

POLITICAL PARTY STRATEGIES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and
The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD)

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Introduction

In March 2001, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Council for Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) launched a program in Asia on *Political Party Strategies to Combat Corruption*. Its purpose is to support political parties in their efforts to implement internal anti-corruption reforms through enhanced democracy, accountability, and transparency in party structures and practices. In addition, the program explores the challenges facing parties with respect to party financing, national legislation and regulations, and evolving public expectations.

In the first stage of this program, NDI and CALD conducted research to identify existing strategies and mechanisms parties are employing to limit opportunities for corruption, whether voluntarily adapted or mandated by external legislation. This research took place in eight countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. NDI and CALD first examined the external environment in which parties function, including the country's transition to democracy, current political climate, governance and electoral systems, and problems with political corruption. In particular, NDI and CALD studied the legislation and institutions governing political parties, elections, and political finance.

Most importantly, however, the research focused on internal political party reforms. The political parties in the study generously shared various strategies they currently employ to promote greater internal democracy, accountability, and transparency in their party structures and decision-making processes, candidate and leadership selection, financial management and fundraising practices, and ethical criteria and disciplinary procedures. Parties described such tactics as codes of conduct, mandatory disclosure requirements, financial audits, independent disciplinary committees, training and ethical education programs, monitoring and evaluation procedures, term limits for party leaders, among others.

This report presents the research findings, with the objective of providing comparative information on party reform practices in order to aid parties in their anti-corruption efforts. All of the party reform strategies described in this study emerged from discussions with the party representatives themselves and are only as detailed and as accurate as the information provided in the interviews. NDI and CALD welcome comments and corrections.

Background

Corruption poses one of the gravest threats to economic growth, democracy, and political stability, in countries across the globe at all stages of political and economic development. In Asia, political corruption has taken on a new prominence in public discourse due to its devastating impact on public confidence in political and economic institutions and processes. Actors from all sectors, including political parties and political party leaders, recognize the need to develop more effective strategies to control the influence of money in politics.

At regional and global conferences, people have increasingly pointed to political party corruption as an essential focus for anti-corruption efforts. At the 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) held in Prague in October 2001, for example, closing speakers listed political party accountability as one of the top three areas for needed future action. Despite this increased commitment to tackling political corruption and addressing the role of political parties in reform, parties have still been largely absent from this discussion and few programs, if any, have been developed to work with parties on this issue.

Political parties in Asia naturally vary significantly in their structures, practices, and development. Although there are examples of transparent, policy-oriented parties, in many countries, parties also participate in corrupt and illegal activities. Electoral competition requires parties to raise large amounts of money in order to finance their campaigns, and fundraising practices often circumvent the law. Parties frequently build support through patronage networks, rather than through issue-oriented platforms based on the interests and needs of citizens.

Many parties are opaque in their internal operations and undemocratic in their decision-making. Even if political parties falter, however, they cannot be viewed merely as part of the problem. They must also be viewed as part of the cure. Parties remain the principle vehicle for placing issues on the public agenda. Moreover, increasingly, whether motivated by a principled commitment to the ideals of good governance or by more practical considerations of political survival and electoral appeal, anti-corruption ranks highly on the agenda of almost every political leader. This new profile for corruption in political discourse presents an opportunity for parties in Asia to ensure that the rhetoric of political leaders is supported by meaningful reforms and concrete actions to combat political corruption.

For these reasons, NDI and CALD launched a regional party program on strategies to combat corruption. The purpose of the program is to better understand the challenges Asian political parties face and to support parties in their efforts to reduce opportunities for corruption from within. The program has three primary components: (1) comparative research in eight countries in Asia to explore existing party strategies to reduce corruption; (2) a workshop to equip political party leaders with practical

recommendations for party reform based on regional best practices; and (3) the establishment of an anti-corruption resource center for political parties, providing information on political party finance issues, anti-corruption initiatives, and networking opportunities. This report will describe the research phase of the program.

