

# Preface

by Peter Eigen<sup>1</sup>

Corruption is one of the greatest challenges of our age - a challenge that must and can be confronted. There are no short cuts, and no easy answers. The scourge of corruption will, to some degree or another, always be with us. As we enter a new millennium, we are conscious that corruption, to a greater or lesser extent, poses a threat not only to the environment, human rights, democratic institutions and fundamental rights and freedoms, but it also undermines development and deepens poverty for millions the world over. If it is allowed to continue to provoke irrational governance, one driven by greed rather than by the people's needs, and to disrupt the development of the private sector, corruption will even deny that most fundamental of human needs - hope.

Fortunately, world-wide concern for improved levels of governance and accountability has never been higher - be it in the public or private sector, or within international or non-governmental organisations. The belief that increased transparency can achieve not only more meaningful levels of accountability, but can do so in a highly cost-effective fashion, is now expressed universally. There is also a widespread recognition that fundamental and enduring changes in attitudes and practices can only be brought about by harnessing the energies of all of the points of a society's triangle of forces - the state, the private sector and civil society - and not only within countries, but also trans-nationally.

There is also a deepening recognition of the fact that the democratic gains of the past decade stand at risk if the explosion of corruption the world has witnessed is not contained. If large numbers of people in the emerging democracies become disillusioned with the democratic experiment and start to yearn for times of greater certainty, then the chances are that the old and failed remedies will be tried once more, and further impoverish their lives.

A thesis of partnership and coalition-building underpins Transparency International's approach to containing corruption. As such, this Source Book represents a methodical "drawing together" of the various strands and actors that collectively comprise a nation's integrity system - an expression first used in the first version of this Source Book but one which has passed quickly into the lexicon of reformers.

By adopting an holistic approach and by co-opting all the principal actors into the process of anti-corruption reform, a country or community can enhance its capacity to curtail corruption to manageable levels. But none of this can be tackled without enlightened and determined

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political leadership, without high levels of public awareness and support, and without a motivated and well-led private sector. In many countries, the most difficult element in the equation is that of developing a vibrant civil society willing and able to play a meaningful role in shaping its environment.

This Source Book should, in large measure, contribute to an empowering of leaders within civil society by providing both a rationale for, and examples of, good practice. TI believes that for too long the role of civil society and the private sector has been understated, and it will be working with its national chapters towards achieving progress in this area. When today's developed economies were themselves in the stage of evolving, and had features that resembled those of many of today's third world economies and economies in transition, it was just such action by civil society and the private sector that confronted and successfully contained the corruption that was then threatening their economic development. We believe that history can, and must, repeat itself in this regard.

As anti-corruption efforts evolve, it is important to note that this book, rewritten and fully revised as it is, continues to be a work in progress. Now translated into some 20 different languages, the earlier version has been adapted into various regional and national settings, taking account of differing national, juridical and governmental traditions.

It is our hope that further constructive criticism will lead to further development of the text and to improvement of the models available in the accompanying Best Practice documentation available on the TI web site. This Source Book itself will be placed on the Internet, and regularly revised and updated there.

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