

## **2008 Corruption Perceptions Index**

Berlin-based Transparency International released this year's CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) on Sept 23, 2008.

Transparency International Malaysia (TI-Malaysia) launched the CPI at the Wisma FMM in Kuala Lumpur. Welcome remarks were made by President of TI-Malaysia, Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam. TI-Malaysia secretary-general Datuk Paul Low gave a background briefing on CPI. There was a Q&A session after that.

Malaysia's CPI (Corruption Perceptions Index) 2008 score shows no improvement from 2007. The country scored 5.1, same as last year. In terms of country ranking, Malaysia declined from 43 (out of 179 countries) in 2007 to 47 (out of 180 countries) this year.

According to Transparency International's FAQs on CPI, the CPI 'ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, a poll of polls, drawing on corruption-related data from expert and business surveys carried out by a variety of independent and reputable institutions. The CPI reflects views from around the world, including those of experts who are living in the countries evaluated'.

The CPI for Malaysia shows that the country still needs to improve certain aspects for better transparency and accountability. Public confidence is still being challenged by recent cases of alleged impropriety by those in power. Apart from executing institutional and law reforms, TI-Malaysia believes that the way forward for a country to seriously combat corruption is:

- i. To make government decisions and transactions more visible and transparent; this require the revamping of the Official Secrets Act, which while in some cases may be required for national interest, but in others, it just provides a haven for corruption.
- ii. To make government procurement more open and implement an integrity pact or agreement with vendors as preventive measures to curb corruption, and finally,
- iii. To curb money politics so as to make a representative standing for election and political parties more restricted and more accountable in the use of money in election.

### **Malaysia Must Walk the Talk**

TI-Malaysia believes that while fighting corruption in the public sector requires strong political will, this will must be followed by a strong and persistent determination to strengthen oversight and accountability and making transactions and decisions more transparent. A culture of intolerance for corruption needs also be instilled into the culture of the civil service and political leaders must lead by example and walk the talk.