Research Design and Methodology

NDI and CALD conducted comparative research on political party reform experiences in eight Asian countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. The central objective of this research component was to identify mechanisms that parties have implemented to promote internal accountability and transparency and to reduce opportunities for corruption from within, such as:

- full membership involvement in the election of party leaders and officials;
- full membership involvement in the selection of party candidates for election (and/or public involvement in the selection process through polling or open primaries);
- term limits for party officials;
- codes of conduct for party officials and candidates;
- party contracts for party officials and candidates (e.g. conflict of interest agreements);
- ethical standards for party officials and candidates;
- public declarations of assets and liabilities for all party officials;
- disciplinary procedures;
- internal anti-corruption bodies;
- evaluation criteria and monitoring strategies;
- financial disclosure procedures for all party accounts;
- full public disclosure of the *names* of donors;
- external audit systems; and
- fundraising guidelines and regulations.

The research explored parties' organizational structures and decision-making processes, selection of leaders and candidates, financial management and fundraising practices, ethical standards and criteria, and disciplinary procedures. In addition to examining internal party behavior, the research also investigated the external challenges and pressures political parties face with respect to their country's political culture, constitutional and electoral framework, media access, and public perceptions of parties. In particular, the research examined the impact of legislation (political party, election, and political finance laws) on the conduct of parties and the opportunities and limitations legislation presents.

The primary method of research was first-hand, individually administered interviews with political party leaders and representatives in each of the eight identified Asian countries. The number of parties interviewed in each country was limited to those

with the largest representation in parliament or those with important historical and legislative roles. In some cases, the parties chosen were not inclusive. In Malaysia, for example, research focused on the peninsular parties, omitting parties in Sabah and Sarawak states in Borneo. Moreover, in some circumstances, parties did not agree or were not able to meet with the researchers.

The interviewees in each party also varied. For most parties, researchers were able to meet with at least one senior representative, such as the party leader, secretary general, executive director, or secretary for administration. Researchers also sought meetings with known reformers in the party, such as youth wing members, who often offered interesting insights on the political realities within the party. The researchers developed a survey for these interviews, which suggested key areas for questioning and served as a guide for the interviews.

Despite these guidelines, each interview in the study was unique. The researchers attempted not to be too rigid in their questioning and allowed the conversation to flow in the direction of interest to the interviewee. There were clearly some lines of questioning that the parties felt more comfortable not discussing. In several cases, the interviewees requested anonymity or asked that the interview take place completely “off the record.” In all instances, the researchers respected these wishes. Interviews also varied in time. Some meetings ran as long as two and a half hours, others lasted less than 30 minutes. Naturally, the timing of the interviews was not always convenient for the party, particularly in countries in which the researchers do not live. Consequently, each party section unavoidably varies in length and in its level of detail.

Although interviews with political party leaders were most central to the research, key representatives from other relevant sectors helped to verify, clarify, and cross-reference the information gathered. Such figures included: leaders from civic organizations and NGOs active in political, electoral, or anti-corruption issues; academics focusing on corruption and the political process; government officials, such as members of the anti-corruption body, the election commission, or the government body overseeing political party registration and activities; representatives of the media; international observers from foreign missions or NGOs; representatives of the private sector; among others. The survey instrument was easily adapted for such interviews.

Findings: External Reform Legislation

The laws and regulations governing political parties, political finance, and elections are critical in framing the context within which parties operate. A main component of the research process, therefore, involved scrutinizing these various legislative measures and interviewing political parties about the impact of legislative reforms on party activities and conduct. The researchers collected all relevant documents from each country, such as the constitution, the political party law/regulations, the electoral law/regulations, and the political finance law/regulations. Special consideration was given to:

- The regulations regarding party registration and operations and the responsibilities of the government body empowered with oversight and enforcement functions;
- Provisions in the party law/regulations related to party finances, such as mandatory review by a government institution, public disclosure requirements, stipulated legal and illegal sources of funding, limits on contributions and/or expenditures, and audit and accounting regulations;
- Provisions in the electoral law relating to campaign finance and campaign expenditure, such as limits on contributions and/or expenditures, mandatory review of campaign finances by a government body, public disclosure requirements, and accounting and reporting regulations;
- Public funding system and the criteria for receiving state funds; and
- Laws pertaining to declaration of assets and liabilities requirements for party leaders and officials, conflict of interest legislation, and anti-corruption agencies.

