KUALA LUMPUR: As far as their daily lives are concerned, Malaysians are not hampered by corruption, says Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Paul Low.

He said that based on the Transparency International (TI) Global Corruption Barometer survey on petty corruption last year, only 3% of Malaysians were asked for bribes or paid bribes. This is compared to 9% in 2012.

“This is at the same level as Japan and Singapore,” he said, when addressing an anti-corruption awareness campaign at UCSI University in Cheras here yesterday.

Low, a former TI Malaysia president, said unlike some countries, Malaysians did not have to resort to paying bribes for basic services like healthcare or education.

Citing Mexico as an example, he said 30% of the household income went to paying bribes for services.

Low, however, lamented that Malaysians tend to see all problems in the country as issues of corruption.

This, he said, was not the case.

He said many things were wrong due to inefficiency, mismanagement or lack of skills, adding that these should be differentiated from corruption.

He said even a bus accident was blamed on corruption when it could have just been a case of negligence.

“Of course, if the driver paid duit kopi (undercounter money) for his licence; that’s corruption,” he added.

Low said he was not trying to downplay the extent of corruption in the country and acknowledged that there was room for improvement.

“My benchmark is that there should be no corruption,” he said, adding that procurement policies of the Government should change to make the process transparent and free of corruption.

“As a minister, I would like to see more openness and disclosures, especially on matters that are not related to national security,” he said.