



IPU-UN Parliamentary Hearing

*Fighting Corruption to Restore Trust in Government and
Improve Development Prospects*

17-18 February 2021

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Speech President SEAPAC, Dr. Fadli Zon, MP

***Key anti-corruption measures: assets disclosure and beneficial ownership,
whistleblowers, and financing of political parties/elections***

***Honorable Mr. Akmal Saidov, IPU Executive Committee member,
Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, CEO and Executive Director of UN Global Compact,
Ms. Ana Gomes, Former member of the European Parliament,
Fellow Parliamentarians,***

***Assalamualaikum Wr., Wb.
Peace be upon us all,***

Thank You for inviting me to be on this panel to address vital issues within our organization's best interest. SEAPAC is a network of parliamentarians in the South East Asia region who solely focusing on anti-corruption and good governance issues.

SEAPAC, through GOPAC, has the opportunity to deliver a parliamentary contribution to the preparation process of the 2021 UNGASS. Our first point of concern that we submit to GOPAC as a regional parliamentary dimension is to ensure that governments in the region are transparent and accountable.

***Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Having learned from the experience, SEAPAC believes that efforts against corruption should be comprehensive. The Southeast Asia countries have introduced anti-corruption plans and policies to combat corruption. But the 2020 Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International mentioned only three countries scored above 50 (Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Singapore).

It means more needs to be done. More parts to prevent corruption need to be introduced since they are as equally crucial as criminalizing the corrupt.

Asset disclosure, beneficial ownership, and even political financing are... part of key measures the UNCAC provides to prevent corruption.

Just to set the context, the UN, in 2018, estimated the cost of corruption amount to \$3.6 trillion in the form of bribes and stolen money. In Indonesia alone, in that same year...

corruption costs us \$401.45 million. Now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence of a higher risk of corruption is everywhere, and it makes people even sicker.

Imagine what we can save annually if we also pay strong attention to prevention measures stipulated within the UNCAC.

Distinguished Delegates,

Exploring elements of UNCAC's preventive measures requires our role as parliamentarians. We need to translate these into legislation or policies and even more oversight actions.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all in combating corruption. It also depends on the national context, social and political situations, and different legal systems.

For example, in the southeast Asia region, some countries have more than one legislation to regulate asset declarations. Others do not have any... except a code of conducts or a parliamentary motion. Countries also put strong points differently for asset declarations regulation, be that its reporting timeline, type, frequency, coverage, verification process, and things to be declared.

On beneficial ownership regulation, its development is unevenly in the region. For example, Malaysia's Companies Act 2016 and Indonesia's Presidential Regulation 2018 have included all corporations/companies, foreign and domestic, to register their beneficial ownership. Indonesia even provides a central registry in the Ministry of Law and Human Rights and public access with a certain amount of fee.

But in other countries, there are different frameworks for the implementation, such as the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), which means not all companies... only those in extractive industry that should report their beneficial owners.

***Fellow Parliamentarians,
Distinguished Guests,***

Another critical aspect in combatting corruption is to encourage public reporting and to protect them. The whistleblower protection mechanism needs an expansion, yet, at the same time, we are aware that many southeast Asia citizens are silent when they found corrupt cases both in the public and private sectors.

To this end, we need to ensure that regulations are in place to protect the reporting persons and to devise measures eliminating potential retaliation measures due to the report.

In the aspects of political party financing and election, the southeast Asia countries also vary. Many believe that state funding is essential to political parties' work and that a cost-reduced election is crucial for allowing more talents to compete in the political arena.

But again... this will also depend on the open or closed political system, the socio-cultural situations, and others. For example, in Indonesia's rural areas, people often request money as subsistence to participate in someone's campaign since they are used to receive a wage in daily manners.

It then can be a debatable one, whether us giving some travel money to them can be considered as money politics or not. Moreover, it also contributes to the high spending of political competition.

In that sense, our colleague from Timor Leste, a few days ago during our event, a SEAPAC Information Webinar on the 2021 UNGASS, has mentioned that there is one crucial thing we need to do.

That is civic education. To educate people, especially the youth, make them aware of the danger of corruption and enable them to be more critical of corruption.

***Mr. Chair,
Honorable presenters,***

SEAPAC, as an inter-parliamentarian network within southeast Asia, has a moral mandate to foster anti-corruption and good governance cooperation between like-minded parliamentarians. We have around 80 members across seven countries with at least four national chapters in Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Timor Leste.

One we are going to implement is to map how UNCAC measures are being regulated in the region so that we can know the strength and its challenges and explore better methods to implement it. I hope that we can be partners in promoting robust anti-corruption policies in the region.

My fellow parliamentarians... allow me at this opportunity to extend an invitation to join GOPAC membership and SEAPAC for those of you who are from southeast Asia countries. Let us be in collaboration to advance parliamentary works against corruption.

Join Us. Be our Ally!

***Thank You
Wassalamualaikum Wr., Wb.***

