

**DAP: Make disclosure of gov't contracts a must**  
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The government has been warned not to rest on its laurels with the slight improvement in Transparency International's corruption perception index (CPI) as more needs to be done, particularly in the area of government tenders.

DAP Serdang MP Ong Kian Ming said for example, it was "worrying" that companies be allowed to keep their contracts hidden from public eye and that disclosure should be made a precondition.

"Most worryingly is how the government continues to protect certain private parties by being not willing to publish contracts such as the directly negotiated highway concessions for Kidex, Dash, WCE, SUKE, Skip and EKVE or even the tender documents for the incinerator project in Kepong, on the basis that the concessionaire holder (is unwilling) to allow the documents to be disclosed.

"The government should make disclosure a necessary condition as part of the tender process.

"All companies who are not willing to have the contracts publicly disclosed should not be allowed to participate in the tender process," said Ong (right) in a statement today.

He also stressed the government to make it mandatory that all government contracts be awarded via open, competitive tender.

"If there are cases where a direct negotiation is necessary, the government must explain why this is the case,"

"In addition, the terms of the tender and the subsequent contracts must be made publicly available," he said, adding only a limited number of directly negotiated contracts are available on the MyProcurement website.

"In addition, not all open tender results are available online," he added.

'Increase MACC independence'

Transparency International-Malaysia (TI-M) announced yesterday that Malaysia's CPI ranking had improved by three places this year.

According to its annual survey, Malaysia scored 52/100 points and ranked 50/175 this year, compared to 50/100 points and rank 53 out of 177 last year.

Ong said the government should not be satisfied with the improvement in ranking but instead prove it is committed to fight corruption.

"Much more needs to be done in order to show that the improvement in the ranking and score is not just due to good publicity on the part of the government," he said.

The government, he said, needs to demonstrate its sincerity in by prioritising increasing the transparency of government contracts as mentioned, and also to increasing the independence of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

To this end, Ong said MACC must be made a separate service commission with powers over its own staffing and independent prosecutorial powers with proper oversight including from members of civil society and parliament.

"Without these and other substantive reforms, the recent improvements in the CPI ranking and scores may prove to be temporary and not convincing to an already sceptical public," he said.

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