

Beat: Politics

EMPOWERING CITIZENS' FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

We are United against corruption

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USPA NEWS - Every year \$1 trillion is paid in bribes while an estimated \$2.6 trillion are stolen annually through corruption “ a sum equivalent to more than 5 per cent of the global GDP. In developing countries, according to the United Nations Development Programme, funds lost to corruption are estimated at 10 times the amount of official development assistance.

The International Anti-Corruption Day 9 December “ The world united against corruption“^[2], UNODC and UNDP have developed a joint global campaign, focusing on how corruption affects education, health, justice, democracy, prosperity and development.

Corruption is contagious! Many countries that suffer from corruption have a centralized anti-corruption body focused on combatting it. Other countries that do not suffer from corruption as much have decentralized bodies. It seems like there is a negative correlation between the two. There are a very few centralized bodies that have actually succeeded in fighting corruption but most have failed. The reasons being quite obvious. When there is a centralized body to fight corruption, other departments will be involved. It is very easy for politicians and bureaucrats to buy officials. In a decentralized hierarchy, it is not that easy.

When we look at centralized bodies, they are usually big. Bigger hierarchical structures mean more people involved. The crimes investigators are mostly investigating cases of their bosses. External pressures and internal stress prevent honest officers from doing their best. Many officers have faced job losses when trying to be honest. If we examine decentralized bodies that combat corruption, we can clearly see that smaller agencies have less people to report to. Smaller structures mean effective communication among officers. The aims of smaller agencies are much clearer in fighting corruption.

Corruption needs to be fought with integrity and honesty. Accountability must be made a habit in the agency and throughout the structure. Reforming society as a whole is the most effective step towards fighting corruption. Everyone should be accountable from clerks to the top leadership.

The strength of the people can shake any structure no matter how strong. Societies that do not tolerate corruption at any level are the ones that thrive. Political leadership is dependent on the people of the country. A society that does not tolerate any corruption “ whether from leaders or themselves “ will inevitably succeed.

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