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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### *Youth face “integrity crisis”*

YOUNG people in Fiji and the Asia-Pacific region face an “integrity crisis” as this large population group enters the education system and the workplace, Transparency International (TI) Fiji warned in a statement issued in Suva today.

TI Fiji says that a survey conducted in four (4) countries of the region shows that many young people and adults alike see institutions in their countries as being affected by corruption, and many have experienced corruption themselves.

“The young people have high standards of integrity,” TI Fiji said, “and an overwhelming number of young people believe they have a role to play in fighting corruption.

“However, a worrying number of young people believe that in order to succeed in life, they have to compromise their values and conform to the current status quo.

“As these big youth populations enter the education system and workforce, we are facing an integrity crisis. The findings represent a warning that urgent action is needed to bring young people, governments, business, schools, parents and others together in order to ensure the next generation helps to transform society into one of integrity, transparency and accountability.”

TI Fiji said that the findings from the survey form the basis of recommendations, laid out in the report, for advocacy activities to mobilise young people’s involvement in the fight against corruption and integrity in the four countries surveyed in the Asia Pacific region.

The TI Fiji statement follows the launch in Delhi yesterday of the survey report titled Asia Pacific Youth: Integrity in Crisis, which is based on surveys conducted in 2012 in Fiji, Indonesia, South Korea and Sri Lanka – for the four (4) sub-regions – Pacific, South East Asia, East Asia and South Asia.

A report on the Fiji component of the survey was launched in Suva last year, as was done in the other three (3) countries.

Please see here a web feature with two videos, infographics, two new true stories, and the regional report which was launched in Delhi:

[http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/integrity\\_in\\_asia\\_pacific\\_what\\_do\\_young\\_people\\_think](http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/integrity_in_asia_pacific_what_do_young_people_think)

One thousand (1,000) young people aged 15 to 30 were interviewed in each country, alongside a control group of 1,000 adults, aged more than 30 years, by young interviewers trained by the TI national chapter.

The four countries have different levels of development and each has a distinct culture, but they all share at least one dynamic: a large and growing percentage of the population consists of young people in the 15-29 age group.

In Fiji 28 per cent of the population is made up of young people in the 15-29 age group, 25 per cent in Indonesia, 19 per cent in South Korea, and 23 per cent in Sri Lanka.

Transparency International's working definition of Corruption is "the abuse of power for private gain", and for Integrity as "behaviours and actions consistent with a set of moral or ethical principles and standards, embraced by individuals as well as institutions, that create a barrier to corruption".

## **Main Findings**

Here are the main findings of the report:

- More than 30 per cent of young people have recently been confronted by corruption.
- More than two-thirds of young people believe that a person of integrity never lies and never breaks the law.
- Almost three-quarters of young people would engage in corruption for personal gain.
- A third of young people think cheating increases the likelihood of success.

- A substantial share of young people do not associate gift-giving with corruption.
- More than 50 per cent of young people would report corruption.
- More than 80 per cent of young people believe that youth can take action against corruption.

## **Key Recommendations**

Here are the key recommendations of the report:

### **To Governments:**

- Develop, fund and invest technical resources in a national action plan to address the integrity crisis, owned, developed, and implemented by related ministries, anti-corruption agencies, the business sector, the media and civil society.
- Establish and provide resources to channels for young people to report corruption and ensure they are accessible.
- Assess existing integrity education in the formal and information education systems and implement a new integrity programme that addresses the gaps found, taking advantage of interactive technology and new social media.

- Ensure a specific anti-corruption curriculum is pursued, including education on the exercise of the right to information in the legislative context of the country.
- Develop national programmes that honour people with integrity in order to create role models.

**To education authorities, universities, schools, parent, student and teacher associations:**

- Include ethics education programmes and projects within the curriculum at all levels of educational establishments from primary school to university.
- Develop a syllabus for teaching integrity and anti-corruption that is interactive and participatory and that utilises new communication technologies. The design of new syllabi should be undertaken in full collaboration with youth representatives.
- Educate students on their rights to information and existing systems where they can report on corruption and unethical behavior.
- Make sure that teachers encourage students to shape the environment they live in through leadership initiatives, peer education and projects in school, as well as promotion of accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

- Enforce legal guidelines that eradicate gift-giving between students and teachers.

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(Media release authorised by TI Fiji Executive Director Apisalome Tudreu)

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