

## PRESS RELEASE

**Phnom Penh, 29 January 2019** – Transparency International Secretariat in Berlin, Germany, released the results of the 2018 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) today. The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and private sector professionals, uses a scale of 0 (zero) to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. Globally, the results are troubling: more than two thirds of countries score below 50, while the average score is just 43. Perhaps the most disturbing is that the vast majority of countries assessed have made little to no progress. Only 20 countries or territories have made significant progress in recent years.

The results reveal the links between corruption and the health of democracy across the globe. Full democracies score an average of 75 on the CPI; flawed democracies score an average of 49; hybrid regimes – which show elements of autocratic tendencies – score 35; autocratic regimes perform worst, with an average score of just 30 on the CPI. Detailed sources of data are available below.

This year's index shows that Cambodia receives a score of 20 out of a total 100, which is a one point drop from last year. The country is ranked 161 in the global ranking among 180 countries and territories. This result indicates that although Cambodia has made some progress in certain areas of its reform agenda including education, corporate registries, revenue collection and basic public service deliveries, this progress has not changed the perception of experts and business community especially when grand and political corruption are observed to remain at the same scale or even increase in some aspects. Key structural and systematic reforms – in particular with regard to rule of law – have made little to no progress. While the score of the World Economic Forum Report 2018, which measures economic competitiveness, slightly improved, scores on other indicators remain the same. However, the score on democratic governance dropped significantly from 19 out of 100 in 2017 to only 12 out of 100 in 2018 (The Varieties of Democracy Project, 2018).

Recent years also marked an unfavourable political environment where media, civil society and democratic institutions were less able to act as checks and balances against corruption, while political accountability mechanism has been compromised following the dissolution of the main opposition party.

*“Cambodia has made some positive steps to address sectoral corruption which yield some encouraging results for instance decreasing petty corruption and increasing revenue collection from taxes and custom services thanks to reform efforts in improving quality of basic public service deliveries including education, and public financial management reforms. However, if grand and political corruption are not addressed properly, corruption will continue to create social injustice and development risks for Cambodia”,* said **Vong Socheata**, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of TI Cambodia.

From a regional perspective, Cambodia continues to receive the third lowest score in the Asia Pacific and the lowest score in the ASEAN region. The ASEAN countries receive mixed results. Singapore remains at the top after gaining one more point and moving from sixth to third cleanest country of the world. The Philippines is the only country of the region to gain two additional points from last year. Indonesia also incurs a one point gain. However, Malaysia and Lao PDR's scores remain the same, while Thailand and Myanmar's scores each drop one point. Vietnam is the only country in the region that witnesses a two point drop.

"Cambodia needs to speed up its fundamental and structural reforms", said **Preap Kol**, Executive Director of TI Cambodia. "CPI 2018 makes a clear link between having a healthy democracy which encompass strong accountability systems and successful fight against public sector corruption". He added "Corruption is much more likely to flourish where democratic foundations and integrity systems are weak".

TI Cambodia once again calls upon the Cambodian authorities to step up its reform agendas as a matter of priority. Amending the anti-corruption law, especially with regard to asset declaration, and the timely adoption of regulations that promote citizens' access to public information and protect whistleblowers are necessary steps to fighting against corruption. Strengthening the institutions responsible for promotion of rule of law and addressing the implementation gap between anti-corruption legislation, practice and enforcement are very necessary. Supporting civil society organisations and free/independent media is equally crucial. More importantly Cambodia urgently needs to establish reliable accountability mechanisms, as well as creating checks and balances at both national and sub-national levels. TI Cambodia is committed and stands ready to engage with all relevant stakeholders to help implement key reform agenda in order to promote greater transparency, accountability and rule of law.

### **About the Corruption Perceptions Index**

First established in 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is a composite index that ranks countries and territories from around the globe based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be, from a scale of 0 (very corrupt) to 100 (very clean). It aggregates data from a number of different reputable sources that provide perceptions of business people and in-country experts of the level of corruption in the public sector.

The 2018 CPI ranks 180 countries and territories, drawing on up to 13 surveys covering expert assessments and views of business people. In the case of Cambodia, eight sources were used – namely:

The Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index 2017-2018,  
The Economist Intelligence Unit Country Ratings 2018,  
The Global Insight Country Risk Ratings 2017,  
The Political and Economic Consultation Asia Risk Guide 2018,  
The World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment 2017,  
The World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey (EOS) 2018,  
The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2017-2018, and  
The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project 2018.

For a full list of result and relevant data sources, visit: [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

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*Transparency International is the civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption.*

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