

Transparency Watch

APRIL 2009

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



Mary Robinson, founder of Realizing Rights and member of The Elders

Mary Robinson, the first woman President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has spent most of her life as a human rights advocate. She is the founder of Realizing Rights, an ethical globalisation initiative, and a member of The Elders. Transparency Watch spoke with her on human rights, globalisation and the effects of corruption >> [read more](#)

SPOTLIGHT STORY



Summit of the Americas: confronting corruption for prosperity

The fifth Summit of the Americas saw leaders confronted with how to make progress on human prosperity, energy security, climate change and sustainable development >> [read more](#)

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SPOTLIGHT STORY

Summit of the Americas: confronting corruption for prosperity

By Michael Sidwell



The 34 country Summit of the Americas held in Trinidad and Tobago on 17-19 April saw leaders confronted with the issues of human prosperity, energy security, climate change and sustainable development.

The first Summit of Americas took place in 1994. Since then all states have committed to reducing corruption throughout the region. However, recent [research](#) by Transparency International (TI) shows that many countries in the Americas are struggling with rampant corruption.

Corruption has gone hand in hand with persistently high levels of inequality across the region, in spite of widespread robust economic growth in the last few years. Nearly 200 million people, a third of the population of the hemisphere, live in poverty with 13 per cent of them surviving amidst extreme [poverty](#), according to the Inter-American Development Bank. Weak institutions and low levels of governance threaten efforts to promote economic equality and sustainable development, and jeopardise the likelihood of the region meeting the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

Such inequality has fuelled [crime, instability and insecurity](#), which are acute problems troubling several countries in the region. These obstacles cannot be removed as long as a lack of accountability and poor governance reign.

Progress to date

From the very first Summit of the Americas in Miami to the recent meeting in Port of Spain, corruption has been recognised as a key challenge by heads of state and reflected in each Declaration and Plans of Action.

Almost all Organization of American States (OAS) [member states](#) have signed and ratified two key legal instruments that provide a foundation for preventing corruption: the Inter-American Convention against Corruption ([IACAC](#)) and the UN Convention against Corruption ([UNCAC](#)). Most signatory countries have joined the [follow-up mechanism](#) of the Inter-American Convention, a crucial step for the treaty to become truly effective.

However, meaningful implementation of the IACAC and the UNCAC in the region has been uneven. In the lead-up to the Port of Spain meeting, TI [evaluated](#) whether promises to fight corruption have been effectively translated into action. Nine countries were assessed (Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago) on the extent of advances on actions and goals set out during the previous four summits of the Americas. The report looks at numerous indicators; from the country's status on ratifying anti-corruption conventions to the level of implementation of recommendations put forward by the [committee of experts](#) within the OAS responsible for reviewing implementation.

States that have signed on to the IACAC have an obligation to report their advances on anti-corruption. The TI report though, found serious gaps in the implementation of anti-corruption commitments, particularly as there is lack of coordination among regional and national authorities responsible for follow-up of Summit mandates and the implementation of the Inter-American Convention.

On the implementation of Inter-American Convention recommendations: the nine countries evaluated received a total of 249 recommendations, from which only a little more than half (148) were acted upon, yet sufficient measures were taken in only 20 per cent of these.

Overall, anti-corruption may be formulated into law but never make it into actual policy, remaining a dead letter in some countries. Civil society participation is not integrated into implementation reviews and is even dependent on domestic legislation in some countries, which severely limits independent and appropriate monitoring.

Round five: Trinidad and Tobago

The summit [Declaration](#) reflects key points raised during civil society forums held during the past year, in which TI actively participated.

The importance of transparency, accountability and fighting corruption is recognised in the Declaration, from promoting energy security to strengthening public security. Reiterating the value of anti-corruption conventions, the Declaration notes that “We reaffirm our commitment to the Inter-American Convention against Corruption, and declare our support for the ratification and effective enforcement of the United Nations Convention against Corruption.” Similarly, the commitment to make important progress on “providing access for our citizens to public information, particularly on government revenues, expenditures and budgets” is welcomed.

While it is a meaningful that such promises have been made, TI’s report underlines the need that these words must now be translated into effective action.

