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Vietnam makes no progress on Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

Drastic changes are required in anti-corruption efforts

The Corruption Perceptions Index 2014 (CPI 2014) was publicly released by Transparency International (TI) today, 3rd December 2014, ranking 175 countries and territories, based on the perceptions of business people and country experts of corruption in the public sector in each country/territory.

This year, Vietnam scores **31/100**, ranking 119 globally and 18 out of 28 countries and territories in the Asia Pacific region. **It is noted that Vietnam's CPI score remains unchanged for three consecutive years (2012- 2014) and corruption in the public sector remains a serious problem in the country.**

It should also be noted that while Vietnam stands still on CPI, scores of most of neighboring countries are improving. Among 9 ASEAN countries surveyed this year, Vietnam ranks 6th, above only Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Most of the other countries in the region have registered improvements in their scores (from 1 to 3 points), except for Myanmar, which also sees no change in its CPI score, Laos (-1) and Singapore (-2).

Towards Transparency (TT), TI's National Contact in Vietnam, recognises the resolve and efforts of the Communist Party, National Assembly and Government of Vietnam to address corruption. However, we are highly concerned that the unchanged perceptions, also reflected by citizens' lack of trust in the effectiveness of national anti-corruption efforts, highlight a real lack of progress on reducing corruption in Vietnam. To strengthen public trust and support for anti-corruption, as well as to build Vietnam's international reputation as a safe and attractive destination for investment, concrete achievements in anti-corruption need to be demonstrated. This requires a more focused and more result-driven approach.

We recommend the Government focus on developing and enforcing policies to enhance the transparency and accountability of public agencies, as well as reducing corruption in those areas of the public sector that are regularly perceived as most corrupt. A clear

mandate and better coordination are needed to enhance effectiveness of Vietnam's anti-corruption institutions, as is more public participation in addressing corruption.

To increase transparency, Vietnam should soon adopt and ensure the effective enforcement of a law on access to information which adheres to international transparency principles and standards, guaranteeing public access to information on the operation of public agencies.

In the context that Vietnam is amending the Penal Code and planning to review the 10-year implementation of the Anti-Corruption Law, we recommend that any amendments to these laws should ensure their consistency with one another as well as compliance with the requirements of the United Nations Conventions Against Corruption (UNCAC) to which Vietnam is a signatory.

To make law enforcement more effective, it is necessary not only to improve coordination among relevant agencies but also to empower and uphold the accountability of anti-corruption institutions. We recommend that the Government consider empowering one institution with a clear mandate, authority, independence and capacity to lead, coordinate and be accountable for overall enforcement efforts.

Any good anti-corruption law or effort to fight corruption will not be successful without public participation and support. Although the Government has provided some measures to encourage public participation, especially the reporting of corruption, more practical and effective mechanisms are needed so that citizens are more willing to report and those who take courage to reject and report corruption will be rewarded deservedly and well protected.

The CPI is calculated based on a scale of 0-100 (of which 0 means a country is perceived as highly corrupt and 100 as very clean). This year, 8 data sources from independent international surveys were used for the calculation of Vietnam score.