

## Corruption Perceptions Index 2009

### Regional Highlights: Asia-Pacific

Countries/Territories included: 32

The global financial crisis and political transformation in many Asian countries during 2008 exposed fundamental weaknesses in both the financial and political systems and demonstrated the failures in policy, regulations, oversight, and enforcement mechanisms. These two factors contribute to a decrease in the scores of 13 countries from the 32 countries/territories in the region, along with a reduction in the number of countries that scored above 5 in the 2009 *Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI).

**Bangladesh, Japan, Tonga** and **Vanuatu** scored significantly higher this year, reflecting an improvement in perceived levels of corruption. **Malaysia, Nepal, the Maldives** and **Afghanistan**, on the other hand, saw their scores decline, representing worsening levels of perceived corruption.

**Bangladesh's** score of 2.4 continues to reflect perceptions of rampant corruption, but represents an improvement over its score of 2.1 in the 2008 CPI. This is the result of the caretaker government's nationwide crackdown on corruption during 2007-08 and the introduction of institutional and legal reforms aimed at strengthening the government's capacity to tackle corruption. Whether the improvement is to be sustainable will depend on the new government's ability to strengthen key institutions dealing with anti-corruption, public information and human rights, as well as the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and public services.

Following the 2006 riots, **Tonga** has undergone reforms that seek to grant greater political power to popularly elected officials and its anti-corruption drive has earned the support of local civil society organisations. Tonga's CPI score has risen to 3.0 in 2009 from 1.7 in 2007.

The political stability and high fiscal freedom of **Vanuatu** helped to improve perceptions of corruption in the country, which has a significant increase this year to 3.2 from 2.9 in 2008.

Since 2008, the **Hong Kong** government and the Independent Commission against Corruption have intensified efforts to fight corruption in the financial sector. New regulations were enacted and new tools developed.

**Indonesia** still has a long way to go to eradicate corruption but the recent tough approach by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has contributed to a rise in its CPI score from 2.6 in 2008 to 2.8 this year. The KPK has reported a 100 per cent conviction rate for corruption cases involving some of the country's highest-ranking officials. A crucial task for the new administration is to continue support of the KPK. Local anti-corruption advocates must ensure that this agency is not weakened.

The decline in the CPI score for **Malaysia** (from 5.1 in 2008 to 4.5 in 2009) may be attributed to the perception that there has been little progress combating corruption and a lack of political will to implement effective anti-corruption measures. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) appears to focus on "small fish" and opposition politicians.

The **Maldives** is undergoing a radical political transition in response to national and international criticism and has introduced a series of political reforms. However, their passage has not been smooth and human rights abuses and corruption cases have been exposed.

Despite the fact that **Nepal** replaced its centuries-old monarchy with a federal republic, drafted a constitution and held elections in 2008 – all relatively peacefully – political instability, lawlessness, nepotism and lack of accountability prevail in the society and corruption is perceived to be a major concern. An anti-corruption agenda has not become a political and social priority.

Public-sector corruption in **Afghanistan**, which is at the bottom of the index (1.3), is rampant according to reports and surveys. Examples of corruption range from public posts for sale and justice

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for a price to daily bribing for basic services. This, along with the exploding opium trade – which is also linked to corruption – also contributes to the downward trend in the country's CPI score.

In **Taiwan**, corruption scandals involving former President Chen Shui-pian and his family members gripped the public and have resulted in convictions. This has not yet been reflected in its 2009 CPI score, which remained steady.

**China** has launched a sustained anti-corruption drive and intensified a crackdown on corruption in the public sector, investigating and prosecuting ministers, public officials and employees. Corrupt officials above provincial levels were disciplined and preventive measures to deal with stimulus packages to tackle the financial crisis have helped keep China's score stable in 2009, though still low at 3.6.

Rank	Regional Rank	Country / Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Confidence Interval		Surveys Used
				Lower bound	Upper bound	
1	1	New Zealand	9.4	9.1	9.5	6
3	2	Singapore	9.2	9.0	9.4	9
8	3	Australia	8.7	8.3	9.0	8
12	4	Hong Kong	8.2	7.9	8.5	8
17	5	Japan	7.7	7.4	8.0	8
37	6	Taiwan	5.6	5.4	5.9	9
39	7	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4.7	6.4	4
39	7	South Korea	5.5	5.3	5.7	9
43	9	Macao	5.3	3.3	6.9	3
49	10	Bhutan	5.0	4.3	5.6	4
56	11	Malaysia	4.5	4.0	5.1	9
56	11	Samoa	4.5	3.3	5.3	3
79	13	China	3.6	3.0	4.2	9
84	14	India	3.4	3.2	3.6	10
84	14	Thailand	3.4	3.0	3.8	9
95	16	Vanuatu	3.2	2.3	4.7	3
97	17	Sri Lanka	3.1	2.8	3.4	7
99	18	Tonga	3.0	2.6	3.3	3
111	19	Indonesia	2.8	2.4	3.2	9
111	19	Kiribati	2.8	2.3	3.3	3
111	19	Solomon Islands	2.8	2.3	3.3	3
120	22	Viet Nam	2.7	2.4	3.1	9
130	23	Maldives	2.5	1.8	3.2	4
139	24	Bangladesh	2.4	2.0	2.8	7
139	24	Pakistan	2.4	2.1	2.7	7
139	24	Philippines	2.4	2.1	2.7	9
143	27	Nepal	2.3	2.0	2.6	6
146	28	Timor-Leste	2.2	1.8	2.6	5
154	29	Papua New Guinea	2.1	1.7	2.5	5
158	30	Cambodia	2.0	1.8	2.2	8
158	30	Laos	2.0	1.6	2.6	4
178	32	Myanmar	1.4	0.9	1.8	3
179	33	Afghanistan	1.3	1.0	1.5	4