

# ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific

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5<sup>th</sup> regional anti-corruption conference  
Hotel Nikko New Century Beijing  
Beijing, People's Republic of China

## Governments and private sector must do more to fight corruption in Asia-Pacific, finds ADB/OECD anti-corruption conference in Beijing

**BEIJING, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (30 September 2005)** – Asia and Pacific governments and businesses need to tackle corruption more aggressively to reduce growing social inequality and sustain economic growth.

That was the message of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Asian Development Bank (ADB)/Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-Corruption Conference for Asia and the Pacific, hosted by the People's Republic of China (PRC) this week.

Richard Hecklinger, OECD Deputy Secretary-General, underlined the success of the conference, especially in enabling participants to openly share experiences and challenges: "Government commitment to fighting corruption in the region has improved over the past two years and reforms are underway but much more still needs to be done."

The conference was convened in Beijing from 28-30 September 2005. Mr. Wu Guanzheng, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Chairman of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, met with the representatives of the delegations. Mr. He Yong, Secretary of the Secretariat of the CPC Central Committee and Vice Chairman of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Mr. Hua Jianmin, State Councilor and Secretary General of the State Council, and Mr. Jia Chunwang, Chief Procurator of the Supreme People's Procuratorate presided over the opening ceremony. The Chinese leaders congratulated the successful convening of the meeting and elaborated on the policies and achievements of the anti-corruption initiative in China.

The conference brought together more than 200 senior representatives from governments, civil society organisations and the private sector from the 25 member countries and jurisdictions of the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific, as well as experts from the international donor community and observer countries from the region and world wide. Participants spoke highly of the determination and achievements of China's fight against corruption, and appreciated the efforts China has made as host of the conference and the importance it has attached to it.

"Given the complexities of the global age, corruption cannot be handled through stand-alone efforts," ADB Vice-President Geert van der Linden told participants. "This battle requires state of the art knowledge and tools and, above all, firm resolve. Judging by the commitment of the 25 member countries, we can be optimistic that progress will continue."

In light of the growing internationalisation of trade and business, and thus the increasing need for effective international judicial cooperation in the prosecution of bribery, delegates agreed, among other issues, on the need to set up a framework to deny safe haven to officials and individuals found guilty of corruption and make it easier to extradite them through improved cooperation. They highlighted the need to improve international cooperation to confiscate and recover illicitly gained assets, and to enact laws making bribery of public officials a predicate money-laundering offence and requiring financial and non-financial institutions to report suspicions of money laundering related to bribery to the relevant authorities.



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Delegates recognised the value of public opinion surveys in raising awareness of corruption and influencing reforms. They noted that non-government actors, such as academics or citizen groups, can play an important role in triggering discussion of corruption and so help increase public pressure for change and reform.

They also urged businesses operating in the region to act with increasing integrity and put in place effective anti-corruption measures. They further recommended that governments set up and strictly enforce accounting standards to improve transparency of company accounts; strengthen independent external auditing controls to help prevent and detect acts of corruption; and require auditors to report suspicions of bribery to competent authorities.

Participants highlighted the increasing potential for conflicts of interest in the region as private sector activity increases, as does staff mobility between the public and private sectors. To cope with this growing challenge, they stressed the need to establish ethical and administrative codes of conduct for public officials requiring public officials *inter alia* to declare outside activities, employment, investment, assets and substantial gifts or benefits from which a conflict of interest may arise, and setting guidelines for public officials moving to the private sector.

Addressing corruption in humanitarian relief operations, delegates noted that corruption may undermine the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts. ADB and OECD together with Transparency International released a new publication at the conference entitled "Curbing Corruption in Tsunami Relief Operations," which contains recommendations that arose from a regional expert workshop held earlier this year.

Finally, participants, stressing the benefit of cross-stakeholder and cross-country dialogue to strengthen regional cooperation and find joint solutions to a common problem, encouraged the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific to convene its next regional conference in 2007 as an opportunity to analyse progress on implementing these recommendations.

The Beijing Conference was organized to review anti-corruption reform efforts and evaluate progress made by participating countries in implementing the Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia-Pacific, which 25 of the region's countries, including the PRC, have endorsed since its formal adoption in Tokyo, Japan, in December 2001.

The full recommendations and conclusions of the conference are available [here](#).

For further information, contact:

Asian Development Bank  
Graham Dwyer  
(632) 632 5253  
[gdwyer@adb.org](mailto:gdwyer@adb.org)

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
Spencer Wilson  
(33) 1 45 24 81 18  
[spencer.wilson@oecd.org](mailto:spencer.wilson@oecd.org)

## Notes to editors -

The following countries have endorsed the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Plan for Asia and the Pacific:

Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan (Rep.), Korea (Rep.), Kyrgyz Rep., Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palau (Rep.), Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

