



ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION

an agenda for anti-corruption action in the UK

November 2009

Transparency International UK invites each political party to embrace the following agenda for action in their election manifestos for the 2010 general election.

Why?

The United Kingdom's reputation for integrity in public life and honesty in business has been seriously damaged in recent years. It is in the national interest that we repair our reputation as quickly as possible.

Through individual and collective action against corruption, we can:

- Restore trust in Parliament.
- Strengthen ethical standards in public life.
- Create a society in which individuals and companies acting corruptly do not gain an unfair advantage at the expense of others.
- Ensure that public procurement in central and local government is free of corruption and that taxpayers' money is spent more effectively.
- Support British exports by encouraging a level playing field in international business, thus reducing the risks and waste associated with bribery.
- Enhance the effectiveness of UK aid in promoting sustainable development among the poorest nations, and in meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals.

AN AGENDA FOR ACTION

Ethical Standards in Public Life

- Formally commit that the Party's MPs, other elected representatives and Peers will at all times adhere faithfully to the Seven Principles of Public Life known as the 'Nolan Principles': Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership; and expel from the Party those found to have breached the Principles.
- MPs providing false or misleading information on expense claims should be answerable at law for offences of fraud and false accounting under the criminal law of the UK applying to all citizens.
- Support an open review of the system for monitoring and auditing expense claims in the House of Lords.
- Review present Guidelines and Rules for business appointments taken by Ministers and Crown Servants after leaving government service, to ensure they are not tainted by suspicion of impropriety.

Anti-Corruption Strategy

- Formally commit the Party to a 'zero tolerance' policy on corruption.
- Ensure the government has a coherent, cross-departmental strategy for combating international and domestic corruption. The strategy should set specific targets against which progress should be reported on a bi-annual basis to Parliament. The Anti-Corruption Champion, who should be a member of Cabinet, should remain responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

Resources for Law Enforcement

- Increase resources to boost law enforcement capacity to combat bribery, corruption and money laundering. Prioritise increased resources for the Serious Fraud Office, the Overseas Anti-Corruption Unit of the City of London Police and the Proceeds of Crime Unit of the Metropolitan Police.
- Ensure that penalties are sufficient to act as a real deterrent for both individuals and companies guilty of corruption offences.

Private Sector

- Work with UK companies to promote collective action to raise anti-corruption standards, particularly in industries that are vulnerable to corruption such as construction and engineering, defence and extractive industries.
- Increase awareness among UK companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, of the importance of adopting, and reporting on, strong anti-bribery programmes.

International Commitments

- Enforce effectively the Bribery Act, ensuring that the UK is fully compliant with the 1997 OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.¹
- Implement all commitments in the 2003 UN Convention Against Corruption, which provides a strong framework for cooperation between Member States to prevent and detect corruption and to return the proceeds of corruption to the country from which it came.
- Work with G-8 and G-20 partner countries to keep anti-corruption on the global agenda and report annually on the UK's implementation of G-8 and G-20 anti-corruption commitments.

Aid and Revenue Transparency

- Based on the principle of mutual accountability, ensure that UK bilateral aid budgets are presented in a transparent way so that the public in both the UK and in recipients' countries know the precise nature of commitments and disbursements.
- Establish, in co-operation with competent civil society organisations, effective systems for monitoring and tracking public expenditure, especially at a local and community level in recipient countries.
- Oblige recipient governments to record aid funds publicly and subject them to legislative and other oversight mechanisms. Work with recipient countries to increase the transparency of public income and expenditure management as well as aid transactions and related monitoring systems.
- Support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to make transparent the payments by companies and the corresponding revenues of governments in the participating natural resource-rich countries.

Export Credits

- Apply strong anti-bribery rules to all transactions supported by the Export Credit Guarantees Department (ECGD). Ensure that ECGD's anti-bribery rules are consistent with good practice in other Export Credit Agencies in OECD countries.

Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery

- Strengthen the UK's anti-money laundering regime in order to prevent the proceeds of corruption from finding a safe haven in the UK and its Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.
- Strengthen and improve procedures to help developing countries to recover looted assets and the proceeds of corruption.

¹ The Bribery Bill is expected to be introduced in the 5th session of Parliament and enacted with cross-party support prior to the 2010 General Election.

Work with us

Transparency International UK, the UK's leading anti-corruption NGO, calls on each political party to work with us to restore the UK's international reputation as a global leader in the fight against corruption. We ask each Party to commit to fight corruption in the public and private sectors globally and nationally and to raise ethical standards in public life and in business.

Corruption is a complex issue and constantly changes, posing new challenges such as corruption related to climate change and organised crime. Transparency International UK would like to work with all major political parties to combat existing challenges and anticipate new corruption threats.

Transparency International UK

Transparency International UK is the UK Chapter of the world's leading non-governmental anti-corruption organisation, Transparency International (TI). With a presence in more than 100 countries and an international secretariat in Berlin, TI has unparalleled global understanding and influence. Transparency International UK is engaged in the following activities:

- We raise awareness about corruption
- We advocate legal and regulatory reform at national and international levels
- We design practical tools for institutions, individuals and companies wishing to combat corruption
- We act as a leading centre of anti-corruption expertise in the UK.

For more information or to meet with Transparency International please contact

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