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CONTACT:
Nathaniel Heller, Global Integrity
202-449-4100; nathaniel.heller@globalintegrity.org
Carol Miller, M+R Strategic Services
202-478-6138; cmiller@mrss.com

Clean Elections No Guarantee of Strong Democratic Society, Global Study Finds

New Report Assesses Anti-Corruption Mechanisms and Government Accountability in 55 Countries, Including First Investigation of China

(Washington D.C.) – Although elections are often touted as the linchpin of governance reform efforts around the world, a new report finds long-term benefits offered by elections are often undermined by a lack of government accountability and the absence of strong anti-corruption mechanisms. The report, a major investigative study of 55 countries, was released today by Global Integrity, an international nonprofit organization that tracks global governance and corruption trends.

“We have to stop using elections as a simplistic litmus test for a government’s commitment to democracy,” said Global Integrity’s Managing Director Nathaniel Heller. “We now know there is little linkage between elections and the much tougher reforms that must be made, especially in countries at political crossroads such as Pakistan, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kenya.”

The *Global Integrity Report: 2007* covers most of the Group of 8 (G8) countries as well as dozens of the world’s emerging markets and developing nations, from Argentina to China to Zambia. Rather than try and measure corruption directly, the report investigates and assesses the government accountability mechanisms and transparency measures needed to prevent corruption and promote good governance.

Many of the findings of the report should be sobering for policy makers and investors alike. The weaknesses found in China’s anti-corruption framework, for example, raise questions as to the true risks facing investors rushing to capitalize on the country’s economic boom– and to the risks Chinese investment funds pose to Western markets. “China’s lack of strong anti-corruption mechanisms could soon be to foreign investment what subprime mortgages have been to the U.S. economy,” stated Heller. “The message from our report to investors should sound a lot like ‘buyer beware’.”

Other major findings of the report include the following:

- **The US and other G8 countries suffer from many of the same corruption challenges as developing countries, especially in election and campaign financing.** While many observers tend to assume that wealthier countries have developed to a point where corruption is no longer a problem, Global Integrity’s 2007 data for the United States, France, Italy, Japan, and Canada paints a decidedly different picture.
- **Despite the conventional wisdom that changes in governance and anti-corruption performance take many years to manifest themselves, several countries exhibited significant improvements**

or **backsliding from 2006 to 2007**. The biggest gainers in the past year were Bulgaria, Nepal and Azerbaijan; Nigeria and Georgia were the countries that experienced the greatest declines.

- **Poor ratings for several close allies of the United States highlight the challenges the U.S. faces in promoting democratic reforms in countries where it has competing security interests.** The report found that countries like Pakistan and Georgia posted ‘weak’ or ‘very weak’ ratings for many of the anti-corruption, accountability and transparency indicators.
- **A widespread lack of government accountability among foreign aid recipients presents serious dilemmas for Western and multilateral aid agencies.** Despite a growing awareness by aid donors of the need to direct aid to non-governmental stakeholders, like civil society groups, aid agencies continue working primarily with the very same executive branches that are often hindering democratic reforms.

“This report should be a roadmap for change and a wake-up call to policy makers, investors, and aid donors around the globe,” said Global Integrity’s International Director, Marianne Camerer. “It’s also a take-action toolkit for public officials and citizens who want to fight corruption and increase government accountability.”

The report is the product of months of on-the-ground reporting and data gathering by a team of more than 250 in-country journalists and researchers who prepared more than a million words of text and 20,000 data points for their respective countries. Twenty-four countries were repeated from Global Integrity’s 2006 assessments, while 31 were newly assessed. The 2007 report covers the following countries:

Algeria	Colombia	Kenya	Pakistan	Thailand
Argentina	Costa Rica	Kyrgyz Republic	Papua New Guinea	Timor-Leste
Armenia	Ecuador	Latvia	Peru	Turkey
Azerbaijan	Egypt	Lebanon	Philippines	Uganda
Bangladesh	France	Liberia	Romania	Ukraine
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Georgia	Malawi	Russia	United Kingdom
Bulgaria	Germany	Mexico	Sierra Leone	United States
Burundi	India	Moldova	Spain	Vanuatu
Cameroon	Italy	Mozambique	Sri Lanka	Zambia
Canada	Japan	Namibia	Tajikistan	
China	Jordan	Nepal	Tanzania	
	Kazakhstan	Nigeria		

To access the *Global Integrity Report: 2007*, please visit <http://report.globalintegrity.org>. For more information about the organization, visit <http://www.globalintegrity.org>. Global Integrity is an independent, non-profit organization tracking governance and corruption trends around the world. Global Integrity works with local teams of researchers and journalists to monitor openness and accountability. Its data and reporting are used routinely by aid donors, governments, grassroots advocates, and investors to prioritize governance challenges in countries and develop roadmaps for reform.

Global Integrity is grateful to the Legatum Institute for Global Development (www.ligd.org) for its continued support of Global Integrity’s work. LIGD is an independent policy, advocacy and advisory organisation within the Legatum group of companies (www.legatum.com). The Institute’s mission is to research and promote those principles that drive the creation of global prosperity and the expansion of human liberty and well-being, including the rule of law, transparency, and accountable government as the pillars of a prosperous and free society. Other supporters of the Global Integrity Report: 2007 were the Australian Agency for International Development, the Wallace Global Fund, and the World Bank.