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## A new record! Taiwan Jumps in Global 2021 Rankings on Least Corrupt Countries

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On January 25, 2022, Transparency International published the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), in which 180 countries and regions around the world (including Taiwan) were listed in its rankings on perceived corruption. Taiwan moved up three notches to 25th, indicating an improvement of 3 places from 28<sup>th</sup> in 2020. Not only did Taiwan make a jump in the CPI rankings, but it also saw an improvement in its score by 3 points from 65 in 2020 to 68 (out of 100), exceeding 86% of the countries evaluated and marking a new record since the first CPI report was published in 1995. Since President Tsai took office in 2016, Taiwan's score and rankings have improved from 61 points and 31<sup>st</sup> place to today's 68 points and 25<sup>th</sup> place, fully demonstrating that Taiwan's efforts in integrity and ethics have been recognized internationally.

In rankings of countries across the Asia Pacific region, Taiwan is placed in 6<sup>th</sup> place together with Bhutan, which is known as the "Kingdom of Happiness", behind New Zealand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, and Japan. Furthermore, the Government Defence Integrity Index (GDI), released by Transparency International's Defence & Security Programme (TI-DSP) on November 16, 2021, ranked Taiwan 6<sup>th</sup> globally. On November 17, 2021, the non-profit organization TRACE released the 2021 TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix, which ranked Taiwan 6<sup>th</sup> in the world and 1<sup>st</sup> in Asia. With outstanding results in both the GDI and TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix, coupled with today's release of the CPI Index, Taiwan has delivered yet another impressive report card. This fully exemplifies the fruitful results of the government's work in integrity and ethics, as well as the country reaching a new milestone in integrity building.

### Integrity Awards: Encouraging the Positive Cycle of Integrity

Taiwan released its first national report on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2018. In order to implement the concluding observations of the International Review Conference of the UNCAC in 2018, the Agency Against Corruption of the Ministry of Justice (AAC) has proposed a pilot awards program, the "Integrity Awards", since 2019. In the past three years, 43 representative agencies have participated in the award. The award's five objectives of "encouragement, commitment, practice, participation, and trust" encourage various government agencies to review their integrity and transparency measures, strengthen corruption prevention, and introduce integrity innovation. Through impartial third-party assessments, the results and benefits of integrity management by various agencies are validated. The "Integrity Awards" serve to identify and recognize agencies that are highly capable and effective, and encourage them to demonstrate their commitment to integrity governance, thereby setting a benchmark and gaining the trust of the public. This converges positive energy for exemplary learning and circulation and allows all sectors to witness the effectiveness of integrity in governance.

### Government Procurement Integrity Platform: Safeguarding Major Public Infrastructure Projects

The AAC is committed to being the guardian of the nation's major infrastructure projects. Through the "Government Procurement Integrity Platform" (Integrity Platform), the AAC upholds the four-pronged strategy of "inter-agency collaboration, public-private cooperation, administrative transparency, and public oversight" to promote cooperation between the executive and the judiciary in a consolidated effort, as well as to invite experts from different fields in the public and private sectors to support the agencies. By adhering to the principles of openness and transparency and eliminating undue interference and pressure, AAC fosters an environment that allows civil servants to take up their duties and allows the heads of agencies and colleagues to exercise their responsibilities with peace of mind and dedication. Through the Government Procurement Integrity Platform, the AAC works side by side with various agencies for the country's prosperity and welfare; there are currently 29 projects on the Integrity Platform in operation, with 12 central projects and 17 regional

projects, culminating in a total procurement amount of over NT\$781.2 billion. The AAC has also set up a special section on its official website to promote and market the successful cases of the Integrity Platform, which effectively helps to enhance the transparency of major procurement projects and strengthen the participation mechanism through external oversight. The results of relevant work have been highly recognized during the 24<sup>th</sup> Central Integrity Committee Meeting. In addition, Premier Su of the Executive Yuan has emphasized that "prevention is better than cure" and that the mechanism to prevent mistakes, crimes and corruption should be strengthened in order to implement clean governance and expand public participation.

### **Advocating Corporate Integrity and Connecting to Global Trends**

In response to the growing global attention on anti-corruption measures in the private sector, the AAC has been actively focusing on private sector governance issues in recent years. It has been working with various agencies to promote the deepening of "corporate integrity" and "legal compliance" in public-private partnerships to assist enterprises in strengthening integrity governance. In 2021, the AAC worked with the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Economic Affairs and other competent authorities to jointly hold the Corporate Integrity Forum. The event invited representatives and senior managers from various chambers of commerce, foreign companies, financial institutions, listed companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, construction firms, and hi-tech enterprises to participate in the forum. Through presentations and discussions with industry, government, academia, NGOs, and benchmark enterprises, the AAC seeks to establish anti-corruption partnerships and advocate the spirit of integrity, compliance, and ethical responsibility in governance so that integrity can become a common belief for both public and private sectors. Through frequent exchanges in the public-private network, the AAC will espouse the value of integrity and improve the legal compliance system and transparent monitoring mechanism.

