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TI chairman outlines corruption remedies

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FIGHTING corruption is not a straightforward task, says Transparency International Fiji's chairman Hari Pal Singh.

He was speaking at the symposium on corruption and bribery in Fiji held in Suva yesterday.

"Not only must the approach be holistic but must also be carried out and supported by all stakeholders in the affected society," Mr Singh said.

"Corruption is a complex phenomenon and so must be the measures designed to fight it," he said.

"Effective anti-corruption activities need to be based on a comprehensive analysis of the respective causes and types of corruption as well as nature of the stakes involved.

"Solutions must be grounded in reality and relate to each part of the affected country's institutional framework."

Mr Singh said if real change was to occur, anti-corruption efforts must reach beyond State reforms and become engrained in every day activities of other significant social actors.

"The roles and responsibilities of both the private corporate sector and civil society are increasingly recognised in this regard."

"Although they operate in the regulatory framework set by the State, these sectors provide a fertile ground for corruption to thrive and remedies required to address them."

Mr Singh made some suggestions that could rid the country of corruption.

"Strengthening the rule of law and the capacities of law enforcement agencies."

"Developing anti-corruption plans for institutions with substantial revenue and expenditure and in our case the Public Works Department, health, water, agriculture etc including local government where there is likelihood of abuse of ratepayers' funds.

"Purchase of a luxury motor vehicle by the Lord Mayor in the face of massive job losses due to economic downturn and deteriorating infrastructure within the city shows lack of sensitivity on the part of our city fathers on the use of ratepayers' money that is abuse of funds, thus getting entrusted power for private gain," he said.

Mr Singh suggested the signing and ratifying the UN Convention against Corruption together with an early setting up of the Fiji Independent Commission against corruption, the introduction of a

Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information and whistle-blower protection legislations to help curb corruption.

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