Of the eight countries in the study, Korea and Thailand have the most detailed and stringent national regulations aimed at limiting political corruption and money politics. Malaysia, Cambodia, and the Philippines have relatively weak legislative frameworks governing parties and political finance, and although Indonesia passed several political finance laws in 1999, they are not fully enforced or have not yet been implemented. In Nepal and Taiwan, legislation is under consideration.

Thailand

The 1997 Thai Constitution introduced new party, political finance, and election laws, under the Organic Law on Political Parties and the Organic Law on Elections, and empowered an independent Election Commission of Thailand (ECT) with oversight authority. These laws strictly regulate party operations and accounting practices in order to enhance transparency and accountability within the party system. A key objective of the new legislation is also to strengthen parties as ideological bodies and broaden their membership bases, with the aim of reducing the prevalence of patronage and vote buying.

The new party and election laws inflict stringent regulations and checks on parties. Disclosure is the main theme of the new reforms. All party officials, including branch chairpersons, must declare their assets and liabilities to the ECT, regardless of whether or not they hold public office. The new laws mandate annual party audits and financial reports that detail all expenditures and the amounts and sources of all contributions, and these reports must be made available to the public. Spending limitations are also placed on parties during the campaign period. In addition, parties are required by law to have internal elections for party posts and policies, including the election of branch office committees, and to decentralize party structures. The law even provides an appeals process to the Constitutional Court for those party MPs who feel they are the victims of “undemocratic” party decisions. Moreover, the new legislation attempts to limit factionalism and encourage more ideologically based and cohesive

parties by making it difficult to switch parties and providing a public subsidy for institution-building and constituent outreach activities.

The ECT is responsible for managing and enforcing the political party regulations and has demonstrated its authority. In July 2001, the ECT sent dissolution requests for 17 parties to the Constitutional Court because the parties failed to abide by the new regulations. Short of dissolution, the ECT has also fined parties for accepting donations from illegal sources. In addition, the ECT submitted to the Constitutional Court over 380 cases of party officials who have failed to declare their assets and liabilities. During elections, the ECT is empowered to disqualify candidates and call for fresh elections as needed. The ECT exercised this power during the 2001 general elections by nullifying election results and banning numerous candidates on corruption charges. Although by all accounts the new ECT serves as a model of enforcement, the Commission itself acknowledges that its oversight capabilities are limited and many violations continue to take place.

Korea

The 1987 Korean Constitution requires political parties to be democratic in their organization and operations. In fact, if a party violates the “fundamental democratic order,” the Constitutional Court can force its dissolution. The Political Parties Act (amended in 2000) requires all parties to register with the National Election Commission (NEC), to hold elections for the party’s leaders and officials, to establish branch offices, and to provide lists of all members to the NEC. The law also places a limit on the number of paid employees in a party.

The Political Fund Act (amended in 2000) includes provisions on fundraising, expenditures, and party reporting. There are both income and expenditure limits on parties at all times, and donations are funneled through supporters’ associations established for the parties and candidates. The NEC receives names of all members of and donors to the supporters’ associations, which become part of the public record, although in certain circumstances contributors can request anonymity. The law also provides state funding for political parties. Parties’ annual audits and financial accounts can be accessed by all citizens.

The Act on the Election of Public Officials and the Prevention of Election Malpractices (amended in 2000) creates the framework for electoral competition in Korea and establishes the NEC as the oversight body for all elections. The NEC sets campaign income and expenditure limits and requires each candidate or election campaign to appoint an accountant to maintain a record of all financial transactions. Receipts for expenses and contributions and a report of all accounts must be submitted to the election commission within 20 days after the election. These accounts are available for public inspection for a period of three months.

Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

Cambodia's Political Party Law (1997) specifies minimal requirements for parties. Parties are required to register with the Ministry of Interior, providing a party name and the signatures of at least 4,000 citizens. Parties also have to provide activity reports to the Ministry every year. There are no limits on spending or donations; public disclosure of the sources of funding is not required; and there are no mandatory declarations of assets or liabilities for party officials. The Election Law (1997) requires parties to submit campaign expense statements to the National Election Commission, but parties do not have to reveal the sources of funds and these expense statements are not made available to the public. There are also no campaign income or expenditure limits.

Indonesia passed two laws in 1999, No. 2/1999 regarding Political Parties and No. 3/1999 regarding General Elections. The Political Party law establishes criteria for party competition and sets contribution limits to political parties. Parties are also required to file financial reports, along with a list of all donors, and to conduct an annual audit. To date, however, no party has reported an annual audit. The Party Law also provides for state funding, although this has not been implemented yet. The Election Law sets contribution and spending limits, requires parties to file financial reports, and calls for campaign audits of parties by the election commission. The commission had significant difficulty conducting campaign audits following the last election. In sum, although Indonesia has passed legislation requiring full financial disclosure and encouraging greater party accountability, it may take more time for these measures to be fully realized.

Malaysia's Societies Act (1966) governs political parties, NGOs, associations, and charities in Malaysia, and all of these organizations must register with the Registrar of Societies, under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Parties have to submit financial accounts to the Registrar, but these accounts are not disclosed to the public and there is no requirement for parties to reveal the sources of their funds. The current law also does not prevent political parties from owning and managing financial enterprises, and there are no spending or contribution limits. The Election Offences Act includes specific campaign finance regulations for candidates. During the campaign period, which is technically the period from the day of nomination to polling day and is usually between seven and 15 days, there are limits on campaign expenditures. Candidates must also file returns with the election commission, which are made available to the public. Under the current legislation, there is little transparency of internal party affairs and finances, and many civic groups and several political parties have lobbied for stricter regulations, particularly with respect to party financing.

The Philippines has no law governing political parties other than the Omnibus Election Code, and there are no laws regulating political finance outside the campaign period. There are no limits on spending or contributions, no required declarations of assets and liabilities, no reporting requirements, and no disclosure of financial records to the public or a governmental body. During the campaign period there are expenditure and contribution limits for candidates. The election law also requires parties to file financial reports for all campaign income and expenditures with the election commission,

and these reports are made public. Several political parties and civic organizations have advocated for the passage of a political party law to regulate party practices and finances between elections.

Nepal and Taiwan

Nepal, like the Philippines, currently has no law governing political parties and there are no political finance regulations outside of the campaign period. The country's Election Code of Conduct sets limits for campaign expenditures and requires all candidates and parties to maintain records of expenses and submit them to the election commission, although these records are not routinely made public. A new Political Party Law (2001), however, passed the House in the legislature. Although it has not been implemented yet, the law will require party audits and financial reporting, including disclosure of the names of contributors of more than 25000 rupees (\$333).

Taiwan has not yet enacted a political party law to govern the registration, finances, or operations of political parties. Provisions for political party registration are provided by the Civic Associations Law, which, like Malaysia, is extremely broad, covering registration for all types of civic and charitable groups. The law places few requirements on political parties. An aspiring political party must submit its constitution, its structures and operations, its leadership roster, and registration forms to the ministry. The current law does not prevent political parties from owning and managing financial enterprises, nor does it place any requirements on political party financial practices, such as audits of party financial accounts or declarations of party assets. The Public Officials Election and Recall Law (POERL) and the President and Vice President Election and Recall Law (PVPERL) establish spending and contribution limits for the campaign period and require each candidate to prepare an account book of campaign income and expenditures, audited by a certified public accountant, and to make this account book available for inspection and reference. The state also provides financial subsidies to political parties and candidates based on electoral performance.

