



# AOA NEWS BULLETIN









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## Message from the President

There have been a number of positive developments since the last issue of the AOA News Bulletin. First, we had a very purposeful meeting of the AOA Board of Directors in Tehran in April, where a number of very important decisions were taken regarding the future plans of the AOA including on launching a membership drive, building on the base of knowledge products and identifying better use of existing funds. The minutes of the meeting are available on the AOA website and members are requested to please take actions identified.

The second development relates to the approval by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) of the regional technical assistance (RETA) for 'Strengthening the Asian Ombudsman Association'. As you're aware, a number of our plans for improving the value for membership in the AOA are entwined with this RETA so its approval is both timely and exciting, as it will allow us to establish a platform for learning, sharing and doing. The RETA is spread over a two year period and provides \$900,000 for a focused portfolio of activities that includes establishing a Knowledge Management Resource Center through which trainings, research, study tours, secondment and staff exchanges for second

and third tier staff in member institutions and access to a dynamic set of online services will be provided.

While the RETA offers a great opportunity for the AOA in terms of upgrading its services and strengthening its capacity to assist members in raising their levels of efficiency and effectiveness, it also presents a challenge for us in terms of coordination and organization. I can assure you that the AOA Secretariat is geared up to ensure that the benefits of the RETA are accessible to all members as per plans. Coupled with the active cooperation of the members, I am confident that we will be able to meet the challenge and ensure that implementation of the RETA begins soon.

Lastly, we have been receiving good feedback from both members and non-members regarding the AOA News Bulletin; this is a compliment for all our members since this newsletter is based on your contributions. However, we need to raise the bar further to make the bulletin more informative and useful and welcome suggestions in this respect.

**Javed Sadiq Malik**

**President of AOA**

## Tehran hosts the 10th Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the AOA

The Board of Directors of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) met in Tehran on 21-22 April 2008 for its 10th Annual Meeting, which was chaired by the President of the AOA and the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) of Pakistan, Mr. Javed Sadiq Malik.

The Board reviewed the progress achieved on several fronts and took several important decisions aimed at improving the services and performance of the Association, including:

- ✍ Targeting completion of research studies by China, Japan, Philippines, Hong Kong, Macao and Iran by the end of calendar year 2008 and requested all members to complete these, and encouraging members to complete their short studies and fact sheets as soon as is possible.

- ✍ Recommending to the AOA General Assembly that amendments proposed in the Association's By-Laws and Code of Conduct be approved.

- ✍ Recommending to the AOA General Assembly that the applications of the Office of

Lokayukta, Uttar Pradesh, India, and the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) for full membership applications of the AOA, be accepted.

- ✍ Approval of the Annual Budget for 2008 and the Audit Report for 2007.

- ✍ Accepted with thanks, the offer from Thailand to host the 11th AOA Conference in 2009. Members have been invited to send their suggestions for the theme and sub-themes of the conference.

- ✍ Approval of the proposal to launch a drive to broaden the membership base.

- ✍ Agreement to develop a proposal for more efficient and productive use of AOA funds.

The meeting also reviewed and appreciated the President's Report for 2007 as well as efforts made by the Executive Committee and the AOA Secretariat in relation to the establishment of the AOA Knowledge Management Resource Centre under the ADB regional technical assistance.



Ethsham Khan Executive Secretary

With warm greetings we are herewith presenting the second issue of the AOA News Bulletin for 2008. We hope you have enjoyed the re-designed issue of the last edition. Efforts have been made to bring further improvements in the current issue in light of the valuable comments and suggestions received from the members.

The period covering this edition witnessed interesting events for the AOA, the major being the approval by the Asian Development Bank of the RETA. The 10th Board meeting was held at Tehran in the Islamic Republic of Iran in April 2008. Members enjoyed the warm hospitality and the culture of that country as well. The Board considered the membership requests of the Lok Ayukta, U.P India, and the of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) and recommended their application for the next General Assembly meeting in 2009 at Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand. The Board also authorized the Secretariat to launch an effective membership drive to expand the Association's scope and influence.

