

Bad systems lead to corruption, says expert
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Corruption occurs due to bad systems and not because of an individual, said an academican regarded as "the world's leading expert on corruption".

Prof Robert Klitgaard, the former president of Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California, said to control corruption, there was a need to reduce monopolies and at the same time, to limit digressions, clarify rules and enhance accountability.

"For instance, if you have the prosecutions in an investigation opposing each other instead of working together, there will be some difficulties in the country.

"This doesn't mean that they have to work under the same roof, though it is important for them to sit together literally and come up with potential ideas that will later benefit the country."

He said the difficult part was to get them to understand the real deal and how by working together they could help in enhancing economic growth and the country's development.

Klitgaard, who has been an advisor to many governments on economic strategies and institutional reform, was speaking to reporters before giving a talk on 'The Future of Corruption', in Kuala Lumpur today.

It was organised by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

Impurities in politics

He said there were two known themes in corruption -- political and economic.

"To control corruption, we have to get rid of impurities in politics, that see the weaker group taking the blame from the one responsible (the bigger group). As for economic corruption, it depends more on the risks and rewards at the end of the game."

He said corruption had many negative effects such as slow economic growth and polluted environment that led to an imbalanced lifestyle.

"Recent studies show that countries with bad infant care and schooling environment are the ones facing a major corruption problem," he said.

By acting against corruption, Klitgaard said, efforts to enhance economic growth and development were more worthwhile.

"Economic growth means better lifestyle which includes improved social services. Social services benefit the poor mostly. This is crucial as we do not want to create an atmosphere of distrust against the ruling party," he said.

Klitgaard said another important element was that unity worked as a powerful tool in controlling corruption.

He said this was proven by case studies where some of the countries which survived the damages, were the ones who came together and fought against corruption.

"Take Singapore, for instance...50 years ago it was known as 'a pool of massive corruption'.

"Even the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) interfered in the handling of cases. In the end, it showed that power and leadership combined with unity could check corruption," he said.

- Bernama

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