Extraordinary measures need to be undertaken to tackle the scale of grand corruption in the Maldives.

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As we mark International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2015, Transparency Maldives calls on the government to make strong commitments to fight corruption and to ensure political integrity in the Maldives.

Corruption is the biggest problem facing the Maldives today. The results of the 2015 Maldives Democracy Survey shows that 72% of the public believes that corruption has increased in the past year. Corruption continues to undermine development by promoting wastage, has eroded public confidence in key institutions and victimise vulnerable communities in Maldivian society.

With public confidence in the parliament, judiciary, executive and oversight bodies at an all time low, it is paramount that basic anti-corruption measures are obliged and enforced in order to restore public confidence in state institutions.

Transparency Maldives calls on the State to ensure the following.

1- As a measure to tackle illicit enrichment, enforce a credible asset declaration regime, with high-ranking officials in the executive, judiciary and legislature having to publicly declare their assets.

2- Create a safe environment for dissent to ensure that watchdogs, independent state institutions, opposition political parties, media and NGOs have the space to operate free from fear of persecution. In a healthy democracy these groups hold the state in check. In addition, citizens need to enjoy basic civil and political liberties to hold those that govern them accountable.

3- Corruption in the judiciary creates a cycle of crime, undermines access to justice and deprives victims of their rights to a fair trial. The judicial sector of the Maldives need to undertake extraordinary measures to restore public confidence by adhering to international best practice and enforcement of anti-corruption measures.

4- The parliament of the Maldives is perceived as the most corrupt institution in the country according to the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer Survey. Allegations of vote buying within the parliament and illicit enrichment of MPs is widespread. Furthermore, there is limited public consultation in the law making process with the parliament increasingly becoming a vehicle to fast-track questionable laws and removal of public officials without due process.

We call on the parliament to work in the interest of the public by holding state institutions accountable and ensure greater transparency and inclusivity in the law making process. We call on relevant state institutions including the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Auditor General’s Office and the Prosecutor General’s Office to address the widespread allegations of corruption in the parliament.

Extraordinary measures need to be undertaken to tackle the scale of grand corruption in the Maldives. The level of impunity enjoyed by the powerful and the corrupt in the Maldives, allows them to escape justice, undermines the rule of law and obstructs development. To win the fight against corruption, we need to create a culture of integrity and zero tolerance towards corruption.

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