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Corruption widespread in 70 countries

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19 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Corruption widespread in 70 countries

The global anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI) has announced corruption is on the rise around the world in both rich and poor countries. A TI press release reports there are serious levels of corruption in a majority of countries. The organization's annual survey seeks to ascertain how corrupt governments are by questioning businesspeople, academics and public officials. Bangladesh and Chad finished bottom of the Corruption Perceptions Index. Iceland finished top as the nation with the world's cleanest publicly run affairs. Close behind are Finland, New Zealand, Denmark and Singapore. Countries where perceptions of corruption are declining include Hong Kong, Turkey and Nigeria, while nations that had deteriorating statistics include Russia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Ireland.

TI chairman Peter Eigen said: "Corruption is a major cause of poverty as well as a barrier to overcoming it. The two scourges [of corruption and poverty] feed off each other, locking populations in a cycle of misery. Corruption must be vigorously addressed if aid is to make a real difference in freeing people from poverty." David Nussbaum, TI's chief executive, stated: "Corruption isn't a natural disaster: it is the cold, calculated theft of opportunity from the men, women and children who are least able to protect themselves. Leaders must go beyond lip service and make good on their promises to provide the commitment and resources to improve governance, transparency and accountability." The world has set its sights on halving extreme poverty by 2015.

WARM-UPS

1. POVERTY: In pairs / groups, talk about what it must be like to live in extreme poverty. What do poor people do every day? How often are they happy? What do they think about their future? What can they do to escape poverty?

2. CORRUPT PEOPLE: What people do you normally associate with corruption? In pairs / groups, talk about how corrupt you think the following people might be. What kinds of corrupt practices could they engage in? What damage could they do? Who suffers from their corruption? Are these people corrupt in your country? How about in other countries?

- A country's leader
- Police officers
- Journalists
- Local government officials
- Doctors
- Customs officers
- Sports officials
- Election officials

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Corruption / watchdogs / transparency / rich countries / world countries / Bangladesh / Iceland / poverty / misery / theft / lip service / accountability

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. POVERTY STRICKEN: You have suddenly become poverty stricken. Walk around the class and talk to other "poverty stricken" students about your plight.

5. CORRUPTION: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "corruption". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. PETTY OR GRAND? In pairs / groups, decide whether the following are examples of petty or grand corruption. How would you punish the offenders?

- a. Giving a policemen money to escape a motoring fine.
- b. A construction company boss rewarding a politician to win a big contract.
- c. A cousin is hired for a job for which he is less qualified than other candidates.
- d. A country's leader misdirects aid into his own bank account.
- e. A company employee finds a way to secretly receive two salaries a month.
- f. A tobacco company illegally contributes money to a political party.
- g. A customs official allows a flu-infected chicken into the country for \$100.
- h. A company CEO fakes accounts, which causes the company's collapse.

7. CAUSES: What are the causes of poverty? Talk about the following with your partner(s). Put them in order of most probable reason for poverty.

Laziness Corruption Natural disasters War Geography Globalization History

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. A global anti-corruption watchdog issued a report on corruption. | T / F |
| b. Corruption is widespread in poor countries only. | T / F |
| c. Iceland has the world's cleanest publicly run affairs. | T / F |
| d. Nigeria experienced the biggest deterioration in transparency. | T / F |
| e. The report states corruption is a minor cause of poverty. | T / F |
| f. A top official said corruption was a natural disaster. | T / F |
| g. The official said leaders must go beyond eye service to keep promises. | T / F |
| h. The world has set its sights on halving extreme poverty by 2015. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| a. watchdog | openness |
| b. transparency | hollow words |
| c. ascertain | understanding |
| d. perceptions | defeating |
| e. deteriorating | defender |
| f. overcoming | actively |
| g. scourges | determine |
| h. vigorously | deliberate |
| i. calculated | worsening |
| j. lip service | curses |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. anti-corruption | how corrupt governments are |
| b. corruption is on | halving extreme poverty by 2015 |
| c. seeks to ascertain | cleanest publicly run affairs |
| d. the nation with the world's | be vigorously addressed |
| e. perceptions of corruption | watchdog |
| f. a major cause of poverty as | theft of opportunity |
| g. The two scourges | well as a barrier to overcoming it |
| h. Corruption must | are declining |
| i. the cold, calculated | of corruption and poverty |
| j. The world has set its sights on | the rise |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

ODD WORD OUT: Strike through the incorrect choice in each group of three *italicized* words.