Urgent action needed

As a result of the current economic crisis, a [slowdown](#) in regional growth, a continued rise in [unemployment](#) and a decline in [remittances](#) –a top source of income for many Latin American countries- the poor will be left in urgent need of safety nets.

Governments across the region will have to respond to the bleak economic forecast by ensuring that social programmes are handled with integrity, transparency and accountability, so they function effectively and deliver such vital services as health and education.

For [stimulus efforts](#) to work, increases in funding through the [International Monetary Fund](#) and the [World Bank](#) must be accompanied by accountability mechanisms and fiscal transparency requirements in order to truly help those in most need. Increased money means increased accountability and opportunities for citizens to see that steps are being taken to help them in their daily struggle to cope with the global economic burden.

>>Learn more

What do you think? Join in the discussion on TI's [blog](#)

To read the TI report click here – [English](#), [Spanish](#)

[Official site of the V Summit of Americas](#)

[Summit of the Americas mandates on transparency and anti-corruption](#)

[List of anticorruption and transparency mandates](#)

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INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

Mary Robinson, founder of Realizing Rights and member of The Elders

By Michael Sidwell



Mary Robinson, the first woman President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has spent most of her life as a human rights advocate. She is the founder of Realizing Rights, an ethical globalisation initiative, and a member of The Elders. Transparency Watch spoke with her on human rights, globalisation and the effects of corruption.

Transparency Watch (TW): 2008 was the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights do you view corruption as a threat to this vision?

Mary Robinson (MR): Very much so. I was very keen to ensure that we made good links during the anniversary year with the many chapters of Transparency International that are tackling corruption and people on the ground who are addressing violations of human rights as there is a real overlap.

When we launched the Elders campaign [Every Human Has Rights](#) Cobus de Swardt [managing director of Transparency International] came to Cape Town for it. Huguette Labelle [chair of Transparency International] and myself are members of the board of the UN [Global Compact](#) and so we also worked in that framework to encourage more linking between human rights and corruption advocates because corruption leads to huge violations of human rights.

TW: [The Elders](#) has a mission to “support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict, and inspire hope where there is despair”, do you have any plans to tackle the hurdle represented by corruption?

MR: I think we would see it as being implicit in our approach of being humble. That is how Nelson Mandela wonderfully instructed us at our first meeting. He said to be humble and reach out and listen to those on the margins who feel invisible, isolated and voiceless in society and who are victims of corruption. These are the people who need to have a voice and be understood. These very people who suffer from corruption, whether it is corruption in the health service, corruption in the police, or corruption in governments of rich countries with large poor populations because the resources are being siphoned away. So I feel we have very strong encouragement to speak out against corruption and The Elders intend to be good strong moral voices on all of these issues.

TW: [Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative](#) strives to ensure that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable are addressed on the global stage. Do you think the international community is responding adequately?

MR: We are path finding to a certain extent on how to link human rights principles and approaches more directly to a range of global challenges. For example, I am very encouraged by what we are doing in the area of health and I was glad to do a foreword for a Transparency International [report](#) on health and corruption a couple of years ago. In developing countries it is realised more and more that in practical terms the right to health means a right to a functioning basic health system, but because of structural adjustment funds, corruption and lots of other reasons many countries do not have a functioning health system. Health is currently the privilege of the elite and in rural areas and slums access to basic care basically doesn't exist, except some NGOs that try to fill the gaps. We are pressing upon ministers of health and presidents of countries that they have the responsibility to progressively realise the right to health – a right most have committed to realising through international treaties, which means to have a functioning health system. However, we are not here to finger point, we are here to work with them. We have a ministerial leadership initiative working with four African countries and Nepal on financing for health equity, aid effectiveness and reproductive health.

With the support of various foundations I co-chair a health worker migration advisory council, which has ministers, experts and community leaders on it. Our focus is on African countries as the drain of doctors and nurses prevents their health systems from functioning. Another project we are involved in is studying three African countries and is proving that you don't need fully qualified doctors and nurses to improve the health of individuals at local level, rather mid-level providers with proper training can effectively address a range of health issues such as maternal mortality which is a big problem in many countries. A lot of the language and approaches we are using may at first glance seem closer to

mainstream development work, but what we bring is the added strong human rights grounding in accountability of governments, as well as focus on non-discrimination, participation in decision making and other principles, which form the foundation of the human rights framework. We're making it clear that governments have responsibility, but we are not here to finger point and be rhetorical, we are here to work with them.

