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# INTRODUCTION

Every day, all over the world, ordinary people bear the cost of corruption. In many countries, corruption affects people from birth until death. In Zimbabwe, women giving birth in a local hospital have been charged US\$5 every time they scream as a penalty for raising false alarm.<sup>1</sup> In Bangladesh, the recent collapse of a multi-story factory, which killed more than 1,100 people due to a breach of basic safety standards, has been linked to allegations of corruption.<sup>2</sup>

This report examines how corruption features in people's lives around the world. Drawing on the results of a Transparency International survey of more than 114,000 respondents in 107 countries, it addresses people's direct experiences with bribery and details their views on corruption in the main institutions in their countries. Significantly, Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer also provides insights into how willing and ready people are to act to stop corruption.

The findings are clear: corruption is a very real burden, with more than one out of four respondents reporting having paid a bribe during the last year.<sup>3</sup> When people are not in a position to afford a bribe, they might be prevented from buying a home, starting a business or accessing basic services. Corruption can, and often does, infringe on fundamental rights. For those surviving on less than US\$2 a day, and for women who are the primary caretakers of children around the globe, corruption and bribery are particularly devastating. For them, the additional cost of bribery can mean trade-offs are made between health and hunger, between school entrance fees and the shoes necessary to wear to school.

Not only do people pay the costs of corruption directly, but their quality of life is also affected by less visible forms of corruption. When powerful groups buy influence over government decisions or when public funds are diverted into the coffers of the political elite, ordinary people suffer.

When there is widespread belief that corruption prevails and the powerful in particular are able to get away with it, people lose faith in those entrusted with power. As the Global Corruption Barometer 2013 shows, corruption is seen to be running through the foundations of the democratic and legal process in many countries, affecting public trust in political parties, the judiciary and the police, among other key institutions.

Importantly, however, the people surveyed around the world as a part of the Global Corruption Barometer

do not view themselves as powerless victims of corruption. They believe they can be part of the solution. In India, in 2011, millions of people marched to demand the establishment of an independent anti-corruption commission; in Brazil, a citizen petition led to the passage of a law which bans corrupt politicians from running for office. Citizen action can lead to the exposure of corrupt acts, the sanctioning of corrupt officials and pressure upon reluctant governments to do more in the fight against corruption. The Global Corruption Barometer underscores the pressing desire of citizens to get involved in stopping corruption.

Efforts to stop corruption started in earnest in the early 1990s, at a time when corruption was a little-talked-about secret. Twenty years later, the Global Corruption Barometer 2013 shows that people recognise all too well the extent of the problem and are ready to tackle this issue themselves.

## 1.1 Key Findings

- **Bribery is widespread**  
Overall, more than one in four people (27 per cent) report having paid a bribe in the last 12 months when interacting with key public institutions and services.
- **Public institutions entrusted to protect people suffer the worst levels of bribery**  
Among the eight services evaluated, the police and the judiciary are seen as the two most bribery-prone. An estimated 31 per cent of people who came into contact with the police report having paid a bribe. For those interacting with the judiciary, the share is 24 per cent.
- **Governments are not thought to be doing enough to hold the corrupt to account**  
The majority of people around the world believe that their government is ineffective at fighting corruption and corruption in their country is getting worse.
- **The democratic pillars of societies are viewed as the most corrupt**  
Around the world, political parties, the driving force of democracies, are perceived to be the most corrupt institution.
- **Personal connections are seen as corrupting the public administration**  
People surveyed regard corruption in their country as more than just paying bribes: almost two out of three people believe that personal contacts and

relationships help to get things done in the public sector in their country.

- **Powerful groups rather than the public good are judged to be driving government actions**  
More than one in two people (55 per cent) think their government is largely or entirely run by groups acting in their own interests rather than for the benefit of the citizens.
- **People state they are ready to change this status-quo**  
Nearly 9 in 10 surveyed say they would act against corruption. The majority of people said that they would be willing to speak up and report an incident of corruption. Two-thirds of those asked to pay a bribe say they refused.

## 1.2 Recommendations

- **Make integrity and trust the founding principles of public institutions and services**
  - Governments must operate with transparency and open up their books and activities to public scrutiny.
  - Codes of conduct should be developed and adhered to by all public servants.
  - Governments should embed transparency in how they work by passing and implementing comprehensive access to information laws.
  - Countries should adopt and enact standards for procurement and public financial management, consistent with UN Convention Against Corruption Article 9 and the OECD Principles on Enhancing Integrity in Public Procurement.
  - Governments must set up accountability mechanisms and channels that get the public engaged in oversight.
  - People should refuse to pay a bribe, wherever asked and whenever possible.
- **Bring back the rule of law**
  - Governments should prioritise anti-corruption reforms in the police, based on a thorough analysis of underlying problems.
  - Governments must ensure the independence and impartiality of their judiciaries.
  - Governments must set up adequate checks-and-balances to ensure that private
- **Hold the corrupt to account**
  - All governments must work to end impunity by effectively preventing, detecting, investigating, prosecuting and punishing acts of corruption.
  - Elected public officials should not enjoy immunity when charged with corruption offences.
  - People should make use of existing reporting mechanisms to speak out about corruption that they witness or experience.
  - People should use their voice, vote and spending to punish the corrupt, such as only voting for clean candidates and parties that stand in elections or only buying from companies that have strong integrity systems and clean business practices.
- **Clean-up democratic processes**
  - Governments should pass and implement laws on making party financing transparent, including requirements for political parties, political candidates and their donors to publicly disclose donations.
  - Parliaments should adopt comprehensive codes of conduct for members, including guidance on conflict of interest situations and rules for disclosure of assets, interests and income.
  - Parliaments should introduce mandatory registers of lobbyists.
- **Give people the tools and protections to fight against corruption**
  - Governments should pass and implement whistleblower laws. These laws should include appropriate follow up mechanisms to allow people to report wrongdoing in the public and private sectors and protect whistleblowers from retribution.
  - Governments should seek to provide people with effective mechanisms to report corruption and get redress.
  - Governments should enable independent civil society organisations to function as effective watchdogs of government and to help people to hold public officials to account.

interests and power groups do not dictate a government's policies and actions.