It is really heartening to observe the response from interested people on the website's blog. More than a thousand people have viewed the discussions posted.

Ending with a note of thanks and good wishes for year, we think your interest and response will further improve the News Bulletin and become a source of strength for us.

## Conference News

### Co-organization of the “Conference on Combating Corruption in Construction Works”

In January 2008, the Ministry of Supervision of China, the



Vice-Minister of Supervision, Mr. Yao Zengke (middle) presiding over the Opening Ceremony

Independent Commission Against Corruption of Hong Kong and the Commission Against Corruption of Macao co-organized for the first time the “Conference on Combating Corruption in Construction Works”. The conference took place in Shenzhen, China with over 50 government officials and experts from Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao participated. When addressing the Opening Ceremony, the Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U, pointed out that construction works, especially infrastructure

projects, not only involve huge amounts of public money, but also are closely related to the lives of people. Corruption in construction works will result in financial loss and reputation damage to the government and will severely hurt the public interest. Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Endy Tou and Legal Advisor, Mr. Vu Ka Vai also delivered speeches at the conference. The conference provided a valuable platform for the sharing and exchange of professional experiences, expertise and strategies.



The Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U addressing the Opening Ceremony

## GUIDANCE NOTE

### RUNNING A COMPLAINTS SYSTEM: Guidance on Good Practice

The Local Government Ombudsmen association UK has published a guide for establishing and operating an effective complaints system at the level of the local government Ombudsman. Although prepared from the perspective of the UK local government, most of the principles and practices laid out in the guide are relevant for Ombudsmen around the world.

This document gives guidance to local governments about the design and operation of their complaints systems. Guidance is provided on issues such as the

reasons for instituting an effective complaints system; the essential qualities of a good complaints system; the mechanism for establishing targets for performance and the manner of monitoring such performance; the importance of local councilor and stakeholder involvement; the critical element of awareness and advocacy; assessing and addressing capacity gaps; and periodic evaluation of the outcomes of the system to ensure continuous improvement.

Source: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/pdf/guide1.pdf>

## KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

### Role of Civil Society in the Work of the Ombudsman

As part of its plans for greater openness, the office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) of Pakistan has embarked upon a drive to introduce a role for civil society institutions in its work. In line with its attempt to approach these new areas of policy and practice by first developing a strategic framework, the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) conducted a research study on 'The Role of Civil Society in the Work of the Ombudsman'. This study

proposes to create space for civil society institutions in the operations and policy making of our office and presents an actionable framework for strategic engagement with civil society. Implementation of this framework will also be initiated in 2008 with the assistance of the UNDP, although the proposed strategic interventions will be spread over several years.

#### Framework for Inclusiveness

✎ Establish a Civil Society Advisory Committee to provide independent input on policy issues related to

outreach, advocacy and inclusiveness

✎ Institute client-led oversight mechanisms

✎ Engage civil society for co-delivery of services on PPP arrangements

✎ Invite and integrate as far as is possible, civil society views on public interest actions initiated on own-motion

✎ Facilitate and encourage civil society-led accreditation systems for federal government agencies.

## What's new on the AOA Website and Blog

### New reports added on the AOA Website

Dear viewers we have various new reports posted on the website. These have been given for your preference. Please click on the links below to open the desired report.

- ▶ [Technical Assistance for Strengthening the Asian Ombudsman Association by the Asian Development Bank 2008.](#)
- ▶ [AOA Annual Report 2007](#)
- ▶ [Governance and Anticorruption - Reports on GAC Consultations, Malaysia.](#)
- ▶ [Address at the General Assembly of the African Ombudsman Association \(AOA\).](#)
- ▶ [Measures Taken by China's Supervisory Organ to Safeguard Public Interests and Results Thus Yielded Ministry of Supervision, the People's Republic of China.](#)
- ▶ [Measures for Removal of Constraints in Implementation of Ombudsman's Decisions/Recommendations, Wafaqi Mohtasib.](#)
- ▶ [Communication Strategy for Ombudsman, Wafaqi Mohtasib.](#)
- ▶ [Simplification of Procedure for Speedy Relief, Wafaqi Mohtasib.](#)