TW: You are known for advocating for countries to step up their commitments to poorer countries in order to meet the UN Millennium Development [Goals](#). What effect do you think the global financial crisis will have on these?

MR: I am very worried even when I look at Ireland. They have had a good approach to aid and the aid budget is being cut in the context of very severe budgetary problems. I think it is going to be the same in other countries, just at the time when the stresses of the food crisis are hitting and the effects of the fuel crisis are still being felt. We tend to forget in richer parts of the world that population growth, which is unprecedented from 6.7 to an expected 9 billion in a very short space of time, is in the poorest countries. Apart from anything else they have to cope with that and when you have the undermining of values, which is corruption, then the wealth of a country is siphoned away. When officials wearing uniforms abuse their positions you shock young people, but then they become accustomed to believing that they have to work with the system in this way – it's not acceptable. And then you have countries that should know better, undermining the rule of law and human rights and having double standards. We really need to have a strong civil society that insists governments stick to their standards and are accountable, tackle corruption and live up to human rights, environment and development obligations even in the midst of this difficult economic crisis. I feel that for too long these areas have worked in silos. We must work together respecting the separate mandates, but working much more effectively in a coherent people-centred way, linking with social movements and helping them to have more tools to hold governments and others accountable.

TW: There is a school of thought that globalisation equals unscrupulous multi-national corporations for whom the bottom line is the only guiding principle. To what extent is this the case?

MR: I'm slow to characterise globalisation as being necessarily negative. A globalisation of ideas, a globalisation of connecting people is part of this movement I am talking about – that people can use the internet, track abuses by corporations, governments and others and hold them to account. At the moment when we talk about globalisation we talk about economic globalisation by and large and that is weighted in favour of the rich countries. Power imbalances continue and so the poorer countries have not benefited from the potential of a more interconnected world. But there are opportunities in the context of globalisation. On the 16 October 2008, [116.9 million](#) people stood up in a 24 hour period against poverty. That is a huge mobilisation and we can build on that strength, it's the strength of numbers.

TW: Do you think that the growing awareness of corporate social responsibility and the birth of such voluntary initiatives as the UN Global Compact are making corporations see what role they can play in driving positive change?

MR: I think the UN Global Compact provides a useful framework through its 10 principles based on existing international standards including in the areas of human rights and transparency. But as we prepare to mark the 10th anniversary of the Global Compact in 2010, we need to take stock and draw out lessons and move this important initiative forward in a way that will address some of its shortcomings. We have ways of strengthening it and the board of the Global Compact has decided to have committees to look at specific issues. I chair the [Human Rights](#) Working Group and Huguette Labelle [TI chair] chairs the [Anti-corruption](#) Working Group. A labour working group has also been formed. That provides the beginnings of bringing good practices into a voluntary arrangement, which is what the Global Compact is.

I am interested in how we can ensure that the Global Compact also draws on the progress made through the mandate of John Ruggie as UN special representative on business and human rights. And I hope that over the next three years that mandate will continue to provide leadership and further clarify the duty of states to protect their people from violations by what we call non-state actors, which includes business, and the [Human Rights Council](#) accepting that all corporations big and small have the responsibility to respect all human rights and to make clear what that should mean in practice. It is more than just 'do no harm'. You must find out what is the impact of your business. Are your activities contributing to or in direct violation of human rights? If you are bribing in poor countries and getting away with it, Europe in particular, you are not respecting human rights.

TW: One of the negative aspects of globalisation is an increase in human trafficking. What responsibility do you think transit countries have?

MR: Human trafficking is one of the most grievous and horrible abuses of human rights. I didn't realise until I became UN High Commissioner for Human Rights just how pervasive it is. I still have an inch below my consciousness those I talked to in Cambodia and parts of Africa who had been trafficked. One girl I spoke to in Phnom Penh was pushed into a brothel and many months later rescued. I met her about nine months later and could still see the guilt in her eyes. I spoke to that guilt and said: 'do not for

one moment blame yourself. You are a wonderful young lady, a wonderful woman I deeply respect.'
That is what trafficking does.

