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National Corruption Perception Survey
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Transparency International-Kenya, Members of the Press, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to have the honour of presiding over Transparency International-Kenya's launch of its National Corruption Perceptions Survey. As Chair of Transparency International's Board of Directors, it is always a pleasure to personally engage with our National Chapters and witness firsthand the diversity and energy of their various activities.

Founded in 1993, Transparency International has grown into a global network of over 90 chapters, each of whom plays an important role in driving their domestic anti-corruption agenda. Transparency's National Chapters in Africa have taken full advantage of the expanding political space in recent years to further the anti-corruption cause and to demand greater government accountability and democratic reform. Across the region and locally, a multiplicity of efforts target issues ranging from political party management to greater access to information. I am particularly proud to be here with the Kenyan chapter, one of the founding and most vibrant national chapters in the region and internationally.

It is widely acknowledged that half of sub-Saharan Africa's population of 840 million people live in absolute poverty. Poor people all over have been promised a better future, more efficient management of public resources and a dignified standard of living. But turning such promises into action is essential if anti-corruption efforts are to have an impact on the lives of ordinary people. Governments bear the greatest responsibility for following through on commitments to fight corruption. Yet governments are not alone in their responsibility. We need to see concerted action from civil society and the private sector too.

While there have been notable gains in economic growth, persistent poverty in Kenya, one of Africa's biggest economies - remains a major challenge as inequality continues to erode trust. One positive development is that anti-corruption reform has become a major focus of Kenya's national discourse ranging from the media and civil society to players in the political arena.

Further, I acknowledge the positive steps the Kenyan government has made in recognising the development challenges faced by the citizenry through its establishment of the Vision 2030 plan. However, it is our duty to note that the attainment of this goal as envisaged will be impeded by poor

public resource management, lack of accountability and general weaknesses in institutions of governance. It is no coincidence that countries such as Botswana, Mauritius and Ghana, which have made significant economic progress in recent years, are also amongst the higher scorers within the region in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2008.

Anti-corruption plays a significant role in sustaining a country's economic growth. That is particularly the case in light of the global economic downturn that we are all grappling with. The time to act is now. It is imperative that the Kenyan government expedite participatory constitutional reform initiatives and takes the opportunity provided by apparent goodwill across the political divide for constitutional change. From TI-Kenya's current perception survey, it is clear that the Kenyan public strongly supports constitutional reform. We look forward to Kenya establishing a farsighted constitutional order that allows for separation of powers, comprehensive mechanisms for accountability, good financial management of available resources and independent oversight institutions. Such reform can go a long way towards ensuring public confidence and guaranteeing the credibility of democratic processes.

Finally, I urge TI-Kenya and other chapters in the region to continue their vigilance and ensure that the gains made in recent years are actualised for the benefit of all. Transparency International's secretariat remains committed to driving change at the global level and supporting the excellent work of National Chapters throughout the world.

Thank You