## ADB Approves a \$900,000 Regional TA for the Asian Ombudsman Association

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved the regional technical assistance (RETA) on 'Strengthening the Asian Ombudsman Association'. Under this facility, the ADB will provide \$900,000 over a two year period, enabling the establishment of a knowledge management resource center within the AOA, whose primary objective will be to support the operations of member institutions through effective knowledge management, dissemination and capacity development. The resource center will undertake several activities, including the preparation and dissemination of knowledge products; facilitating knowledge sharing; capacity building activities; building an e-Library; and organizing secondments, staff exchanges, study tours for second and third tier staff in member institutions to provide hands-on exposure to innovative practices and systemic improvements in Ombudsmen institution in Asia.

Welcoming the approval of the RETA, the President of the AOA, Mr. Javed Sadiq Malik, who is also the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) of Pakistan, stated that "The RETA heralds an important phase for the AOA, enabling us to upgrade our suite of services and benefits for members. We are pleased to be working with the ADB on this important initiative and are confident that the RETA will contribute to improving governance, public accountability and transparency in the Asian region".

Implementation on the RETA is scheduled to start in the near future.

The RETA paper is available at [www.aoa.org.pk](http://www.aoa.org.pk) for reference and download.

## In Preparation for the Expansion of Jurisdiction to the Private Sector

### Organized “Public and Private Sectors: Towards Integrity and Fairness” Forum

The Chief Executive Edmund Ho announced in



The Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U and the guest speakers for the Forum

his Policy Address 2008 on 13th November 2007 that the CCAC would expand its jurisdiction to the private sector as a way to strengthen the efforts of integrity construction in Macao and to fulfill a key objective stipulated in the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. To be better prepared for this critical move, the Commission Against Corruption organized a forum entitled “Private and Public Sectors: Towards Integrity and Fairness” on 6th March 2008. Experts and scholars from Macao, Hong

Kong and Portugal were invited to address the Forum and share their experiences and expertise with the participants. Over 500 and 200 participants attended the Chinese and the Portuguese sessions respectively, including members of Executive Council, members of Legislative Assembly, judges and public prosecutors, senior and general public servants, representatives of civil associations, employers of private institutions and representatives from different strata of society. Participants were active in posing questions and exchanging views with the guest speakers.

The Chinese session was hosted by Ms. Endy Tou, the Deputy Commissioner. Guest speakers for this session were Mr. Tony Kwok, former Deputy Commissioner of Hong Kong ICAC, Mr. Pang Kin-kee, Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court and Mr. Paulino Comandante, General Secretary of the Macau Lawyers Association. The speakers, in view of the actualities of Macao, analyzed from the legal point of view the necessity of extending the anti-corruption power to the private sector.

The Portuguese session was hosted by Mr. Mário Chaves, former President of the Collegial

Bench of the Court of First Instance. Guest speakers for this session were Ms. Maria Leonor Assunção, former Legal Advisor of the Office of the Secretary for Administration and Justice and former Professor on Criminal Law of the University of Macau, Júlio Pereira, Assistant Prosecutor-General and the General Secretary of System of Information of the Portuguese Republic and Manuel Simas Santos, Justice of Supreme Court of Justice of the Portuguese Republic. The speakers explored various anti-corruption issues in the private sector from the perspective of legal interests.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao



Participants in the Portuguese session of the Forum

## Seminars Organized on “How to Extend Anti-Corruption Efforts to the Private Sector”

Following the “Public and Private Sectors: Towards Integrity and Fairness” Forum, the CCAC co-organized a series of seminars entitled “How to Extend Anti-Corruption Efforts to the Private Sector” with major civic associations from April to June 2008, aiming to collect community-wide opinions on the extension of anti-corruption efforts to the private sector.

The civic associations represented a broad range of industries, including insurance and finance, journalism and mass media, food and beverage, tourism and hospitality, architecture and engineering, small and medium enterprises, etc.

