

Southeast Asia Regional Meeting of TI Chapters

Viengtai Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand, 23-25 July 2007

Meeting Declaration

The sub-regional meeting of the Southeast Asian National Chapters of Transparency International was held in Bangkok, Thailand from July 23 to 25, 2007. In attendance were representatives of TI Chapters of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, staff members from the TI Secretariat, representatives from partner civil society organisations in Cambodia and Vietnam, and various stakeholder groups in the anti-corruption movement for some thematic sessions.

Activities towards Value Change and Institutional and Policy Reforms

2. Participants shared with each other their experiences, good practices, and challenges. They learned from the numerous activities implemented by the Chapters throughout the year 2006, and reviewed their plan of work for 2007-2008. The participants noted that despite many challenges faced, Chapters had continued their efforts with success in many cases.

3. Participants highlighted their specific activities in (i) awareness raising and education towards the transformation of social and business values, (ii) public contracting at local government level, (iii) strengthening integrity through islands of integrity and more robust national integrity systems, (iv) reducing corruption in post-tsunami reconstruction through community-based complaint systems, (v) raising corruption awareness through comparative measurement at national level, and (vi) promoting transparency and accountability in tax collection.

Regional strategy, programme cooperation, and training

4. Participants welcomed the initiative to develop an integrated regional TI-AP strategy and agreed to contribute to its development in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Department at the TI-Secretariat.

5. Participants also agreed to start addressing the issues of transparency in political party financing and of corruption in the judicial systems – both areas being found serious and common throughout Southeast Asia. Chapters confirmed their strong interest in taking part in two regional collaborative thematic programmes which will aim at (i) strengthening national integrity systems across the region, and (ii) tackling corruption in forestry.

Beyond project work, participants confirmed that they will maintain their main focus in 2007-2008.

6. Participants were briefed about progress made towards the development of TI-AP regional training programme on governance and anti-corruption, and agreed to collate with the circulated questionnaires the training needs from their Chapter and coalition partners.

National Integrity and Judiciary

7. Participants agreed to make special efforts to continue catalyzing reform for strengthening the pillars of the national integrity system. A new exciting scoring methodology for the NIS was introduced to be considered by TI Chapters. Using key findings and recommendations of the Global Corruption Report 2007 on Judiciary released on 24 May 2007, Chapters identified specific weak areas requiring attention in their respective countries. They concluded by emphasizing the need to engage in advocacy work for the independence, integrity, accountability and capacity building of the Judiciary.

Integrity in Water

8. The meeting discussed the relevance and importance of engaging in work related to water and integrity, and came to the conclusion that more in-depth information is needed before a proper assessment could be made. To this effect participants were informed by IBON of the Philippines about a forthcoming workshop to be held in Bangkok in November 2007 on Integrity in the Water sector, and were encouraged to participate.

UN Convention against Corruption

9. After discussing the outcomes from the first Conference of State Parties (CoSP) held in Jordan 10-14 December 2006, the meeting called upon the Governments of Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam that have not yet ratified the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) to do so without any further delay. The meeting also congratulated the Governments of Indonesia and the Philippines on ratifying the UNCAC in September and November 2006, respectively. The Southeast Asian Chapters decided to further strengthen advocacy work, not only for ratification by countries that have not yet done so, but also for proper implementation, follow-up and monitoring of UNCAC commitments in countries that have, or will have ratified the Convention. Many participants agreed to participate in the second CoSP scheduled 28 January to 1 February 2008 in Bali, Indonesia and requested that TI Secretariat improves its Chapter coordination role and progress monitoring on issues pertaining to UNCAC.

Journalism Awards

10. Recognizing the importance of the role, necessary professionalism and integrity of media in fighting corruption, participants stressed the need to further strengthen professional relationships with the media and organise training for journalists on corruption issues. In the absence of effective mechanisms for whistle blower protection, TI Malaysia and Ti Philippines asked the Asia Pacific Department of TI Secretariat to support them in establishing a national Investigative Journalism Award on Corruption. The experience of TI Thailand in this field was also recognized as a great asset for other Chapters interested in the establishment of such awards.

Increasing Capacity through Effective Fundraising

11. Briefed about the golden rules for effective fundraising, participants from TI Chapters with funding limitations agreed to give into their 2007-8 strategic plans special attention and priority to the development of project proposals, and to strengthen their financial self-sufficiency through individual and corporate memberships widening. The Asia Pacific Department confirmed that it will support the sharing of best practice in this area.

ASEAN and TI in Southeast Asian

12. Chapters agreed to cooperate closely to establish an Asean TI Caucus and to gain Consultative Status with the Asean Secretariat and the Heads of Government. The participants agreed that TI Thailand would take the lead for the above initiative.

Appreciation

13. The meeting commended the contributions of the delegates from the TI Secretariat towards successful conclusion of the proceedings. Participants also appreciated the contribution of other resource persons and invited guests. Visiting participants were grateful to the TI-Thailand team for the extraordinary commitment and efficiency with which they arranged the meeting and for their warm hospitality.
