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TI 2009 Index Finds Corruption Persists Worldwide Despite Decade of Promises to Fight It

November 17, Washington, D.C. – Despite a decade of commitments to fight it, corruption continues to be endemic in much of the world, according to Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index (TI Index), released today. With 131 out of the 180 countries surveyed scoring below 5 out of 10, the need for governments to deliver on their anti-corruption commitments is more urgent than ever.

The TI Index is a call for action by the 142 nations that have committed to implement the anti-corruption reforms required by the UN Convention Against Corruption. It demonstrates the need for the G20 to put commitments into action, particularly stemming payments of bribes in transnational business and development, ending bank secrecy and strengthening transparency of financial markets and institutions.

The ranking of Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan at or near the bottom of the TI Index underscores the urgency of action in countries where the U.S. has vital strategic and national security interests. President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton have acknowledged the devastating impact of corruption on efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, political stability and economic growth. A consistent and coherent attack on corruption must be a central component of U.S. foreign policy and its development assistance. The U.S. should intensify its work with governments to enhance transparency, oversight institutions and rule of law. At the same time, commitments to close U.S. borders and its financial system to the corrupt and their illicit gains must be fully observed.

In this time of economic hardship, every effort must be made to ensure accountability for the massive financial flows committed to the recovery effort and that they reach those in need. In the U.S. as in all countries, rapid financial disbursements raise the risk of corruption. The Index makes clear that no country can afford to ignore this risk.

See http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009 for details.

Transparency International is the global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption. Transparency International USA is its Washington, D.C. based U.S. chapter.

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