

Dear _____:

The Group of Eight (G8) leading industrial countries have a special responsibility to promote accountability, beginning at home. We, Transparency International's chapters in the G8 countries and in 13 African countries – as we believe a successful future on that continent hinges particularly on a global campaign against corruption - therefore urge you to report back publicly at the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit on how you have implemented the previous G8 commitments to fight corruption, the greatest threat to sustainable development today.

Anti-corruption measures are integral to fighting both poverty and climate change, another crucial development issue on which the Summit will focus. The possibility of a world where all countries and all people can share in the wealth of the global economy hinges on fighting corruption, strengthening public institutions and improving governance and standards of accountability and transparency across the world.

We write to underscore four critical areas where greater action and a forthright inventory of progress are direly needed, as too many continue to pay the price for poor governance.

Stopping the supply side of corruption

Foreign bribery was criminalised in all OECD countries with the entry into force of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention in 1999. Russia has agreed to implement an anti-bribery prohibition pursuant to the UN Convention against Corruption. Almost ten years later, however, the track record on enforcement remains disappointing.

The G8 must enforce their laws against companies engaged in bribery particularly in developing countries where the impact is most damaging. When companies from G8 countries are not held to account for their “supply” of corruption, despite their government's commitment under the OECD Convention supporting the fight against corruption, the ability of the G8 to encourage better governance in the developing world is severely weakened and the efforts of developing countries to fight corruption and improve governance are undermined.

Deny safe haven to illicit assets and cooperate in their repatriation

A key chapter of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) requires parties to assist developing countries in recovering stolen assets and preventing kleptocrats from retaining them.

In the 2005 UN World Summit, the UN members resolved to support efforts to reduce capital flights and measures to curb the illicit transfer of funds from developing countries.

As home to the major financial centers, the G8 can demonstrate to corrupt officials that there is no safe haven in which to hide their money. The G8 should refuse to accept illicitly-acquired assets, close loopholes allowing the anonymous transfers of funds to offshore centers, and cooperate with the developing world, particularly African countries, to trace, freeze and repatriate stolen assets. Clear escrow provisions, specialised trust funds and other mechanisms for disputed funds, are equally essential to ensure that the money is not siphoned off again.

Strengthen Governance Globally

The landmark UNCAC, which entered into force in 2005, is the only truly global legal framework against corruption, and commits signatory countries to prohibit foreign bribery, assist each other in investigating and prosecuting corruption and in the repatriation of stolen assets. The G8 have pledged their support for it numerous times, yet three of its eight members, Germany, Japan and Italy have yet to ratify the convention, and commitment for a monitoring mechanism - essential for UNCAC's success - remains weak. Germany, Japan and Italy must ratify promptly the UNCAC and all G8 countries should assist in creating and funding an implementation monitoring mechanism with civil society participation. In particular, it would be essential to set up a monitoring mechanism, funded from the regular budget of the United Nations.

Lower-income countries will require assistance to implement the UNCAC's provisions as well as those of regional conventions, such as the African Union (AU) Anti-Corruption Convention. G8 countries should contribute to multilateral efforts to this end through the United Nations and the African Development Bank, provide direct technical assistance for convention implementation and, more broadly, for strengthening the domestic institutions of governance and oversight in low-income countries. Efforts to now establish an Advisory Board on Corruption within the African Union as per Article 22 of the AU Convention should be supported.

The G8 must be able to demonstrate significant progress towards these goals by the 3rd Conference of States Parties to the UNCAC in Qatar in late 2009.

Harness Resources for development

The G8 have accurately recognised natural resource wealth as both a risk factor for poor governance and a potentially powerful engine of development. Therefore the G8 have given greater prominence to transparency commitments in the oil, gas and mineral extraction sectors in recent years.

G8 commitments include: fostering the responsibility of host governments to transparently manage natural resource revenues; responding to the environmental concerns of local communities; and promoting clean and transparent business practices by extractive companies, by stronger enforcement of anti-bribery laws by the countries home to these companies. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) has been the focus of many of these pledges although its principles should be applied to a broader range of industries and its requirements strengthened in terms of corporate reporting, and enforcement and transparency requirements for high-income supporting countries. G8 members should provide technical and financial assistance and encourage safeguards for civil society engaged in monitoring progress on EITI.

A multi-stakeholder dialogue on progress

We call on the G8 to report back to the 2008 Summit on what has been accomplished and how each member will fulfill outstanding commitments, and for the G8 to convene a high-level, multi-stakeholder meeting to assess progress and determine the way forward shortly after the Summit. Such action is necessary to dispel growing doubt about whether the G8 are serious about matching their rhetoric with action.

Signed,

Algeria
Association Algérienne de Lutte contre la Corruption

Ghana
Ghana Integrity Initiative

Haiti
La Fondation Héritage pour Haïti (LFHH)

Kenya
Transparency International Kenya

Liberia
Centre for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)

Mauritius
Transparency Mauritius

Morocco
Transparence Maroc

Niger
Association Nigérienne de Lutte contre la Corruption

Nigeria
Transparency in Nigeria (TIN)

Senegal
Forum Civil

Uganda
Transparency Uganda

South Africa
Transparency International South Africa

Zambia
Transparency International Zambia

Canada
Transparency International Canada

France
Transparence-International France

Germany
Transparency International Deutschland

Italy
Transparency International Italia

Japan
Transparency International Japan

Russia
Transparency International Russia

United Kingdom
Transparency International (UK)