



TI-USA Welcomes U.S. Enforcement Initiative Targeting Public Corruption and Recovery of Money Stolen by Kleptocrats

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Noting that he has "made combating corruption, generally and in the United States, a top priority," Attorney General Eric Holder announced a new Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative to crack down on grand scale public corruption and to recover and return stolen assets for their intended use. He indicated that a team of prosecutors would focus exclusively on this initiative.

Speaking in Kampala, Uganda to the African Union Summit on July 25, 2010, the Attorney General recognized that "corruption imperils development, stability, competition and economic investment. It also undermines the promise of democracy." In addition to the new initiative, he committed to continue to work with African governments to strengthen the judicial system and "to work with business leaders to encourage, ensure, and enforce sound corporate governance."

Given the Justice Department's rigorous FCPA enforcement, the balance of attention to the public as well as the private sector is timely. TI-USA has called on the Administration to do more to reduce bribe solicitation, including by extending its visa denial policy to those officials alleged in FCPA cases to have accepted or solicited bribes. It has urged the Administration to strongly encourage and assist host governments in investigations of officials named in such cases and to make its cooperation -- and as much evidence as possible -- more public so that civil society can pressure host governments to take action.

With respect to asset recovery, TI-USA has urged the Administration to take all necessary steps to prevent illicit flows from entering the US financial system in the first place. It should fully cooperate in identifying and repatriating stolen assets and, in order to promote their use for the benefit of the people and to prevent their being stolen again, it should work with the host government to ensure comprehensive transparency and accountability in the disposition of such assets.