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TINZ Media Release

19 August 2015

Transparency International New Zealand
Wellington New Zealand

Speak up and save our reputation

The lack of transparency in the Saudi sheep deal could deliver a body blow to New Zealand's hard won reputation as one of the least corrupt countries in the world.

Transparency International's New Zealand Chair Suzanne Snively says the investigation launched by the Auditor General will determine if the millions spent on the Agri Hub in Saudi Arabia was a facilitation payment, a bribe, or a legitimate business expense. But she warns "the secrecy surrounding the deal and the reluctance of the Minister to publically address it will in themselves undermine New Zealand's position as one of the driving forces trying to eliminate bribery and corruption around the globe."

"Government is no different from business when it comes to standards of ethical behavior," Ms Snively says, "and there seems to be some pretense that we don't know how to trade with other countries so we simply resort to the practices prevalent overseas. That is utterly counterproductive! Other countries look to New Zealand for leadership in good business conduct and transparency is one of the central pillars of that behavior."

"New Zealand has enjoyed spectacular success in winning a seat on the security council. Now we must maintain the success we have established as a leader in the fight against corruption. The government must continue to take a lead."

Ms Snively welcomes the Auditor General's investigation and says that will determine the nature of the deal, but even if The Auditor General finds no fault in the deal itself, the whole tone has been needlessly sullied by the lack of openness.

Notes to editors:

1. About Transparency International New Zealand:

Transparency International New Zealand (TINZ) is the local chapter of the global organisation - <http://www.transparency.org.nz/>. TINZ works to actively promote the highest levels of transparency, accountability, integrity and public participation in government and civil society in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Transparency International New Zealand provides a free [Anti-Corruption Training Tool](#) designed by leading experts in the field, and enables organisations to provide training for their personnel. This was developed in partnership with the Serious Fraud Office and BusinessNZ

Transparency International New Zealand published the [Integrity Plus 2013 New Zealand National Integrity System Assessment](#) and is actively engaged in the implementation of its recommendations.

2. **About Transparency International**

Transparency International is the global civil society coalition leading the fight against corruption - <http://www.transparency.org/>.

3. **For further enquiries please contact:**

Note- recommended contact is TINZ Chair, Suzanne Snively. She can be reached by email, Skype or cell phone.

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