Prominent business leaders and

experts from Hong Kong were invited as guest speakers to share their experiences on professional ethics and corporate governance. Many



Deputy Commissioner, Ms. Endy Tou (second from left) with guest speakers at one of the seminars

examples were given to illustrate the strategies of integrity management in different industries and the importance of business ethics in

achieving sustainable development. Some guest speakers pointed out that there would likely be resistance in the industries during the initial stage and the success of the anti-corruption efforts lies in the cooperation and support of all parties involved. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a consensus among the participants that extending anti-corruption efforts to the private sector would help create a fair business environment and would enhance the competitiveness of Macao in the long run. All sectors of the community were encouraged to collaborate with the CCAC in promoting ethical conduct and fostering a culture of integrity.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao.



## OMBUDSMAN PRESENTS THE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007 TO THE PRESIDENT

On February 27, 2008 Ombudsman Elmira Suleymanova submitted to the country's President and Milli Mejlis, the Annual report on "Provision and Protection of Human Rights in Azerbaijan for the Year 2007". This was in compliance of the provisions of Article 14 of the Constitutional Law on "Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan", which stipulate that the

Commissioner submits to the President of Azerbaijan Republic and the Milli Mejlis, an annual report on protection of human rights in the country and presents the features of the report before the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The report highlights the activities of the Ombudsman in the field of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; outcomes of

the legal education and scientific and analytical activities; international relations; collaboration with governmental and non-governmental bodies, civil society and mass media; and the Ombudsman's summarized proposals and recommendations on more effective provision and protection of human rights.

Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan.

## MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON NATIONAL ACTION PLAN HELD

The Ombudsman organized the latest round of discussions concerning the activities carried out in the field of National Action Plan on Human Rights.

The event was attended by members of five sub- groups. In accordance with the structure of the document,

They discussed issues on the improvement of the legislation, cooperation with international organizations dealing with human rights, strengthening the protection of each stratum of population, improvement of the activities of the

state bodies in terms of protection of human rights, legal education and awareness.

Addressing the meeting, Elmira Suleymanova, the Ombudsman, who heads the working group, underlined that the first year of the National Action Plan implementation was very successful.

She said that they held regular meetings of the working group and presented to the Presidential Apparatus of Azerbaijan Republic, the summarized reports of 31 state bodies responsible for the

implementation of this document.

On the initiative of the Ombudsman, a conference dedicated to the results achieved during the year on implementation of the Action Plan will be organized to share the outcomes of the Plan's implementation with a broader audience.

Participants welcomed the initiative and agreed that the Action Plan marked a new phase of the protection of human rights in the country.

Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan.

## THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON NATIONAL ACTION PLAN HELD

The Ombudsman organized the next round of the discussions concerning the activities carried out in the field of National Action Plan on Human Rights and further perspectives.

The event was attended by five sub-groups' members. In accordance with structure of the document, they discussed issues on the improvement of the legislation, cooperation with international organizations dealing with human rights, strengthening the protection

of each stratum of population, perfection of the activity of state bodies in terms of protection of human rights, legal education and awareness activities.

Addressing the meeting, head of the working group Elmira Suleymanova underlined that the first year of the National Action Plan implementation was very successful. She said that they held regular meetings of the working group and presented to the Presidential Apparatus of Azerbaijan

Republic the summarized reports of 31 state bodies responsible for the implementation of this document.

It was emphasized that on the initiative of the Ombudsman it was held the conference dedicated to the results achieved during a year in the application of the Action Plan and the document was appreciated as new phase of the protection of human rights in the country.

Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan.

## AZERBAIJAN



### OMBUDSMAN ATTENDS THE PEACE SUMMIT

On February 9-13, 2008, World Peace Summit on "Towards a new Paradigm of Leadership and Good Governance in the 21st century" was held by the World Peace Federation in Seoul, Korea. The Summit was devoted to the support and promotion of peace, expansion of opportunities and capacities in this field and formation of new visions with regard to the leadership and good governance.