The responsibility to address this terrible abuse is that of the sending, receiving and transit countries. Many of the countries which bear part of the responsibility are countries that don't get named or blamed enough and need to be brought to book. When there is an economic downturn, trafficking in women and girls goes up so I am very fearful that we will see an increase in trafficking. I want Transparency International, the human rights community and all of those who want a fairer world to really focus much more on this issue.

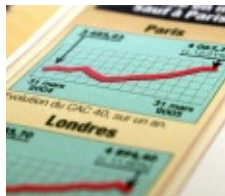
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ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

TI launches tools to help business tackle corruption

By Michael Sidwell



The current economic crisis is a sobering reminder of what can happen when companies ignore or fail to manage risks to their business. To enable companies to be aware of and manage the risks posed by corruption, Transparency International launched RESIST and the second edition of its successful *Business Principles for Countering Bribery*.

RESIST (*Resisting Extortions and Solicitations in International Transactions*) was jointly developed by Transparency International (TI), the World Economic Forum Partnering Against Corruption Initiative (PACI), the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and the UN Global Compact (GC). Primarily a training tool to help employees respond to solicitation and extortion demands in the most efficient and ethical manner, acknowledging they might be accompanied by a threat, RESIST also aims to help companies reduce the probability of such demands being made. Over 20 companies and organisations contributed to designing RESIST, based on 21 real-life scenarios of solicitation and extortion demands.

TI has also published the 2009 edition of its *Business Principles for Countering Bribery*. An effective and practical tool for companies dealing with the challenge and risks posed by bribery, the tool reflects recent developments in anti-bribery practice worldwide and incorporates approaches by business, academia and civil society.

The 2009 edition places greater emphasis on public reporting of anti-bribery systems and in recommending that enterprises commission external verification or assurance of their anti-bribery programme.

Originally published in 2003, the Business Principles have been adopted by many leading companies around the world to benchmark their own anti-bribery policies, as well as being used by such global frameworks as the UN Global Compact and the WEF's Partnering against Corruption Initiative.

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ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Bangladesh: dangerous driving

By Michael Sidwell



According to a recent survey by TI [Bangladesh](#), sixty one per cent of Bangladeshi drivers received their driving licences from the authorities without undergoing the necessary test.

The report "*Role of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and other stakeholders in Bangladesh's road transport system: problems and ways out*" highlights corruption and indiscipline in road transport management and among motor vehicle owners, trade unions and the traffic and highway police.

According to the experiences of those polled during the two-year survey: a person can bribe officials Tk 100 (€1.14, US \$1.50) to Tk 7,000 (€80, US \$106) to receive a driving licence, and Tk 100-500 to pass a driving exam; the registration of a car or motorcycle may be obtained with a bribe of Tk 1,000-50,000 or Tk 100-10,000 to receive a certificate of roadworthiness without having the vehicle tested.

As a result of the study and based on the recommendations of the chapter, the country's Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain said at a roundtable event that a committee would be formed to discover misappropriation and corruption in the road transport system. Hossain also suggested an online system of paying fees, tax and other bills to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

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ANTI-CORRUPTION WORK AROUND THE WORLD

TI calls for an effective UN Convention against Corruption review mechanism

By Michael Sidwell



Ahead of the third [Conference of State Parties](#) to the UN Conference against Corruption taking place in Doha, Qatar, this November, TI calls for an effective review mechanism.

Failure to establish such a mechanism this year would be a major setback, undermining the value of the UNCAC and its ability to develop momentum in curbing corruption around the world.

The UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is a comprehensive global treaty providing a framework for collective action against corruption. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003 and signed by 140 states, it includes provisions calling for government transparency and accountability, for regulation of the private sector and for improved civil society participation. As of April 2009, 133 countries were parties to the Convention.

To support efforts, the UNCAC Coalition has launched a new [website](#). The new site features a main forum and an international section, where forum users can exchange views on all topics. Users can also subscribe to the forum and receive all postings directly in their mailbox. Guest columnists will contribute to the site's new blog and registered Coalition members can upload UNCAC related documents produced by their organisations. Other resources will also be available, such as the Coalition statement, Transparency International [recommendations](#), press releases and all documentation produced around the Conferences of States Parties.

The UNCAC Coalition is a network of more than 50 civil society organisations (CSOs) established in August 2006, committed to promoting the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UNCAC. It aims to mobilise broad civil society support for UNCAC and to facilitate strong civil society action at national, regional and international level in support of UNCAC.

