



As of 24 October 2013

General Assembly of the Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC)

MEDAN DECLARATION

“Zero Tolerance to Corruption in Southeast Asia: *Common Goal, Common Action*”

We, 47 (forty seven) members of the South East Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC) hereby adopt this declaration, in presence of GOPAC Members from GOPAC OCEANIA, ARPAC and SAPAC, as well as representatives from international organizations, gathered at the SEAPAC General Assembly, in Medan, Indonesia, on 23- 24 October 2013:

Preamble

We understand that the harmful impacts of corruption are palpable and corruption raises serious moral and political concerns. Corruption is a serious barrier to effective resource mobilization and allocation and diverts resources away from activities that are vital for poverty eradication, the fight against hunger and post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals;

The Southeast Asia is a region of emerging democracies where people demand greater participation and transparency on their public interests and therefore, it is essential to hold an accountable government and political system. It is also necessary to strengthen the political will in eliminating political patronage and strengthening comprehensive inter-state cooperation in anti-corruption law enforcement, which also include the implementation of anti-money laundering regime and asset recovery;

National anti-corruption measures can benefit from existing relevant regional and international instruments and best practices such as those developed by the countries in the region. We emphasize that the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) is the significant instrument for the universal fight against corruption. Therefore it is imperative to implement its principles in the Southeast Asian region as the effort in fighting against corruption is a complex undertaking and requires involvement of all levels of society;

Parliaments hold an important role to promote four key principles of anti-corruption strategy: transparency, participation, accountability and integrity by exercising their functions as mandated by National Constitutions. We welcome the establishment of new national chapters under the Southeast Asian Parliamentarians against Corruption (SEAPAC), the regional chapter of Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC) and the eagerness of other regional parliamentarian(s) to join forces in a regional and global coalition against corruption.

Key issues related to the fight against corruption:

Political Patronage, Gender and Culture

1. All are equal before the law. There shall be no immunity for public officials including parliamentarians in matters of corruption and their related crimes.
2. Good Governance shall be the main principle to protect legislative function and policies from fraud and vested interests, and shall be able to safeguard the state from the political interests and patronage, which are undeniably available at all levels of society.
3. Anti-corruption efforts require greater participation and involvement of all elements of society to eradicate corruption which undermines the poorest and weakens good governance.
4. Permissive behaviour which enables corruption is a formidable threat to the society of emerging democracies. Therefore, a zero tolerance culture towards corruption is imperative.
5. Parliaments and parliamentarians play significant role to oversee governments' work to deter corruption, ensure resources are well managed and put into the best use. Therefore, the need to strengthen capacity of parliament to further support governments in translating their commitment into a tangible result should be at the heart of Post-2015 development agenda.
6. Corruption knows no boundaries of gender, race, age, education level, political and social status, and territory.
7. Corruption in public services delivery has a disproportionate impact to the most vulnerable groups of society, women in particular. It is urgent to take necessary strategy and appropriate action for improving service delivery to be more effective and reliable.

Mobilising People: Connecting Agents of Change

8. Parliamentarians are the driving force of their constituents in the campaigns against corruption and they must be committed to their political mandate.
9. Cooperation among stakeholders, particularly NGOs, mass media, private sectors, monitoring agencies and anti-corruption watch, as well as the use of social media, is an effective tool in the fight against corruption.

10. Bearing in mind the nature of corruption as transnational crime, it requires partnership among anti-corruption agencies, providing agent-to-agent linkage cooperation, to seize and bring corruptors to justice.
11. Youth is the key to a sustainable development and democracy. By involving the youth, as the next leader in the region and their role as agent of change, in the fight against corruption, they will be able to develop important skills and greater understanding of good governance. This could be pursued, among others, through anti-corruption based curriculum in the formal education system.

Restoring Public Trust

12. An accountable political party with the recruitment system of public officials in a fair and corrupt-free election shall provide strong legitimacy in ensuring the accomplishment of a proper democracy which is free from any vested interests.
13. Good performance and accountability of parliament, as well as effective oversight function will restore public trust.
14. Transparency should be the basis of government activities in which it will contribute effectively in restoring public trust.
15. A strong law supported with the high integrity, credible and committed law apparatus will be effective to deter and eradicate misconduct and corrupt actions of state officials.

Moving Forward

16. Parliamentarians shall actively participate to promote the comprehensive and effective anti-corruption strategy which addresses the 5 pillars of UNCAC namely prevention, criminalisation, asset recovery, international cooperation and effective monitoring within their respective jurisdiction.
17. The participation of parliamentarians in the coming Conference of the State Parties to the UNCAC is essential. The Governments, if they have not done so, should be encouraged to include parliamentarians in their national delegations.
18. A global campaign and strong political will in the fight against corruption is a must. It is necessary to have as many parliamentarians as possible, who are committed to build a strong awareness on the adverse enormous consequences of corruption. Integrity and clean track record against corruption shall be the prerequisites of such commitment.
19. Build synergy with other existing regional parliamentary organization including ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in order to broaden anti-corruption movement.
20. SEAPAC Regional Action Plan shall form an integral part of this declaration, which transcribe as a joint effort among Members of Parliaments in the establishment of a corrupt-free Southeast Asian region. This is our common goal which requires mutual cooperation and hard work.