Corruption widespread in 70 countries

The *global / worldwide / Earth* anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI) has announced corruption is on the *rise / increase / elevation* around the world in both rich and poor countries. A TI press release reports there are *unsmiling / significant / serious* levels of corruption in a majority of countries. The organization's *yearly / annuity / annual* survey seeks to *entertain / determine / ascertain* how corrupt governments are by questioning businesspeople, academics and public officials. Bangladesh and Chad finished bottom of the Corruption Perceptions Index. Iceland finished top as the nation with the world's cleanest publicly *run / composed / conducted* affairs. Close behind are Finland, New Zealand, Denmark and Singapore. Countries where *perceptions / images / prescriptions* of corruption are declining include Hong Kong, Turkey and Nigeria, while nations that had *deteriorating / worsening / decorating* statistics include Russia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Ireland.

TI chairman Peter Eigen said: "Corruption is a major cause of poverty as well as a *barrier / stumbling block / blockade* to overcoming it. The two *curses / gorges / scourges* [of corruption and poverty] feed off each other, locking populations in a *cycle / chain / lock* of misery. Corruption must be vigorously *addressed / mailed / dealt with* if aid is to make a real difference in freeing people from poverty." David Nussbaum, TI's chief executive, stated: "Corruption isn't a natural disaster: it is the cold, *calculated / calculator / intentional* theft of opportunity from the men, women and children who are least able to protect themselves. Leaders must go beyond *hollow words / lip service / tongue in cheek* and make good on their promises to provide the commitment and resources to improve governance, *openness / transparency / transplants* and accountability." The world has set its sights on *having / halving / cutting* extreme poverty by 2015.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Corruption widespread in 70 countries

The global anti-corruption _____ Transparency International (TI) has announced corruption is ____ ____ ____ around the world in both rich and poor countries. A TI press release reports there are serious levels of corruption in a majority of countries. The organization's annual survey seeks ____ _____ how corrupt governments are by questioning businesspeople, academics and public officials. Bangladesh and Chad finished bottom of the Corruption _____ Index. Iceland finished top as the nation with the world's cleanest publicly ____ _____. Close behind are Finland, New Zealand, Denmark and Singapore. Countries where perceptions of corruption are declining include Hong Kong, Turkey and Nigeria, while nations that had _____ statistics include Russia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Ireland.

TI chairman Peter Eigen said: "Corruption is a major cause of poverty as well as a barrier ____ _____ it. The two _____ [of corruption and poverty] feed off each other, locking populations in a cycle of misery. Corruption must be _____ addressed if aid is to make a real difference in freeing people from poverty." David Nussbaum, TI's chief executive, stated: "Corruption isn't a natural disaster: it is the cold, _____ theft of opportunity from the men, women and children who are least able to protect themselves. Leaders must go beyond ____ _____ and make good on their promises to provide the commitment and resources to improve _____, transparency and accountability." The world has set its sights on _____ extreme poverty by 2015.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'rich' and 'poor'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. ODD WORD OUT: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "CORRUPTION" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about corruption and poverty.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • watchdog | • scourges |
| • majority | • misery |
| • ascertain | • addressed |
| • run | • calculated |
| • declining | • lip |
| • deteriorating | • halving |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What do you think of corruption?
- c. Do you think you are corruptible or incorruptible?
- d. If you were in a position of great power, would you be tempted to illegally direct money into your bank account?
- e. What kinds of corruption exist in your country?
- f. What's the biggest corruption scandal you can remember?
- g. Do you think the world is becoming a more or a less corrupt place?
- h. How serious is corruption?
- i. What can be done to stamp out corruption?
- j. Do you think your country's leader has ever abused his/her power?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think causes corruption?
- d. Why do you think corruption is rising in countries like Canada and Ireland?
- e. How can the world stop corrupt leaders from pocketing money aimed at reducing poverty?
- f. How important is transparency in government?
- g. Do you think corruption that results in an increase in poverty should be made a crime against humanity?
- h. Do your country's leaders ever pay lip service to the people?
- i. Do you think the world can halve extreme poverty by 2015?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

CORRUPTION: Look at the types and examples of corruption below. In pairs / groups, decide how serious each type of corruption is and what the penalty should be.