>> To read the recommendations and learn more about TI's work on international convention, please click [here](#).

>> Visit www.uncaccoalition.org to find out how you can show your support for an effective UNCAC review mechanism.

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CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

OECD publishes taxhaven blacklist

By Michael Sidwell



Following the publication of the OECD's blacklist of territories considered to be non-cooperative jurisdictions in April several countries have committed to comply with international tax rules.

As part of efforts agreed at the London Group of Twenty summit in April the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) published a blacklist which designated Costa Rica, Malaysia, the Philippines and Uruguay as non-cooperative, reports the [Financial Times](#). Leaders at the summit said that "they would crack down on tax havens, including sanctions against non-cooperative jurisdictions, by using information from the OECD," writes [Reuters](#).

All four countries were moved to a "grey list" after agreeing to accept international tax reporting standards. In a [press release](#) the OECD said, "They have now officially informed the OECD that they commit to co-operate in the fight against tax abuse, that this year they will propose legislation to remove the impediments to the implementation of the standard and will incorporate the standard in their existing laws and treaties."

According to [Reuters](#), the "grey list" contains countries that have "agreed to improve transparency standards but have not yet signed the necessary international accords." The list also includes Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Singapore and Chile as well as the Cayman Islands, Liechtenstein and Monaco.

European Union Commissioner for Taxation and Custom Union Laszlo Kovacs said, "Commitments are the first step; we're more interested in the implementation. We need a level playing field and are looking forward to quick implementation of the standard" ([Wall Street Journal](#)).

According to research from [Oxfam](#), "Developing countries miss out on up to [US] \$124 billion every year in lost income from offshore assets held in tax havens."

To read Transparency International's recommendations to the G20 on financial offshore centres and what needs to be done to enshrine transparency and accountability in all economic rescue and reform measures, please click [here](#)

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CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

Corruption risk in \$750 billion US bailout

By Michael Sidwell



US federal investigators have opened 20 criminal probes into possible securities fraud, tax violations, insider trading and other crimes by recipients of the US \$750-billion financial bailout programme, reports the [LA Times](#).

"The cases represent only the first wave of investigations, and the total fraud could ultimately reach into the tens of billions of dollars," said Neil Barofsky, the special inspector general overseeing the Troubled Asset Relief Program, according to the [article](#).

Barofsky's office has released a 250-page [report](#) "detailing a long list of concerns about government efforts to prop up hundreds of banks, Wall Street firms and auto companies," writes [CNN](#).

In a series of recommendations, the report calls on the Treasury Department for greater transparency and greater fraud protections.

"Our recommendations are forward looking and there are no vulnerabilities that can't be addressed," Barofsky said. "The balance of what we're trying to do is to inform, bring transparency and make appropriate recommendations" ([CNN](#)).

According to Barofsky, the Treasury "should dispense with rating agency determinations" on mortgage-backed securities, which lay at the root of the financial crisis, and should instead screen each security to assess its value, reports the [FT](#).

In addition, Barofsky also urges federal officials to create safeguards that prevent conflicts of interest arising among banks and investors participating in the new Public- Private Investment Program to stop "collusion between participants, and vulnerabilities to money laundering" ([CNN](#)).

The report illustrates the complexity of the US bailout programme. "What started out in October as a [US] \$750-billion effort only to buy toxic securities has morphed into 12 separate programs that cover up to [US] \$3 trillion in direct spending, loans and loan guarantees -- an amount roughly equal to the annual federal budget," reports the [LA Times](#).

The inspector general's office is now conducting six audits, "including one on whether recent bonus payments to American International Group employees complied with government aid conditions and whether Treasury was aware of the full range of compensation plans at the company," notes [Reuters](#).

Join TI-USA's campaign [Show us the money!](#) to promote transparency and accountability in the US stimulus effort.

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CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS

Political asylum for Venezuelan opposition leader in Peru

By Michael Sidwell



Venezuelan opposition leader Manuel Rosales was granted political asylum in Peru after being charged with illegal enrichment in his country.

"The former mayor of Venezuela's second largest city had been in hiding since the charges were filed in March," reports [BBC](#).

