

Asian Governments to Fight Corruption and Illicit Financial Flows to Restore Trust

Phnom Penh, Cambodia (5 September 2014): 20 Asia-Pacific economies agreed today to intensify efforts to combat corruption and prevent illicit financial flows, so as to build trust in government, the private sector and civil society, and to increase domestic resources for development.

The commitments were made at the 8th Regional Conference of the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific focussing on “Fighting Corruption and Building Trust” as well as at the UNDP/UNODC Workshop on “Preventing Illicit Financial Flows for Financing Development”, both hosted by the Anti-Corruption Unit of the Kingdom of Cambodia from 2-5 September 2014.

The Members of the ADB/OECD Initiative in attendance agreed to restore trust in government by:

- Increasing transparency in government institutions, fiscal matters, and decision-making
- Updating and modernizing anti-corruption strategies, including through the use of technology
- Encouraging companies to adopt measures to prevent and detect corruption
- Increasing prosecutions of individuals and companies that engage in corruption
- Enhancing the right to information, media freedoms and monitoring by civil society

Opening the Conference, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen reinforced the need for cooperation in the fight against corruption: “It is doubtless that when both the public and private sectors work together, it will not only help improve the effectiveness of the fight against corruption, but also create an environment attractive to investment and clean business in the region and beyond.”

OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría remarked that, “In order to ensure that the benefits of growth, regional integration and growing international investment are fully reaped, it will be essential for governments to address the risk of corruption. No economy is immune from corruption, nor can any economy combat it alone.”

Clare Wee, Head of ADB’s Office of Anticorruption and Integrity, said that while much has been done in the region to try to combat corruption, there is much more to be done. “Instead of words like ‘endemic’, ‘systemic’, ‘engrained’, ‘rampant’, let us work towards hearing words like ‘reduced’, ‘minimal’ and ‘successfully fought’ when corruption levels in Asia are discussed.”

The UNDP/UNODC Workshop discussed a groundbreaking Global Financial Integrity report on illicit financial flows in the Asia-Pacific. Participants called for accelerating efforts in the region to prevent illicit financial flows by:

- Undertaking in-country consultation with different stakeholders to raise awareness about the importance of illicit financial flows

- Conducting more thorough studies of illicit financial flows in individual countries in the region
- Fostering consensus in the region by organizing a high-level regional meeting whose conclusions could feed into the UN's Post-2015 discussions
- Engage relevant regional and/or sub-regional bodies to ensure policy coherence

In addition to the Regional Conference and UNDP Workshop, the events also included the 19th Steering Group meeting of the Initiative and a meeting of the Initiative's Advisory Group.

The full text of the Conference's conclusions is available online at: www.oecd.org/corruption/asiapacific.

About the ADB/OECD Anti-corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific

The Initiative was established in 1999 to help governments in the Asia-Pacific region meet international anti-corruption standards. Its Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific sets out the goals and standards for fighting corruption in the region. To date, 31 countries and economies from Asia and the Pacific have endorsed the Plan and agreed on means to achieve its standards. The Plan encourages effective and transparent public services, strong anti-bribery actions, and integrity in business operations. It supports the objectives of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

Members are: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; People's Republic of China; Cook Islands; Fiji Islands; Hong Kong, China; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kazakhstan; Korea; Kyrgyz Republic; Macao, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Papua New Guinea; the Philippines; Samoa; Singapore; the Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Vanuatu; and Vietnam.

For further information, contact:

ADB

Elizabeth Fischelis
Senior Public Management Specialist, Regional and Sustainable Development Department
Tel. +63 2 632 4444 (efischelis@adb.org)

UNDP

Elodie Beth Seo
Regional Anti-corruption Advisor
Tel.: +66 2 304 9100 ext. 5105 (elodie.beth@undp.org)

UNODC

Shervin Majlessi
Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser
Tel. +66 2 288 2547 (shervin.majlessi@unodc.org)

OECD

William Loo
Senior Legal Analyst, Asia-Pacific Programme
OECD Anti-Corruption Division
Tel. +33 6 17 18 22 95 (william.loo@oecd.org)

Julio Bacio Terracino
Integrity Policies Analyst, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate
Tel. +33 1 45 24 94 60 (julio.bacioterracino@oecd.org)