Taiwan's legislature is considering amendments to the Election and Recall laws that would eliminate the penalty for breaking contribution and spending limits, which are widely considered unrealistic, and would impose stricter eligibility requirements for candidates. A pending Political Contributions Law would, for the first time, regulate political finances *outside* of the campaign period. Political parties would have to keep detailed and accurate financial records that would be audited by certified public accountants and made available for public inspection. The government has also proposed the enactment of a Political Party Law to regulate the registration and operations of political parties and ban parties from managing their own profit-making enterprises. Interestingly, Taiwan's proposed legislation would actually remove some of the existing requirements, such as the contribution and spending limits, in order to enhance the transparency of campaign finances.

Disadvantages of External Legislation

Stringent external legislation, although an attractive approach to combating political corruption, has disadvantages. Although enforcement of external legislation varies, overall it is extremely difficult for regulating bodies to keep tabs on party activities, expenditures, and income. Even the widely praised Election Commission of Thailand faces resource difficulties and is unable to scrutinize all party records.

In addition to being difficult to enforce, many parties in this study complained that the laws do not take into account the political culture in which they function. As one MP said, “You cannot buy a vote unless someone sells it.” Parties have argued that the laws single them out for sanction without taking into consideration the demands placed upon them. Moreover, laws can frequently underestimate the amount of money that parties need to operate effectively and competitively, and spending limits and regulations are often unrealistic. To emphasize this point, one politician claimed that if he bought one newspaper advertisement, he would violate the campaign spending limit.

The laws can also create perverse incentives. In Korea and Thailand, for example, parties explained that many donors prefer to remain anonymous, so the public disclosure laws force parties either to reject the needed financial support or to break the law. In fact, many report that legislation, such as cumbersome reporting requirements, has simply driven practices underground. “The law has made us all criminals,” reports one MP. In fact, Taiwan has learned that limits on campaign spending and donations *reduces* transparency and is therefore considering lifting the penalties for breaking these limits. It is widely recognized that current accounting reports are inaccurate, so by lifting the penalties of legislation, the government hopes that it will, for the first time, obtain an accurate assessment of actual expenditures and contributions. In other words, legislation can often defeat its own intention of promoting greater transparency in political finance.

Findings: Internal Reforms

Most of those interviewed agree that despite strict external legislative reforms governing political parties and political finance, effective reform must come from within the parties themselves. There are frequently loopholes or other ways in which to circumvent the law if parties do not voluntarily adapt an anti-corruption mandate. In addition, internal party efforts are needed to complement and reinforce legislative requirements and can help demonstrate the party’s anti-corruption message to the voting public.

When embarking on this regional program, NDI and CALD encountered considerable skepticism of the notion that parties would “reform themselves.” In virtually every party interviewed for this program, however, NDI and CALD encountered reformers committed to ridding their parties of money politics. Several parties provided the researchers with concrete examples of strategies and instruments they use to promote internal transparency, accountability, and democracy in internal party structures and

practices. Such reforms include codes of conduct, internal monitoring procedures, financial checks and balances, defined nomination and election processes, among others. These tactics can serve as useful “best practices” for possible replication by other parties in the region.

General Party Reform and Anti-Corruption Activities

Most of the political parties interviewed have publicly recognized the damaging effects of political corruption on their countries’ economic growth and governance and have incorporated the fight against corruption into their party platforms and agendas. Beyond these commitments, many parties have provided concrete critiques of the existing anti-corruption legislation and have advocated specific legislative and governmental reforms. Parties have issued press releases, held forums, and drafted anti-corruption policy prescriptions. Several parties, for example, have recommended changes to the current structure, powers, and activities of the existing anti-corruption bodies, such as the counter corruption commission, election commission, and prosecutor’s office.