Over 250 official persons from more than 100 countries, ambassadors of peace, former state figures, international experts, lawyers,

diplomats, academicians as well as leaders in the promotion of peace attended the event.

Addressing the Summit, the Ombudsman stressed the necessity of realization of all human rights and freedoms, including the right to life in peace. During the visit, the Ombudsman also met with the Commissioner for Human Rights of Korea. The parties came to the agreement that some of the representatives of both Ombudsmen's Office would exchange experiences on the application of the new information

and communication technologies.

The Ombudsman of Korea thanked his Azerbaijani counterpart for the visit and her valuable proposals. He presented her the latest annual report of his office and expressed his hope for future collaboration in the field of protection and promotion of human rights.

**Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan.**

### OMBUDSMAN MEETS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ORGANIZATION

Ombudsman Elmira Suleymanova received the director of International Migration Organization Mr. Sarat Dash.

During the meeting Ombudsman stressed that today migration problem is one of the sensitive issues concerning the world. Elmira Suleymanova also underlined the activity of the Organization represented by the guest which carried out enormous work for the solution of the problems of the migrants suffered from wars and armed conflicts, including

internally displaced persons, as well as migrants left abroad to earn their living.

Elmira Suleymanova also informed the guest on some important steps made towards the control and coordination of the migration processes. She mentioned that since 2004 it was adopted the Conception of Azerbaijan on State Migration, regulations on migration issues, Law "On Migration" and "Labor Migration", as well as Azerbaijan acceded to the UN Convention on the Protection of

the Rights of Migrant workers and their family members.

Ombudsman made emphasis on granting migrant status to the internally displaced person and underlined the importance of the assistance of International Migration Organization in this work. The parties also discussed perspectives for further cooperation.

**Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan**

### ELMIRA SULEYMANOVA PARTICIPATES IN THE 7th SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Ombudsman of Azerbaijan Republic Elmira Suleymanova took part in the 7th Session of the UN Human Rights Council held in Geneva on March 6-11, 2008.

During her visit, the Ombudsman participated at the discussion on the provision and protection of human rights, updating of the UN Special Procedures mandate and re-election. Moreover, she attended plenary and special sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, as well as in hearings of the special rapporteurs on torture, migrants, national minorities, missing people and others issues. During the visit, the Ombudsman met with the officials of the Organization and discussed

the situation on the protection of human rights in Azerbaijan.

E. Suleymanova also held a meeting with the head of department on National Human Rights Institutions of the UN's High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) Mr. Gianni Magazzeni. She gave detailed information on the activities of Ombudsman's Office of Azerbaijan in the field of human rights and its outcomes. The Commissioner mentioned the adoption of National Action Plan on Human Rights in Azerbaijan and activities carried out towards the implementation of this document. She also brought to the notice that June 18, 2008 will be at the first time marked as the

National Human Rights Day in Azerbaijan and it has been scheduled to organize the international conference in Baku on this occasion.

The Ombudsman also joined the session on the "Poverty and people rights to Peace" held on the initiative of International Human Rights Association. The participants to the conference held discussions on the adoption of the Convention on Rights of People to Peace and it was emphasized once again that peace plays great role in the provision and development of human rights.

**Source: Commission for Human Rights, Republic of Azerbaijan**



## Hotline to Report Relief Fund Fraud Established

The country's top disciplinary body set up a hotline (10-59592947), which people can call to report suspected malpractices in the management and distribution of quake relief.

The hotline will be open 24 hours, said the Communist Party of China's (CPC) Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the Ministry of Supervision (MOS).

Government funds and donations for the disaster relief have crossed 100 billion yuan (\$14.5 billion).

The CCDI and MOS urged their subordinate agencies to follow up on the complaints and punish the guilty to strengthen quake relief supervision. So far, the Sichuan provincial discipline inspection and supervisory departments have punished 41 Party

members and officials, including eight at the county-level, for relief malpractice.

Earlier, the CPC's top anti-corruption official, He Guoqiang, had promised to ensure "clean" disaster relief work and punish those found diverting or embezzling funds and supplies.