"Venezuelan officials say Rosales illegally enriched himself as governor of Zulia state from 2002 to 2004," writes [CNN](#). According to [The Washington Post](#), "Prosecutors called for Rosales's arrest in March on charges of illicit enrichment, and lawmakers in the National Assembly have opened a probe to determine the source of [US]\$60,000 that Rosales made while governor of the oil-rich state of Zulia. Rosales was elected mayor of Maracaibo, the capital of Zulia, in November but stepped down last month in the wake of the government's investigation."

Rosales has rejected the graft charges and says "he is being politically persecuted by Venezuela's leftist President Hugo Chavez", according to [AFP](#).

[Bloomberg](#) reports that: "Opponents of the government have also been targeted by the legislature and by government appointees over the past year. Ahead of the November regional elections, the former mayor of Chacao, Lopez, was banned from running again for any public office by the government's comptroller general, an anti- corruption watchdog."

"Rosales ran afoul of Chavez after he was linked to the 2002 attempted coup against the leftist leader. Chavez accused Rosales in October of plotting to assassinate him, and threatened to have him jailed," claims [AFP](#).

Mario Isea, a lawmaker in the National Assembly and a member of Chavez's socialist party, said that "Rosales isn't being persecuted," reports [Bloomberg](#).

"This citizen is being investigated by Venezuelan justice for crimes outlined in the anti-corruption law," said Venezuela's justice minister Tareck El Aissami ([Washington Post](#)).

On 24 April [Interpol](#), an international intelligence agency, issued an arrest warrant for Rosales.

However, Rosales' Peruvian attorney, Javier Valle Riestra, told [AFP](#) that Interpol cannot arrest his client because it "is forbidden from intervening in cases of politics, race or religion."

In response to news that Rosales was granted political asylum in Peru, Venezuela's foreign ministry said that it was "recalling its ambassador in Lima and evaluating its diplomatic relations with Peru," according to [Associated Press](#).

Rosales was the main opposition candidate in the 2006 presidential election, which he lost to Chavez.

Photo - Alejandro Alarcon

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NEWS FROM THE ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT

This area provides highlights of the valuable work being done by Transparency International national chapters, members and Secretariat.

- [Africa and the Middle East](#)
- [The Americas](#)
- [Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [Europe and Central Asia](#)

Africa and the Middle East

Morocco: Publication on Municipal Governance

The TI chapter in Morocco launched a new publication looking at municipality governance and its implications for local development. The publication is the fourth edition of the Transparency News, looking at past work and focusing on one editorial issue. The publication is elaborated by the chapter's project, the [Observatoire de la Corruption](#) that, in short, monitors national news stories on corruption to identify key areas where the national integrity system fails and makes recommendations on how corruption in different sectors can be tackled. The number can be downloaded at:

www.transparencymaroc.ma

The Americas

Argentina: public advertising database

Poder Ciudadano, the TI chapter in Argentina, launched an online database with information on how the executive branch distributes the advertising public/official space. The objective is to examine the relationship between this branch and the media. The free-access database is being used extensively by journalists, academics and civil society. Poder Ciudadano has been monitoring the expenditures in advertising since 2003. The information (available for the period 2000-2008) can be accessed at: www.publicidadoficial.org.ar

Colombia: Survey reveals low awareness of Congress work among citizens

The TI chapter in Colombia, Transparencia por Colombia, released a survey on how citizens view the functions and structure of the Congress.

The initiative, done jointly by the chapter and the National Consultancy Center, focused on the view of the citizens on the role of the National Congress and covered almost 1000 citizens from five different cities. Only one in every four people knew that the government is divided into two chambers (Senate and Representative's chamber). Almost half of the population surveyed (45 per cent), were unaware of congress' functions. With regards to access to information, only three per cent of those surveyed had filed an inquiry with Congress, and 82 per cent expressed no interest in doing so.

Transparencia por Colombia is using this information to raise awareness among media, politicians and activists to start working on the issue, as the access to information on the Congress work is fundamental to fighting corruption. For more information please click [here](#).

Peru: Proética signs a cooperation agreement as part of the Anti-corruption Dawn Programme

Proética, the TI chapter in Peru, will establish an anti-corruption school through which civil society leaders (journalists, academicians, etc.) will be trained on corruption issues and how to promote transparency, responsibility and accountability in their respective areas.

