

An open letter to the Prime Minister...in which Transparency International New Zealand asks the Prime Minister to ensure integrity underpins all work he leads “in the best interests of all New Zealanders”

29 September, 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations in your re-election and for your commitment to making our country a better place to live with a brighter future for New Zealand and New Zealanders. Thank you for your open letter outlining your intentions.

As you plan the objectives for the new Government and form your cabinet, we are writing to you to ask that you insert the importance of integrity into your planning and that you advance your Government’s agenda for prosperity for all New Zealanders through a strong integrity agenda.

New Zealand is perceived as the least corrupt nation in the world; it is clear that *integrity* is New Zealand’s most important asset.

The extensive evidence, based on international and local experience, is that strong integrity systems are the best antidote to fighting corruption.

New Zealand has an opportunity to lead the world by demonstrating that a trusted society is a productive and harmonious one and to ensure that New Zealand stays as good as it’s perceived.

Transparency International New Zealand's vision is a world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. Our Common Interest Areas are:

1. Ensuring New Zealand has Integrity Systems that underpin a society that is not corrupt.

The New Zealand National Integrity System Assessment of 2013 called Integrity Plus published by TINZ is a thorough assessment of the strength of our country’s institutions. This assessment was carried out with the engagement of ministers from your cabinet, government officials, civil society and the wider public. It provides evidence, based on research about what is working and what isn’t across civil society and business as well as the public sector.

For example The 2013 NIS identified critical political process gaps. It recommends changes designed to reduce the likelihood of corruption within our political processes; a topic on which your Government will no doubt wish to show strong leadership, so as to avoid allegations of the type prominent in recent months

The implementation of this work involves advancing important recommendations aimed at protecting and strengthening our national integrity systems.

2. Last year in the UK you signed your commitment for New Zealand to the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Transparency International New Zealand is an active participant in the development of the OGP action plan. We are poised to work across civil society and the business and community sectors to ensure engagement on this issue throughout the country.
3. TINZ has developed a free on-line anti-corruption training programme targeted at New Zealand businesses and organisations, launched by relevant ministers. We are working with the SFO, BusinessNZ, NZICA and other professional organizations to ensure that the public has access to the tools that empower them to avoid bribery and corruption.

We agree this is a remarkable country and there are enormous opportunities for us all. We also are optimistic and ambitious for this country. In this regard Transparency International New Zealand will continue to champion critical changes that will make the biggest differences to addressing the integrity gaps identified and lead to sustainable, positive outcomes for New Zealand as a whole. We believe that these actions will strengthen our society and support business and economic outcomes that contribute to the wellbeing of all our citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Snively
Chair, Transparency International New Zealand (TINZ) Inc
On behalf of the TINZ Board