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The Role of the Corruption Perceptions Index

*Statement by Peter Eigen
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Transparency International*

Berlin, 22 September 1998

The purpose of this special statement is to put today's press release into its full context.

Underlying the CPI is the reality that much of the world's most damaging bribery comes directly from business enterprises trading and investing internationally. The scale of corruption in many poorer countries, particularly the corruption of their elites and the negative impact of corruption on development and the plight of the most poor, would be much less were it not for illicit actions by companies with headquarters in many of the leading industrialised countries. More than this, benefits to bribe payers are facilitated by the existence of safe havens provided by the banking systems of some of the leading industrialised countries.

TI, as a matter of priority, is developing approaches which will capture in a separate Index the sources of this international corruption. This will shine the light on the countries that are the homes of bribe-paying corporations. It will be a vital complement to the CPI and will reflect the hitherto unseen faces of international corrupters.

In this context, TI welcomes the successful completion of the [OECD treaty](#) which will criminalise these actions by their exporters and deny tax deductibility to bribes paid abroad. TI has, throughout, been actively involved in these initiatives, and will continue to monitor closely its implementation by governments.

Let me, on behalf of all involved in TI, call on the world's press to convey the readers the message of the havoc wrought by the bribe payers. Please also resist the temptation to pin labels on countries as being "the world's most corrupt." That would be wrong. The CPI includes only about one-half of the world's sovereign states, as reliable data is not available for the balance. We repeat, too, that the CPI measures perceptions, and that perceptions do not necessarily accord with realities.

Our press release explains the CPI, its purpose and its substantive expert base and methodology. I hope you will study this carefully.

Thank you.

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