



# The Lebanese Transparency Association

## Press Release

### **2009 Corruption Perceptions Index: Lebanon's rank faces significant decline**

**Beirut, November 17, 2009** -- For the 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year since 2003, the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) is announcing the results of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for Lebanon, simultaneously with other National Chapters of Transparency International (TI) throughout the world. The index ranks this year 180 states, among which 20 Arab countries.

This index measures the perceptions of corruption estimated by public officials and politicians of involved countries, and focuses on corruption in the public sector defined as an abuse of official power for private interests. It is a composite index, drawing on 13 different polls and surveys from 13 independent institutions carried out amongst business people, academics, analysts, and experts.

The CPI measures the perceived level of public sector corruption and not corruption itself; thus, it reflects on the image that respondents have of political and administrative corruption in the ranked countries. After combining the results from the different available sources every country is assigned a score out of 10. Then the countries are ranked, based on their score, from the least corrupt to the most corrupt.

Transparency International's Secretariat (TI-S) prepares the CPI centrally in Germany under the supervision of a team of international experts. TI's National Chapters, such as LTA, do not participate in the compilation of the findings of this index nor do they contribute to it in any way. Comparing ranks of states on annual basis does not reflect an accurate examination of corruption rates. Rather, the ranks could be modified since the index could be extended every year to



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include new states. Thus, it is better to compare the scores assigned to each country with respect to scores of recent years, as well as countries' regional and international standing.

On the 2009 CPI, the highest scores are attributed to New Zealand with a 9.4 /10 score, Denmark with a 9.3/10 score, followed by Singapore and Sweden tied at an average of 9.2/10. At the bottom of the index, Somalia received the score of 1.1/10. At the regional level, Qatar has successfully been the least corrupt among the ranked Arab states with a score of 7.0/10.

In comparison to the 2008 CPI results, Lebanon has faced a significant decline with a 2.5/10 score. Lebanon's score was 3.0 in 2007 and 2008 CPI. It was 2.7 in 2004 and was followed by a slight improvement in 2005 whereby the score increased to 3.1, and finally 3.6 in 2006. Since the date of its inclusion on the CPI, Lebanon's current score is the lowest and is similar to the score of Honduras, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and Uganda.

In fact, Lebanon's score decline (an average of 1.1 in three years) reflects the deterioration stage Lebanon had entered ever since the long standing political crisis which dates back to 2005. In addition, the absence of legal mechanisms expected to promote transparency in different sectors, is believed to contribute to this situation as well.

The index not only includes Lebanon's score, but also attributes its corresponding regional and international standing. In this context, Lebanon is ranked 130<sup>th</sup> internationally out of 180 states and ranked 14<sup>th</sup> regionally out of 20 Arab states included in the CPI. Last year, Lebanon was ranked 102<sup>nd</sup> internationally out of 180 states and 11<sup>th</sup> at the regional level.

The June 2009 parliamentary elections, had an important impact on various levels. Both major political blocs (March 8 and March 14) initiated their campaigns months before the elections day, in the 26 electoral districts, spending large amounts of money, especially on vote-buying. In this framework, in 2008, LTA initiated a project aiming at monitoring campaign finance,



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focusing on major ministerial activities before elections day. To this end, LTA observed numerous ministerial activities most of them were for electoral purposes and in many cases constitute obvious abuse of state resources.

The 2009 CPI results is below the international average score of 4.0/10, and is also below the Arab region's average score, 3.5/10. This score reflects institutional weaknesses in curbing corruption regardless of the tremendous efforts initiated by various stakeholders, including the public and private sectors, as well as civil society organizations.

Accordingly, it is crucial emphasizing the importance of curbing corruption on the national level, as well as effectively promoting the various initiatives supporting good governance, the rule of law, and the right of access to information.

To date, there is no effective implementation mechanism for the United Nation Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), despite the fact that Lebanon has ratified it in October 2008.

Finally, the results of the CPI not only highlight the importance of developing mechanisms and tools to ensure political stability and security, but also aim at re-initiating the relationship between the citizens and the state, to adopt an accountable system, to activate public institutions, to legislate the principles of separation of powers, and to effectively collaborate between various Lebanese factions in order to ensure public interest.