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<b>Type of Speech:</b>	Official Launch Speech
<b>Delivered By:</b>	Chapter President, Mrs. Priscilla Chikonde Chansa
<b>Event:</b>	2024 Corruption Perceptions Index Launch
<b>Venue:</b>	Radisson Blu Hotel

### Salutations

- The Guest of Honour, the Permanent Secretary-Administration, Ministry of Justice
- The Acting Director General, Anti-Corruption Commission
- The Director General, Financial Intelligence Centre
- The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment
- Members of Parliament
- The Representative from the Swedish Embassy
- Representatives from Cooperating Partners and International Organizations
- Representatives from Local Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. It is my honour, on behalf of Transparency International Zambia , to stand before you today as we release the findings of the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Each year, the launch of the CPI gives us, as anti-corruption stakeholders, an opportunity to reflect on Zambia's efforts in the fight against corruption. This year's CPI report is themed around **corruption and the climate crisis**, and thereby provides us an important perspective on how national, regional and global anti-corruption efforts intertwine with climate action or lack thereof.

We take note that as the world grapples with the climate crisis, corruption poses a huge obstacle and is a silent threat to addressing and redressing the climate crisis. The inadequacy of transparency and accountability mechanisms increases corruption risks in climate finance, as climate funds for mitigation or adaption maybe misused or embezzled.

Further, climate corruption also takes the form of undue influence, revolving doors between the public and private sectors, and regulatory capture by the private sector. In most developed countries, undue influence in climate policy undermines climate global progress while the influence of lobbying presents challenges, which include watering down of regulations, stalling transition to renewables and fossil fuel phasing out, and comprising actions in attaining international climate commitments.

In general, the launch of the CPI is also an opportunity to reflect on global, regional and country efforts in fighting corruption in order to acknowledge the improvements made, and to identify areas that require urgent collective action. As shown in the earlier presentation, **the 2024 CPI reveals that globally, the fight against corruption remains stagnant.** Over half of the world's nations continue to score below 50/100, indicating a global challenge in combatting public sector corruption effectively. At the top of the 2024 CPI, Denmark remains the least corrupt country with a score of 90/100; while South Sudan, Somalia, and Venezuela sit at the bottom, as nations that are plagued by weak institutions, restricted freedoms, and deep-rooted corruption, perform poorly on the CPI.

The Sub-Saharan region continues to be the lowest performing region, with an average score of 33/100. Seychelles continues to lead the region on the CPI, with a score of 72/100, followed by Cape Verde at 62/100. In 2024, Botswana and Rwanda are both in third place, scoring 57/100, while Mauritius rounds up the top five on the continent with a score of 51/100. The bottom performers in the region are South Sudan (8/100), and Somalia (9/100). **We are pleased that Zambia's CPI score has improved by two points, rising from 37/100 in 2023 to 39/100 in 2024, accompanied by a six-place jump in global ranking from 98 to 92 out of the 180 countries on the CPI.**

This improvement, though modest, reflects progress in specific areas. One of the major drivers of Zambia's CPI improvement in 2024 is the reduction of bribery in business operations, facilitated by key government reforms. The digitization of the mining license application process, strengthened beneficial ownership requirements in procurement, and the adoption of service charters in public institutions have all contributed to a more

transparent business environment. These reforms demonstrate that reducing the human contact in providing government services and enhancing transparent business practices reduces the perception of public sector corruption.

However, we would like to caution that this is not a time for complacency as the rate of improvement has slowed, dropping from a **four-point increase** in 2023 to just **two points** in 2024. If immediate corrective action is not taken, we risk stagnating—or worse, regressing—in 2025. Therefore, despite the modest improvement in our CPI score, significant challenges remain, one of the most concerning of which is the growing perception of corruption within our legal system.

TI-Z and other stakeholders have continued to raise alarm over recent consent judgments entered into between the state and various individuals. In our view, while some consent judgments are justifiable, others lack sound legal justification and may serve as racketeering schemes. For instance, in cases where individuals acted in a private capacity, there is no moral or legal basis for the state to offer compensation. Such actions not only undermine the integrity of our legal system but also erode public trust in our institutions.

Corruption within climate finance poses a growing threat to Zambia's ability to effectively respond to the climate crisis. The lack of transparency in climate-related funds increases the risk of misallocation, regulatory capture, and undue influence from private interests. If Zambia is to truly embrace a green and sustainable future, integrity must be at the center of our climate policies and initiatives.

There is need for full operationalization of the Access to Information Act. Without clear guidelines and enforcement mechanisms, the media and civil society remain constrained in their ability to hold power to account. Transparency and accountability are the backbone of any successful anti-corruption strategy, and as long as information is not accessible, corruption will continue to thrive in the shadows.

**Ladies and gentlemen, the fight against corruption is not a battle that can be won by government or any one entity alone.** It requires the collective efforts of law enforcement agencies, oversight institutions, the private sector, civil society, and every single Zambian who believes in transparency and accountability in how the country is managed.

**In light of our findings from the 2024 CPI, we would like to make the following recommendations to the government:**

1. Accelerate efforts in combating public sector corruption to ensure continued improvements in Zambia's CPI score and restore public confidence in governance.
2. Finalize the guidelines and rules for the Access to Information Act to promote transparency, accountability, and effective scrutiny by the media and other stakeholders.
3. Address the growing perception of corruption within the legal system, particularly concerning consent judgments that lack legal justification and may serve as avenues for corruption.
4. Strengthen oversight of climate finance to prevent undue influence and mismanagement of funds meant for environmental sustainability. Zambia's response to the climate crisis must be guided by integrity and accountability at all levels.
5. Take stronger action following the publication of Auditor General Reports in order to halt the continued trend of abuse of public funds, including in the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) programme

Ladies and gentlemen, corruption is not just a political issue; it is a public policy and development issue. It affects our economy, our institutions, our environment, and the very fabric of our society. Granted, we acknowledge the progress made. However, let us not lose sight of the work that remains. Zambia has the potential to continue its upward trajectory on the CPI and other corruption and governance indices, but this will only happen if we take decisive and immediate action to address the bottlenecks we face. The

choices we make today will determine whether we continue on the path of progress or fall back into the grips of more endemic corruption and impunity.

As I conclude, we as TI-Z remain steadfast in our commitment to advocating for transparency, accountability, and good governance. We call on all stakeholders—government, civil society, the media and citizens—to join us in this fight. Let us continue working together towards building a corruption free Zambia anchored on citizens, businesses and institutions of integrity, where corruption has no place, and where justice, fairness, and integrity reign supreme.

I thank you.