### **Dispelling the Myth of "Abuse of Power for Convenience":**

#### **Win-win Governance Measures for both Government and Enterprises**

The AAC has taken the initiative to respond to the voices of the industry, urging civil servants to act in accordance with the law and be diligent in their duties. In collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the local governments of Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City, and Keelung City, the AAC held 10 large-scale advocacy seminars on "Promoting Industrial Development and Enhancing Administrative Efficiency - Dispelling the Myths of Abuse of Power for Convenience" in several locations across Taiwan, and invited enterprises from various industries, science parks and civil servants to participate. Through cross-ministerial, cross-regional cooperation with local governments and nationwide project advocacy, the seminars received enthusiastic responses from representatives of public and private sectors, successfully conveying the concept of transparent, simple and accessible government administration, and the importance of integrity in business. This is hoped to bring the private and public sector closer, enhance the overall competitiveness of the country, enable civil servants to work diligently and ethically, and streamline administrative efficiency, achieving the goal of sensible and well-grounded governance, and promoting a win-win situation for industry development and cooperation between the government and enterprises.

#### **Support of Integrity Volunteers Empowers Greater Public Participation**

In order to realize the spirit of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in promoting social participation to enhance public awareness of anti-corruption, the AAC has been actively advocating and encouraging the public to participate in integrity volunteer work to promote the spirit of civic engagement and ethical society. As of 2021, 31 teams of AAC volunteers have been established nationwide, and the number of participating volunteers has increased by 10% each year for the past three years. At present, 1,929 volunteers are engaged in integrity work and advocacy, with main services including "integrity advocacy", "public oversight", "integrity inspection", "review of administrative transparency measures" and "integrity education", etc. The teams are also able to reach out to communities, schools and villages to help promote the concept of integrity, which is a great help to encourage integrity work and expand community participation.

## **Planting the Seeds of Integrity Education and the Dynamic Promotion of Professional Ethics**

To further promote the value of integrity to the new generation and to achieve the concept of "a foundation in integrity education and instilling anti-corruption concepts at an early age," the AAC is collaborating with relevant agencies and organizations to create integrity and ethics themed educational materials such as picture books, animation (comics), microfilms, puppet theatre, and interactive e-books for students of different age groups. The initiatives combine digitalized methods and utilize multiple channels to promote integrity across society so that the seeds of integrity and ethics will be planted in the hearts of students and take root. In addition, professional ethics is an issue of international importance. In order to enhance engineering ethics, promote regional governance and cross-domain cooperation, and strengthen the importance of integrity in the private sector to build a clean and fair competition environment, the AAC is collaborating with local governments and universities to produce teaching material, "Legal Compliance and Ethics Q&A for Engineers", which is incorporated into university courses and practical courses to deepen professional ethics and integrity awareness starting from education.

## **Safeguarding the Legal Rights of Whistleblowers: Empowering the Courage to Expose Wrongdoings**

The enactment of a whistleblower protection law is a pivotal anti-corruption mechanism and an important indicator of the state of a country's integrity work on the global stage. The AAC intends to draft a "Whistleblower Protection Act" and actively promote the legislation to provide appropriate measures to protect whistleblowers with reasonable evidence and in good faith from unfair treatment. This protects the right to work, confidentiality, personal safety, and liability relief for whistleblowers in the public and private sectors. It encourages those who are aware of unlawful wrongdoing to be brave enough to expose it and help combat it, while at the same time helping to protect the rights of those who expose it from being infringed upon at work and from having their lives affected. By promoting the Whistleblower Protection Act, the AAC seeks to provide protection measures for whistleblowers and shape the value of the positive image of whistleblowers, thus building a social atmosphere of zero tolerance for corruption.

## **Public-Private Partnership Contributes to Taiwan's Rise in Global Rankings**

During the 23<sup>rd</sup> Central Integrity Committee Meeting, Premier Su of the Executive Yuan pointed out that President Tsai attaches great importance to an ethical and clean administrative and political environment and that integrity is closely related to national competitiveness and international image. Therefore, the public and private sectors must work together to continue to improve integrity in Taiwan. In the past year, the AAC has actively followed the instructions of the Central Committee in promoting integrity work. Through the holding of "Integrity Awards", promotions of "Government Procurement Integrity Platform", advocacy of "Corporate Integrity" and "Integrity and Honesty", Taiwan's standing in the 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index is the best on record. It has turned a new chapter in the development of integrity work in Taiwan.

Since its establishment in 2011, the Agency Against Corruption of the Ministry of Justice has continued to spearhead Taiwan's integrity policies with new concepts and a steady pace. In the future, the AAC will continue to work tirelessly with all sectors to integrate and extend the integrity network with a macro and forward-looking vision, and through openness and transparency, public-private partnership, cross-regional cooperation, and a sound legal system. The AAC is committed to achieving fruitful results in integrity work and empowering Taiwan to rise significantly in the international ranking on integrity, in response to the public's aspirations and to realize the vision of "clean government, transparent Taiwan, and international integration".