Several political parties in the study have also implemented broad internal party reform processes and bodies. A few parties, for example, established reform committees tasked with recommending a wide-range of changes to the party’s current regulations, structure, decision-making procedures, and financial management practices. These reform committees are empowered with a specific mandate and are frequently allowed to operate independently from the other party structures.

Examples of general reform and anti-corruption activities include, but are not limited to:

- The Democratic Action Party (DAP) of Malaysia has placed “anti-corruption” at the top of its agenda and has organized numerous forums to discuss legislative reforms. Specifically, the party made recommendations to the Anti-Corruption Bill of 1997 and has demanded greater transparency in party funding.
- The Kuomintang Party (KMT) of Taiwan recently established an independent Party Reform Task Force comprised of 40-60 party officers of various levels to develop a reform action plan that addresses corruption in the party and attempts to strengthen internal party democracy. Initial reforms put forward by this Task Force include: the election of most party officials by the party’s members, the use of public opinion polls and primaries to determine party candidates, and the complete re-registration of members.
- The Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) of Korea formed an informal “committee on solutions and implementation,” a block of progressive MDP legislators who were successful in drafting, promoting, and building consensus on the recent anti-corruption legislation that passed in the country.
- The Grand National Party (GNP) of Korea recently created a Reform Committee, chaired by a party vice president, to lead the party’s reform and restructuring efforts and draft recommendations.

- The Democrat Party of Thailand has embarked on a reform process that involves a restructuring process to “professionalize” the management of the party to protect against possible conflicts of interest for party MPs and party officials. This reform effort also involves reformulating the party’s platform and agenda. The party has held training seminars across the country to solicit the feedback of its membership.
- The Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino Party (LDP) of the Philippines is trying to understand better the problem of patronage and opportunistic party defection by organizing internal party seminars, conducting policy discussions, and establishing a party research institute.
- The Sam Rainsy Party of Cambodia has prioritized the fight against corruption, placing anti-corruption as one of 10 fundamental components of the SRP platform. In the National Assembly, the party has advocated for adoption of a tough anti-corruption law, an independent anti-corruption commission, and mandatory declaration of assets for all elected leaders.

Candidate and Leadership Selection

Through the research process, parties shared several strategies for enhancing democracy and transparency in the selection of both candidates for public office and party officials. Most parties interviewed are challenging the leadership-driven and top-down practices of the past by involving more members, and in some cases the public, in the determination of party representation. Very few parties still allow a small number of key leaders to determine all candidates for election or to select officials for party posts. Internal party elections have become the most common process for determining both candidates and party leaders. The breadth of participation in these elections varies from the entire membership of the party to the central committee members. As parties integrate democratic procedures into the selection process, parties report that their candidates are of a higher caliber and the “purchasing” of party positions and nominations becomes more infrequent. If officials and candidates are determined by the entire membership of the party through a clean, secret, and fair voting process, patronage and cronyism can no longer be viable determinants of the party’s leadership and representation.

Examples of reforms to the leadership and candidate selection process include, but are not limited to:

- The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan has established a special “corruption hotline” for party members to report corrupt behavior within the party nomination and internal election processes. All phone calls are recorded. The Central Standing Committee has also tasked the Deputy Secretary General with investigating corruption in the primary process, serving as the “anti-corruption czar” within the party.
- The DPP has voluntarily implemented term limits for all party leaders in order to avoid a monopoly of power with one group, and, therefore, limit opportunities for

corruption and the use of influence and party machinery by incumbents in party elections.

- To ensure that party candidates for public office are nominated in a democratic manner, and not determined by patronage or cronyism, and are accountable to the public and broad party membership, the DPP uses a combination of primary elections involving all members and public opinion surveys to select its candidates. Candidates' scores are based 30% on their performance in the primaries and 70% on their performance in the public opinion polls.
- Gerakan Party of Malaysia allows all candidates for party offices to appoint "election observers" to monitor for corruption during the internal party elections.
- Chart Pattana Party of Thailand allows its branch offices to select party candidates for national elections, to ensure popular support for the candidate locally, and the party's central headquarters rarely interferes with these decisions.
- Partai Keadilan (PK) of Indonesia emphasizes selective criteria for party leadership positions and candidate selection to ensure that "the best person for the job has been given the candidacy."
- Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) of Indonesia requires all local chairs to be determined by a "one person one vote" process at each level of the congress.

