

PRESS RELEASE

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The Americas Regional Highlights Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2005

The CPI 2005 shows a relatively static position in the level of perceived corruption in the Americas and focuses attention on countries that urgently need to improve their scores. Access to information must be urgently improved across the region, and for many countries elections in 2006 are an opportunity to reaffirm the political will to tackle corruption by turning words into concrete actions.

Decliners 2004-2005

The substantial fall in **Costa Rica's** performance (CPI 2005 score 4.2; CPI 2004 score 4.9) can be attributed in part to several corruption scandals in recent years, involving former presidents, multinational companies and foreign governments. Despite some government efforts to counter these problems, such as creation of the Office of the Special Attorney for Ethics and Public Services, much more is needed to rid the country's political institutions of corruption.

Damaging corruption scandals

Brazil (CPI 2005 score 3.7; CPI 2004 score 3.9) has been hit by corruption and illegal financing scandals affecting the country's executive, legislature and political parties, deriving directly from vulnerabilities in Brazil's institutional framework, such as the excessive freedom of governments to appoint political appointees to occupy positions in the state's management. It is clear that a comprehensive approach involving an integrated anti-corruption strategy is required.

High scorers cannot afford to be complacent

Canada (CPI 2005 score 8.4; CPI 2004 score 8.5) has again achieved the highest score in the Americas region. However, some of Canada's leading financial institutions have been implicated in scandals in recent years, and there have also been scandals related to governments in Quebec and the City of Toronto which have dominated the headlines and raised concern. The relatively quick government responses to corruption allegations, including the establishment of commissions of inquiry in the above cases, have been particularly important in minimising the lasting effects of these incidents.

Please turn over

Consistently Low Scorers

Argentina (CPI 2005 score 2.8; CPI 2004 score 2.5) has scored poorly in recent CPIs, reflecting the perception of severe corruption. Despite reforms made to the selection process for the Supreme Court of Justice, and the Access to Public Information decree, there is still much room for improvement. In particular, the Committee designated to oversee execution of the budget has not done so for the past 10 years, allowing the Chief of Cabinet to reallocate budgetary funds at his discretion. During this election year, strict observance of the political financing law and clear criteria for allocating public funds into the media are needed.

Guatemala (CPI 2005 score 2.5; CPI 2004 score 2.2) has again received a very low score despite recent government initiatives, including the 2004 Commission for Transparency and against Corruption, which advises the executive on how to combat corruption, and the involvement of various state and civil society bodies in advocating and promoting better regulation. Further efforts are needed with respect to efficient public anti-corruption institutions, strengthening of the electronic public contracting system and improved access to information.

Corruption and elections

With presidential elections due in **Mexico** (CPI 2005 score 3.5; CPI 2004 score 3.6) in 2006, the commitment of candidates to increase transparency in income and expenses will be key in avoiding a repeat of 2000's electoral financing scandals. The government has been active through the promotion of federal, state and local laws on access to public information, creation of an autonomous entity to guarantee access to public information, and increased monitoring faculties for the Federal Electoral Institute. However, it is clear that much work remains in order to rid Mexico's public institutions of corruption.

Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2005

North & South America

Regional average: 3.86

Global average: 4.11

Country Rank	Regional rank	Country	2005 CPI Score	Confidence range	Surveys Used
14	1	Canada	8.4	7.9 - 8.8	11
17	2	USA	7.6	7.0 - 8.0	12
21	3	Chile	7.3	6.8 - 7.7	10
24	4	Barbados	6.9	5.7 - 7.3	3
32	5	Uruguay	5.9	5.6 - 6.4	6
51	6	Costa Rica	4.2	3.7 - 4.7	7
		El Salvador	4.2	3.5 - 4.8	6
55	8	Colombia	4.0	3.6 - 4.4	9
59	9	Cuba	3.8	2.3 - 4.7	4
		Trinidad and Tobago	3.8	3.3 - 4.5	6
62	11	Belize	3.7	3.4 - 4.1	3
		Brazil	3.7	3.5 - 3.9	10
64	13	Jamaica	3.6	3.4 - 3.8	6
65	14	Mexico	3.5	3.3 - 3.7	10
		Panama	3.5	3.1 - 4.1	7
		Peru	3.5	3.1 - 3.8	7
78	17	Suriname	3.2	2.2 - 3.6	3
85	18	Dominican Republic	3.0	2.5 - 3.6	6
97	19	Argentina	2.8	2.5 - 3.1	10
107	20	Honduras	2.6	2.2 - 3.0	7
		Nicaragua	2.6	2.4 - 2.8	7
117	22	Bolivia	2.5	2.3 - 2.9	6
		Ecuador	2.5	2.2 - 2.9	6
		Guatemala	2.5	2.1 - 2.8	7
		Guyana	2.5	2.0 - 2.7	3
130	26	Venezuela	2.3	2.2 - 2.4	10
144	27	Paraguay	2.1	1.9 - 2.3	7
155	28	Haiti	1.8	1.5 - 2.1	4