TYPE	EXAMPLE	PENALTY
Bribery	Person A gives a customs officer \$100. The customs officer allows person A to take illegal drugs into the country	
Extortion	A construction company boss wants to win a construction contract. He uses threats and violence against a local politician to be given the contract.	
Nepotism	A head of department in a company wants to help his friend get a good job. He chooses his unqualified and inexperienced friend for an available job instead of highly experienced and qualified candidates.	
Embezzlement	The United Nations provides emergency aid money to country X. The leader of country X redirects a lot of the money to his personal bank account.	
Conflict of interest	A top politician who is also on the board of directors of an oil company uses his influence to win the oil company a major contract.	
Fraud	A drug company executive lies to a newspaper reporter about an impending outbreak of a virus. That information increases the price and sales of the drug.	
Illegal monetary contributions to political parties	A tobacco company executive gives an illegal \$100,000 to a political party that has suggested it might cut taxes on cigarettes.	

Change partners and talk about what you discussed with your previous partners.

Show each other your penalties and reach agreement on a single penalty for each type of corruption.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the global watchdog Transparency International. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. POVERTY: Make a poster outlining the places in the world where people suffer from extreme poverty. Think of some solutions to help the world's poor people escape from poverty. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think of similar solutions?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the leader of your country. Tell him/her your concerns about corruption in the government and in your country as a whole. Make suggestions on how to fight corruption. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about or suggest similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. F g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. watchdog	defender
b. transparency	openness
c. ascertain	determine
d. perceptions	understanding
e. deteriorating	worsening
f. overcoming	defeating
g. scourges	curse
h. vigorously	actively
i. calculated	deliberate
j. lip service	hollow words

PHRASE MATCH:

a. anti-corruption	watchdog
b. corruption is on the rise	the rise
c. seeks to ascertain	how corrupt governments are
d. Iceland has the world's cleanest publicly run affairs	cleanest publicly run affairs
e. perceptions of corruption are declining	are declining
f. a major cause of poverty as well as a barrier to overcoming it	well as a barrier to overcoming it
g. The two scourges of corruption and poverty	of corruption and poverty
h. Corruption must be vigorously addressed	be vigorously addressed
i. the cold, calculated theft of opportunity	theft of opportunity
j. The world has set its sights on halving extreme poverty by 2015	halving extreme poverty by 2015

ODD WORD OUT:

Corruption widespread in 70 countries

The *global* / *worldwide* / ~~Earth~~ anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International (TI) has announced corruption is on the *rise* / *increase* / ~~elevation~~ around the world in both rich and poor countries. A TI press release reports there are ~~unsmiling~~ / *significant* / *serious* levels of corruption in a majority of countries. The organization's *yearly* / ~~annuity~~ / *annual* survey seeks to ~~entertain~~ / *determine* / *ascertain* how corrupt governments are by questioning businesspeople, academics and public officials. Bangladesh and Chad finished bottom of the Corruption Perceptions Index. Iceland finished top as the nation with the world's cleanest publicly *run* / ~~composed~~ / *conducted* affairs. Close behind are Finland, New Zealand, Denmark and Singapore. Countries where *perceptions* / *images* / ~~prescriptions~~ of corruption are declining include Hong Kong, Turkey and Nigeria, while nations that had *deteriorating* / *worsening* / ~~decorating~~ statistics include Russia, Sri Lanka, Canada and Ireland.

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Corruption widespread in 70 countries – 19 October, 2005

The world has set its sights on ~~having~~ / halving / cutting extreme poverty by 2015.