

**Message from
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Corruption is a serious problem with detrimental effect on Thai society. Alarmingly, corruption has seeped and crept its way into all regions and all segments of Thai society. Corruption multiplies and exacerbates political, social and economic problems of the nation in the worst way.

Corruption invariably has a negative impact on the lives of everyone in society, irrespective of who they are, rich or poor, good or bad, honest or dishonest. Corruption implies injustice because in the corruption process, someone is unavoidably being taken advantage of. Good management in the public or private sector is inevitably distorted when corruption takes place. The nation as a whole loses on revenue collection. The taxpayers have to bear the cost of corruption in one way or another, either directly or indirectly. Worse yet, corruption brings forth a pervasive sense of uncertainty among members of a society where goodwill and mutual trust no longer exist. When regard and respect for law and regulations dwindle among the citizenry, divisiveness and conflicts in a society would inevitably ensue. As such, society is weakened. A troubled society will have little potentials for development. Its people will find happiness and quality of life wanting.

Even though corruption has plagued Thai society for many decades, we have yet to find a way to curb or control it. Perhaps we have not tackled it in a systematic fashion and in a holistic manner. Efforts to deal with corruption in the past may have been segmented, uncoordinated and preoccupied with fighting but not preventing corruption. Much needs to be done in terms of preventing corruption especially in terms of its root causes from Thai culture and the value structure.

Corruption is deeply intertwined with values that relate to ethical and moral standards upon which social actions are predicated. We witness today changes in social values due to fierce economic competitions in society and the concomitant increase in consumerism which depicts money as supreme. Like an invincible god, money has been recognized as the basis of power, prestige and fame, resulting in seeing riches as an end in itself. We have come to lose the ability to judge right from wrong, good from bad, and desirable behaviors from undesirable behaviors. If and when a society decides that corruption is "a way of life" and an inalienable component of its culture, that society is, without a shadow of doubt, doomed because degeneration and decay will surely set in.

To solve the problem of corruption in society, a multi-pronged effort needs to be initiated. Values and ethics not amenable to corruption must be dealt with. It is crucial to have social and other mechanisms that will render corruption a very difficult and risky business. Also, strong social sanctions against corruption are absolutely vital.

Transparency Thailand is committed to foster a new conscience among Thai people that will not tolerate or accept corrupt practices but will fight corruption with determination, patience, devotion and with the collaboration from different segments of Thai society.

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