Proética has signed a cooperation agreement with USAID/Peru as part of the civil society component of the Anti-corruption Dawn programme. USAID/Peru seeks to strengthen the skills of civil society to fight corruption in the country.

Asia and the Pacific

Australia: Passing of Chair Frank Costigan

The Chair of TI Australia Frank Costigan QC sadly passed away in April. He was appointed as director in 2003, bringing to the organisation his professional and personal integrity and his commitment to social justice. He was known for advocating for the rights of the poorest, recognising that they are most

vulnerable to the impact of corruption. Frank Costigan was respected across the legal profession and political parties in Australia. We sincerely express our condolences to his friends and family.

Bangladesh: New initiative *Paribartan* – Driving Change

TI Bangladesh will launch the project *Paribartan* – Driving Change, which aims to promote accountable and transparent governance in Bangladesh. The project expects to strengthen the country's institutions, reduce the costs of corruption and improve citizens' access to basic services through a strengthened and sustained social movement. The project will be supported by bilateral development organisations from Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK, who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Transparency International Bangladesh

Papua New Guinea: Projects for 2009

TI Papua New Guinea (TIPNG) announced the launch of an Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre and the Forest Governance Initiative at its Annual General Meeting held in March in Port Moresby. The Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre will provide advice and assistance to victims of corruption and help citizens pursue corruption-related complaints. "With the establishment of the centre, TIPNG will provide a facility to receive the concerns of the people and assist anti-corruption authorities with their important work," said Chair Mr Aitsi. Meanwhile, the Forest Governance Initiative is a regional project aiming to monitor forestry laws and regulations, and conduct research into their effectiveness and abuse.

Europe and Central Asia

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Report on analysis of privatisation of the Republic of Serbian Oil Industry

TI Bosnia and Herzegovina (TI BiH) published an analysis of the agreement on privatisation of the Oil sector of the Republika Srpska (NIRS) in April. The detailed analysis demonstrates that in case of the NIRS sale no positive privatisation effects exist, while its negative balance will have to be covered by the citizens and the Budget of Republic of Serbia. After examining the available documentation, a conservative calculation suggests the outflow of funds and capital from RS and Bosnia and Herzegovina following the privatisation arrangement in the total amount of KM 985,595,521.19 (€400 million). The full report can be downloaded (in local language) from the chapter's website at www.ti-bih.org.

Hungary: Campaign on party- and campaign financing in Hungary

In a joint initiative, TI Hungary and Freedom House Europe have initiated the campaign "Kepmutatas" to promote more transparency and accountability to party- and campaign financing in Hungary. The campaign platform at www.kepmutatas.hu provides valuable background information and presents key recommendations, from introducing a designated bank account from which all campaign spending be conducted; to strengthening the oversight of campaigns.

Switzerland: Highlighting whistleblowing

To coincide with a draft law on whistleblowers, TI Switzerland held a press conference in March to highlight the lack of protection for whistleblowers in the country. The chapter called for the law to be more comprehensive, as according to current law, whistleblowers are not protected from being fired. Other issues raised by the chapter included what business could do to support internal reporting mechanisms, legal aspects of the current draft law, national approaches to support whistleblowing, and recommendations on the draft law.

For more information please click [here](#).

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CORRUPTION IN QUOTES

"The [World] bank's traditional control systems weren't designed to address fraud and corruption. They were designed for efficiency and equity -- the cheapest possible price"

Ian Hume, from the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, in an interview with the Wall Street Journal

[Wall Street Journal](#), USA, 17 April

"Depriving people of news and information about events that affect them only breeds fear and suspicions"

Koichiro Matsuura, director general of UNESCO, said in a statement on press freedom in Fiji

[Bloomberg](#), Fiji, 20 April

"...many forms of favouritism, nepotism, misappropriation of public money and abuse of public position continue to impact many sectors of the Palestinian society"

The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity report on corruption in Palestinian society

[Reuters](#), Ramallah, 22 April

"Eventually, it will be the commitment, dedication and engagement of people like you, individually and working together as civil society organizations, that will make the difference"

Marie Yovanovitch, US Ambassador to Armenia, in an address to NGOs

[Armenianow.com](#), Armenia, 24 April

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Transparency Watch is a monthly electronic publication of Transparency International. It is produced by the Communications Department.

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