Financial Management and Fundraising

Party representatives frequently cite financial management and fundraising processes as the easiest area for abuse. It is extremely difficult for parties to keep track of all the money flowing in and out of the party, particularly with offices and members spread across the country. Financial donors can also present problems for parties by demanding rewards in return for their support. Parties have approached this problem in many different ways. A few parties have chosen to centralize all party fundraising with the party headquarters to avoid opportunities for corruption. Other parties have called in external management companies to control their assets and finances. Most of the parties interviewed, however, agree that enhanced transparency of party finances limits opportunities for corruption. In other words, the more members who are able to review the financial records and the greater number of checks and balances within the party help the party avoid problems. If money management is tightly controlled by a few leaders, it is difficult to know whether money is received and spent legitimately and it can raise suspicion among party members and the public.

Through the research, parties shared several tactics for preventing corruption in the financial management and fundraising processes, such as:

- The KMT has proposed to transfer all of the party's assets into a trust managed by a private professional management company to enhance transparency of the party's finances and limit opportunities for abuse of party resources.
- The DPP has voluntarily implemented public disclosure of party financial records, including all income and expenditures.
- The Marxist Leninist (ML) Party in Nepal requires all central committee members to receive permission from the party before constructing or expanding a private

- home in order to monitor for unusual accumulation of wealth, and possible misuse of party resources, and to protect the party's public image.
- The Nepali Congress Party, the United Marxist Leninist (UML) Party, and the Communist Party of Nepal - Marxist-Leninist (CPN-ML) of Nepal include in their codes of conduct a requirement that all party office holders at all levels declare their assets and sources of their income to trace unusual wealth.
 - The United Malays National Organization (UMNO) of Malaysia does not allow branch or division party offices to raise money on their own. This prohibition was initiated to avoid the abuse of funds by party members and the influence of donors on the party.

Ethical Standards, Training, and Discipline

Parties have employed a variety of measures to promote ethical conduct among their members, leaders, and candidates, and to punish those who engage in unethical behavior or violate the laws of the party. Frequently, ethical behavior is linked to party loyalty, as many countries in the study experience problems with party defection. Most party representatives interviewed agreed that codes of conduct and written regulations alone are not enough. There need to be other reinforcing preventative measures, such as training, as well as procedures for enforcement, namely evaluation, monitoring, and disciplinary processes. If there is no threat of sanction for committing corrupt acts, such as vote buying, and party regulations are largely ignored, then behavioral change is unlikely.

Although all parties have an official party disciplinary process, some parties argue that informal pressure and reprimands are the most effective way to discipline because they protect party members and officials from “losing face.” Few party officials state that their parties actually go through the official disciplinary channels when there is a problem. Instead, they would prefer to handle things “discretely.” Other party representatives, however, claim that if there are unclear or opaque disciplinary practices, they can be applied inconsistently, or based on factional favoritism, and can therefore weaken respect for the official laws and rules of the party, fostering a culture of impunity. These representatives believe that parties should strictly follow their regulations in order to build respect for “rule of law” in the party and to strengthen parties as transparent, rule-driven, and formal institutions rather than family-oriented, informal cliques.

Mechanisms to enhance party ethics include:

- The DPP has strict eligibility requirements for party candidates, including signed codes of conduct to hold party candidates accountable to clean campaigns.
- The United Liberal Democrat (ULD) Party in Korea has a code of conduct for party leaders, monitored and implemented by the Committee on the Code of Conduct.
- FUNCINPEC Party in Cambodia has a contract that all party members who hold public office – MPs, ministers, provincial governors -- are required to sign before accepting their appointment. Upon signing a contract, the individual accepts to

resign voluntarily from his or her position in the government if he or she violates the provisions in the contract, which relate primarily to ethical conduct and job performance. The party conducts regular evaluations of their members to ensure that the contract is being followed.

- Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) of Malaysia has religious counselors at all levels of the party to provide ethical advice and serve as mentors to party members.
- The New Aspiration Party of Thailand (NAP) holds lectures on corruption and vote buying for party candidates, encouraging monks to participate as facilitators and using religious values as guidelines for ethical behavior.
- UMNO recently established an independent disciplinary committee to investigate and punish corruption within the party. The committee has already expelled six senior UMNO officials for buying votes in internal party elections.
- The DAP of Malaysia requires candidates to sign their own resignation letters for their seats in case they violate party principles, namely by switching parties.
- Lakas-NUCD-UMDP of the Philippines requires all its candidates to sign an agreement stating that they will resign their seats if they defect from the party.
- The Cambodia People's Party (CPP) of Cambodia has established internal structures to monitor party operations and finances. Party "Controlling Commissions" operate at all levels of the party hierarchy – national, provincial, district, commune, and branch.
- Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) of Indonesia provides "Islamic grounding" throughout the country to promote ethical practices.

Lessons Learned

While Thailand and Korea have the most stringent national legislation governing political parties and finance of the countries in the study, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan is, perhaps, the party richest with examples of internal party reforms. The DPP has undertaken extraordinary efforts to tackle political corruption by implementing numerous checks and balances within the party and ensuring full transparency of party operations. These efforts are particularly interesting because the party has adopted them voluntarily, as Taiwan has minimal legal requirements placed on parties. The reforms have also paid off at the ballot box. The DPP and its platform of reform won a stunning victory over the KMT in the last presidential election. The KMT's response to its electoral defeat has been to undertake its own program of party reform and restructuring.

Perhaps no other country demonstrates better the constructive role that voter behavior can play in influencing political practices. Public opinion polls in Taiwan consistently reveal that citizens want clean political parties, and in order to compete effectively, political parties have been forced to demonstrate their "clean politics" credentials. Another "lesson learned" from Taiwan's experience is that parties tend to mimic one another. If one party sets the bar high for reform and clean practices, providing voters with a desirable alternative, then other parties tend to follow.

Nepalese parties have also taken significant steps to enhance transparency in the party system through voluntary disclosure requirements. Thai and Korean parties have implemented few reforms that were not already mandated by national legislation, although parties are beginning to explore voluntary reform measures. Some Indonesian, Cambodian, Malaysian, and Philippine parties have implemented interesting internal anti-corruption mechanisms, but there is ample room for additional work.

Conclusion and Next Steps

If parties are recognized as part of the problem of political corruption in Asia, they must also be recognized as part of the solution and can no longer be excluded from anti-corruption discourse. Moreover, NDI and CALD have learned through this program that parties in Asia are homes to many reformers and democrats who want to see good government prevail, and several parties have taken steps to root out the scourge of corruption within. It is a critical time to encourage and support these efforts.

Although external legislation regulating parties, elections, and political finance is one approach to attempt to reform party practices, significant change will also have to come from within. The positive effects of internal party reform go beyond strengthening the political party system and competition in a country. Party practices and conduct can influence the behavior and operating procedures of a country's leaders and legislators, as most of them started their careers in the party system. Anti-corruption indoctrination at the party level has national repercussions by helping build political will for and reinforce national reforms.

The next step for this program is to put the research results into meaningful use. The aim of the research was to take stock of existing reform strategies and mechanisms that have been employed by parties in the eight countries in order to identify best practices for replication. The comparative models provided by the regional research serve as a launching point for further discussion and analysis by party representatives themselves to determine best uses and implementation. NDI and CALD will host a workshop in January 2002 in Bangkok, which will bring together political party representatives to review and expand upon the best practices identified through the research and recommend strategies and tools for implementing reforms within their parties upon returning home.