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Corruption Perception Index 2019

Transparency International has just released the Corruption Perception Index for 2019. One of the notable changes revealed by Transparency international's data is that Kazakhstan improved its score by 3 points -from 31 to 34- and climbed to the 113rd position worldwide. This means that, even though the country needs to make more progress to join the group of least corrupt or most transparent polities worldwide, it is very much on the right track.

In contrast to Kazakhstan Italy was able to improve its score by just one point. After scoring 52 points in the 2018 CPI, Italy scored 53 points in the 2019 CPI.

The least corrupt countries in the world are Denmark, New Zealand, Finland, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland. Norway, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany are also among the 10 more transparent polities worldwide. In this type of ranking, the United Kingdom and Australia are in 12th position, Japan is 20th position, France and the USA are in 23rd position, while China is in the 80th position.

How did African countries perform in 2019? Several African countries have fairly low levels of corruption and three of them are even less corrupt than Italy. This is the case of Seychelles, Botswana and Cape Verde. Rwanda is, like Italy, in 51st position. Several other African countries are in the top half of the world: Namibia and Mauritius are in 56th position, Sao Tome and Principe is in 64th position, Senegal is 66th, South Africa is in 70th position, Ghana is in 80th position, while Burkina Faso and Lesotho are in 85th position. The other African countries are in the bottom half of the world and five

of them (Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau) are among the 10 most corrupt countries in the planet.

African countries' position in this ranking does not allow one to appreciate whether and to what extent the quality of governance has changed.

The level of corruption or, conversely, the level of transparency has not changed in a handful of countries (Seychelles, Botswana, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Ghana, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Cameroon, while it has changed elsewhere. In most cases, the change amounted to a minor improvement or to a slight deterioration in the level of transparency. In some cases, however, changes were far from trivial. Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone improved their CPI score by 3 points, Angola was the most improved country in Africa as its CPI score increased by 7 points. By contrast, CPI scored decline by 3 points for Mali and by 4 in Liberia and Eswatini.

Transparency international, in presenting the data, lamented that “a staggering number of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption”. This remark is obviously correct. What is, however, more problematic is that in many countries, including some of the most transparent ones (Canada), the level of corruption has increased—which is why one can only hope that policy makers around the world will remain committed to curbing corruption and promoting good governance.

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