

ADB OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative

for Asia-Pacific

Seoul Conference on Combating Corruption In the New Millennium
11-13 December 2000

Conclusions and Recommendations prepared by the Co-chairmen of the Conference

Building on the objectives identified at the Manila Conference on “Combating Corruption in Asia and the Pacific Economies” in October 1999, over 200 government officials, members of non-governmental organizations and leading business representatives from 35 Asia-Pacific countries met in Seoul, Korea, to work out strategies to fight corruption in public and corporate sectors and strengthen co-operation among Asia-Pacific countries. The Seoul Conference was organized by ADB and the OECD in co-operation with the Office of the Prime Minister of Korea. Partner institutions in the Conference included the UK Department for International Development, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Pacific Basin Economic Council, the UN Development Program, the United States Agency for International Development, Transparency International and the World Bank Group.

Delegates acknowledged that corruption,

- is highly detrimental to the stability of all democratic institutions, erodes the rule of law, and undermines the trust and confidence of citizens in the fairness and impartiality of public administration;
- discourages domestic and foreign investment, harms competition on the market place, distorts the allocation of resources, hampers economic growth and undermines efforts for the poverty reduction;

Agreed on the necessity to fight all types of corruption on all levels.

Reaffirmed that political commitment at the highest level is necessary and agreed that priority measures include:

- Taking effective measures on the basis of existing relevant international instruments and standards, in particular those of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the Global Anti-Corruption Forum.
- Promoting good governance through legal, structural and administrative reforms for better transparency and accountability of public administrations.
- Strengthening the rule of law by ensuring the independence of investigative and judiciary bodies.
- Promoting integrity in business operations through enactment and effective enforcement of laws and regulations and the development of an anti-corruption corporate culture.

- Developing proactive strategies to promote citizens' participation in anti-corruption efforts.

Recognized that regional co-operation is a powerful tool to support national efforts to curb corruption.

Will continue to develop their co-operation on the priority areas identified at the Manila conference and to include the following topics in the agenda of future meetings: combating political corruption; promoting the integrity and independence of judicial systems; strengthening national audit institutions; involving professional organisations such as lawyers, accountants and engineers in the fight against corruption.

Called upon governments from inside and outside the region and international organisations to provide support and assistance in the drawing up and implementation of anti-corruption strategies at national and regional level;

Welcomed the proposal made by the Korean Government for countries in the region to develop a regional anti-corruption compact to promote co-operation to combat corruption both in terms of prevention and enforcement.

Thanked the Korean government for hosting the Seoul Conference and took note that the next annual meeting of the Initiative will be hosted by the Japanese Government in the year 2001.

Implementation

In order to implement this initiative, the following mechanisms have been agreed:

Annual Conferences

The purpose of the annual conferences is threefold:

- to exchange experience among governments, business and civil society organisations active in the fight against corruption in the Asia-Pacific region,
- to foster regional co-operation in combating corruption and poverty
- to evaluate progress as well as problems encountered in the implementation of anti-corruption programs on the basis of country reports and case studies.

The implementation of the Initiative and the annual conferences are assisted by an Executive Committee composed of representatives of donor countries, international organizations active in the fight against corruption in the region and other invited parties. The ADB and the OECD act as the Secretariat of the Initiative in close consultation with the other members of the Executive Committee.

To facilitate the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Initiative, countries are invited to designate a national contact point.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building

The East Asia Pacific Region of the World Bank joins the ADB-OECD initiative to promote knowledge sharing and capacity building activities utilizing the distance learning centres which form part of the Global Distance Learning Network (GDLN) Initiative of the World Bank.

ADB and OECD provide a website for exchanging of information and electronic discussion between the annual conferences and will be establishing links to other relevant websites focusing on combating corruption in the region such as the website of TI East Asia.

Technical co-operation

International organisations and Governments participating in the ADB OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific endeavor to provide the assistance for capacity building within the region to develop and implement anti-corruption programs.

The co-chairs welcomed the proposal of the Korean government that a special fund be established under the auspices of the Initiative and hosted by the ADB. Donor countries and organizations are encouraged to contribute to this fund.
