI ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, drawing on 13 expert assessments and surveys of business executives. Denmark and New Zealand top the index, with 88 points. Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan fall on the bottom rung with scores of 12, 12 and 16, respectively. The 2020 research indicates that two-thirds of the countries scored below 50, with countries that recorded higher scores on the CPI having their fair share of integrity challenges, including a lack of transparency in public spending in response to COVID-19, proving that no country is free of corruption.

Regional outlook

Kenya obtained a score of 31 out of 100 having scored 28 points in 2019. Kenya's score still falls below the Sub-Saharan average of 32 and global average of 43 - a score below 50 indicates serious levels of public sector corruption. The CPI 2020 ranks Rwanda the highest in the East African region with 54 points, Tanzania - 38, Kenya - 31, Uganda - 27, Burundi - 19 and South Sudan scoring 12 points.

COVID-19 and Corruption

The CPI 2020 highlights the relationship between the COVID-19 Pandemic and corruption. Corruption leads to inequitable distribution of resources in response to COVID-19, highlighting the importance of transparency and anti-corruption measures in emergency situations. The report shows that countries that perform well on the CPI, also invest more on healthcare. The research also reveals that countries where corruption is more pervasive are least equipped to handle crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Corruption and Democratic Backsliding

According to CPI 2020, corruption contributes to continuous crisis of democracy. Countries that perform poorly on the CPI are more likely to violate democratic norms and institutions. Similarly, countries with higher levels of corruption tend to be the worst perpetrators of the rule of law and democratic breaches while managing the COVID-19 crisis.

Measures to Propel Anti-Corruption Efforts in the Management of COVID-19 in Kenya

While corruption has differed in scale and scope across regions, it proved to be a universal obstacle to effectively combatting COVID-19, and Kenya was no exception. Transparency International Kenya has repeatedly called for transparency and accountability by public agencies charged with managing COVID-19 resources following concerns regarding the over pricing of crucial commodities required to manage COVID-19, purchase of substandard Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), embezzlement of commodities including donated PPEs, failure of the PPE's to reach those who needed them the most including healthcare workers among other irregularities.

According to a report released by TI-Kenya on 'Transparency and Accountability in Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic' in December 2020 (<https://bit.ly/2YhNnVD>), lack of proper safeguards in public procurement during emergency situations, can lead to massive loss of funds. The report recommends the adoption of Open Contracting to enhance utility of the published information on the Public Procurement Information Portal. This will enable the public to trace the flow of money through the system including planning, the tendering process, award justification, delivery, and implementation.

"The COVID-19 crisis has exposed cracks in our institutions, especially in public procurement. It is time to plug the gaps that enable corruption to thrive in Kenya particularly as we look towards taking the country along a path of recovery. The government must guarantee that the acquisition and distribution of the much awaited COVID-19 vaccines will be transparent and equitable, as such strong oversight mechanisms are required," said Sheila Masinde, Executive Director, Transparency International Kenya

TI-Kenya, therefore, proposes the following:

- The findings of various audits and investigations undertaken in relation to COVID-19 management and expenditure, and the measures or recommendations made therein should be made public, and their implementation followed up by the responsible parties or agencies.

- Key accountability and oversight institutions such as the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Office of the Auditor General and the Office of the Controller of Budget should be closely involved in respective coordination efforts to steer comprehensive accountability measures that will insulate COVID-19 resources against wastage and pilferage. In addition, oversight institutions must be strengthened to ensure resources reach those most in need. Anti-corruption and oversight institutions must be accorded sufficient funds, resources and independence to perform their duties.
- The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) should give direction on pending COVID-19 corruption cases whose investigation files have been submitted by investigating authorities.
- All agencies involved in COVID-19 management should publish relevant data on expenditure and procurement, and guarantee access to information to ensure the public receives easy, accessible, timely and meaningful information.
- Publication of a COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, and institution of robust surveillance and oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency and equitable access to vaccines

Note to the Editors

- Transparency International Kenya is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1999 in Kenya with the aim of developing a transparent and corruption-free society through good governance and social justice initiatives. TI-Kenya is one of the autonomous chapters of the global Transparency International movement that are all bound by a common vision of a corruption-free world.
- The CPI is the flagship research product of Transparency International, the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption for more than 25 years.
- Since its inception in 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption. The index offers an annual snapshot of the relative degree of corruption by ranking countries and territories from all over the globe. In 2012, Transparency International revised the methodology used to construct the index to allow for comparison of scores from one year to the next. For more information, visit www.transparency.org/research/cpi.
- Data Sources: The CPI 2020 is calculated using 13 different data sources from 12 different institutions that capture perceptions of corruption within the past two years. Nine data sources were used for Kenya in 2020 including the African Development Bank CPIA, Bertelsmann Foundation Sustainable Governance Index, Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings, Global Insight Country Risk Ratings, World Bank CPIA, World Economic Forum EOS and World Justice Project Rule of Law Index. Some of these data sources were published in 2019, before the global COVID-19 Pandemic during which reports of corruption have reverberated across the globe.

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