

# PM praised for fight against corruption

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KUALA LUMPUR: Transparency International (TI) has praised Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for implementing several government measures to fight corruption.

Its vice-chairman Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim said under the Prime Minister's leadership, the Government had waged a war against corruption in the public and private sectors.

"We know what has been achieved until now, but the war against unethical public behaviour will be a long-drawn affair requiring both unwavering political will and the support of all sections of the community.

"TI's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2002 has once again confirmed that corruption is a malady afflicting not only developing countries, but also the developed world," he said.

In the latest CPI released yesterday, Malaysia occupied the 33rd spot with Hungary and another country, Trinidad and Tobago, scoring 4.9 points out of 10.

A total of 102 countries were surveyed for the level of corruption.

The CPI survey is based on perceptions of the expatriate business and the domestic corporate community.

Tunku Aziz, who is also the president of the Kuala Lumpur Society for Transparency and Integrity, said in spite of the vigorous initiatives taken by the Government and its agencies to confront corruption and introduce extensive governance reform in the last few years, foreign observers continued to

view the country negatively.

He said this could be because of different surveys used, which were not corruption surveys per se, to develop the index and that corruption issues formed a small component of the questionnaires.

The other factor, he said, was CPI 2002 was based on data from surveys conducted in the previous two years and this year which did not reflect on the findings of surveys of the current year.

"While international opinion is important to us, we are not fighting to please foreigners in Washington, Berlin or London.

"We fight corruption and promote good governance because an ethically clean Malaysia benefits all our citizens, and facilitates effective, sustainable human development and overall economic growth.

"Malaysia has what it takes to mount a serious attack on all forms of unethical public behaviour. We have all the institutions of a modern government, we have the financial resources to support the various measures and initiatives that are being put in place to make a difference to the lives of our people," he said.

Tunku Aziz said developed countries had a special humanitarian responsibility, given the enormous resources at their disposal, to investigate and prosecute companies within their jurisdictions that are involved in bribery.

"Corruption is subverting the orderly development of poor nations, already trapped, as they are, in a vicious cycle of crippling poverty, hunger and disease," he said.