



MEDIA ADVISORY

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ASIAN POLITICAL PARTIES COMMIT THEMSELVES TO REFORM

Political Party officials from ruling and opposition parties in eight countries in Asia committed themselves to be part of serious and long-term efforts in order to combat political corruption that continues to plague their respective countries.

In an unprecedented regional workshop, jointly sponsored by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Council of Asian Liberals & Democrats (CALD), leading party officials, including members of parliament, set aside their ideological differences and sat down together to discuss the problem of corruption and come up with a list of practical recommendations for action.

After a three-day workshop made possible by an NDI grant, the participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand formulated their recommendations that both generate impact and yet realistic in terms of scope and attainability. Among the strongest recommendations were:

- comprehensive legislative frameworks to ensure financial accountability, controls and disclosure of campaign spending, the disclosure of assets of candidates and party officials, the upholding of ethical standards, the avoidance of conflicts of interest, the penalization of money laundering
- enforcement of anti-corruption legislation and party standards through independent institutions, such as election commissions and counter corruption commissions
- state funding for political parties wherein proportional funds are allocated to parties
- transparency and accountability within political parties themselves, particularly in financial contributions and management, through disclosure mechanisms, audits, and professional management systems
- exercising greater democracy, particularly in selection and election of party officials, by involving broader membership participation and public input
- conducting further research, strengthening the research capabilities of political parties and encouraging the establishment or expansion of political party institutes
- regional collaboration in order to share ideas and information and to monitor on a regional level progress made within countries and political parties

- dialogue and collaboration with other sectors particularly, civil society, business, media and the academe

Ivan Doherty of the National Democratic Institute emphasized that political parties themselves must take the lead in implementing these recommendations and even expand its coverage to other political parties. Participants also reiterated the need for internal party reform, regardless of opposition or ruling status, to complement external legislative measures.

“Parties are now ready to take an active role alongside civil society,” declared conference chair, Dr. Tunku Abdul Aziz Ibrahim, Vice-Chairman of Transparency International.

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