

**Remarks by  
H.E. Anand Panyarachun  
Transparency Night, April 21, 2004**

Tunku Abdul Aziz, my very dear friend of long standing, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Some of you may have taken note that I have a hoarse voice because I just returned from a ten-day trip to New York and London and I picked up a certain bug along the way. So I hope you forgive me if my voice is not too clear tonight.

I am deeply honored by this award from the Kuala Lumpur Integrity Society, Malaysia Transparency. This is another event that is organized by Transparency Thailand and we are pleased and honored to have the presence of Tunku Abdul Aziz and his colleagues from Kuala Lumpur. Some of you know me intimately. Some of you may have heard of me. Most of you who are here tonight know that I am not a corrupt person. I am, however, not quite sure about some who are outside this hall.

I accept this honor with great humility, particularly since I succeeded two other individuals, firstly, H.E. Lee Kuan Yew, Senior Minister in the Singapore Government and Prime Minister of Singapore for over three decades. It is not an easy thing to be compared to a man of that stature. A man who is known to be incorruptible. Not only incorruptible for himself but he saw to it that Singapore is an incorruptible city. Whatever one may think of Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, one cannot deny the fact that he has transformed his country into a new, progressive and vibrant society, mainly on the basis that it is a transparent government and that it is incorruptible.

The second individual who preceded me on this award is the former Mayor of Seoul who is now the Prime Minister of Korea. We wish him luck. I think the fact that he was given this award is a testimony of his incorrupt behaviors.

Now I do not know what the future holds for me. Let me be very personal on this particular aspect that since my childhood, I have often heard the term “corruption”. Surprisingly or perhaps unsurprisingly, we do not have an equivalent Thai translation for the word corruption. From my early days, I have heard the word used, and as I got older, I appreciated more the real meaning of the term corruption. In Thailand, the term corruption applies mostly to the financial corruption which is equivalent to dishonesty,

graft and bribery, but I think to really appreciate the word corruption you have to go a little beyond a common understanding. The word corruption is a very meaningful word; it applies not only to financial corruption but it is mainly the corruption of the mind. Similarly, we do not have a Thai word for “integrity”. Most Thais would be confused between the words integrity and honesty. But there again, integrity goes beyond honesty. For me, it is interesting to see that the words corruption and integrity can never be translated into Thai words and it does take the Thais a little bit longer to understand these two words.

Generally speaking, a society would be doing fairly well if it is not dishonest and is not a financially dishonest society. But I think that we should be aiming at a society that goes beyond the level of plain honesty and financial corruption. These values have to be instilled in the minds of youngsters to teenagers, to adults and to old people. What is the test? The test is that in your everyday life, you do your own thing, you carry out your duties, you conduct a family life and you interact with your friends and relatives. Somebody who is not corrupt does not have to be fully and forever conscious about the word corruption in his mind. He knows what corruption is and what it is not. It is ingrained in his everyday life - in his everyday activity. Those who are not corrupt would not constantly boast about not being corrupt. The word rarely enters his mind because in his daily habits, he can distinguish what is right or wrong, what is ethical and unethical, and what is honest and dishonest. So if you truly appreciate the word and you practise it everyday, you do not even bother to use the word. It is part of your everyday life, part of your daily habit and part of your everyday interaction with other members of society.

To Aziz, I am deeply grateful to you. You and I have been friends for over thirty years and I am glad that we at Thailand Transparency have built up some kind of a strategic alliance –strategic partnership with our friends from Malaysia. I am deeply touched by your words. I am very much humbled by the award and shall be forever grateful to the recognition that you give - not to a man but to the word “integrity”.

Thank you.