The CCDI and MOS have issued a special statute on the penalties for malpractice and fraud.

### Minor impact on economy

Though a major think tank estimates the direct economic loss because of the quake to be 400-500 billion yuan (\$58-73 billion), the impact on the national economy is likely to be little.

The State Information Center, a think tank under the National Development and

Reform Commission, yesterday said the quake might reduce China's economic growth by 0.1 percentage point.

But that loss could be offset by the huge cost of rebuilding, which could increase the fixed asset investment growth by 1.1 percentage points and help the economy grow 0.4 percentage points faster.

The State Council, the country's cabinet, discussed reconstruction plans at an executive meeting, chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao, yesterday.

The central government will help reconstruction in the quake-hit areas with measures and policies on fiscal budget, finance, tax, land, employment and agriculture.

Source: Xinhua News Agency.

## China, Vietnam Pledge to Strengthen Cooperation on Discipline, Supervision

China's senior anti-graft official He Yong met here Saturday with his counterparts from Vietnam during a visit to Beijing in June 2008, pledging to strengthen cooperation between the two countries on discipline and supervision.

He, Secretariat of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee member and CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection deputy head, met with a delegation led by Tran Van Truyen, who is visiting China at the invitation of the Ministry of Supervision.

Speaking highly of the good momentum of the Sino-Vietnam relations, He said the friendly relationship between discipline and supervision departments of the two countries is an important part of the bilateral relations. The exchanges and cooperation between the two departments will help their work and a further development of the bilateral relations.

Tran agreed with He, saying the supervision departments of the two

countries having more exchanges and cooperation on administration supervision and anti-corruption will further push forward the strategic partnership of cooperation between China and Vietnam.

He Yong briefed the guests on China's experience in anti-corruption and the supervision of earthquake relief fund and materials.

"China attaches high importance on the supervision of relief fund and materials, and has established a leading group specially in charge of the management and usage. All relevant departments will strictly supervise every

sector of the management and usage of relief fund and materials," He said.

The two sides also discussed the two countries' social and economic development.

Source: Xinhua News Agency.



He Yong (R), Secretariat of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee member and CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection deputy head, shakes hands with Tran Van Truyen during his meeting with a Vietnamese delegation led by Tran who is visiting China at the invitation of the Ministry of Supervision, in Beijing, China, on June 21, 2008. (Xinhua Photo)



## ICAC Commissioner Visits Ministry of Supervision to Step up Anti-Corruption Cooperation

On the invitation of the Minister of Supervision, the ICAC Commissioner, Mr Timothy Tong Hin-ming, lead a delegation to visit the Ministry of Supervision (MoS) in Beijing to exchange anti-corruption experience and explore further cooperation.

Mr Tong also met with the Minister of Supervision, Ms Ma Wen, who also heads the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention.

After the meeting, Mr Tong noted that both the ICAC and the Mainland's anti-corruption authorities pursued an integrated strategy in tackling graft through law enforcement as well as prevention.

"Sharing a common objective, both sides have had good cooperation in the past, which will become even stronger in the future."

Mr Tong revealed that the Commission, the

MoS and the Macao Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) have agreed to organise a seminar in Hong Kong to promote ethical management in the financial sector towards the end of this year. Relevant regulatory bodies in Hong Kong will be invited to participate in the seminar.

During the meeting, Ms Ma briefed the ICAC delegation on the work of MoS as well as the structure and strategy of the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention, which was established last year.

The ICAC delegation comprised directorate officers from its three departments. The Director of Investigation (Private Sector) of the Operations Department, Mr Francis Lee Chun-sang, shared with the MoS challenges faced in investigation work and corruption trends in the private sector.

The Acting Director of Corruption Prevention, Mr Ricky Chu Man-kin and the

Assistant Director of Community Relations, Ms Julie Mu Fee-man, respectively updated their counterparts on ICAC's latest corruption prevention and education work.

Source: Xinhua News Agency.



ICAC Commissioner Timothy Tong Hin-ming (right) presents a souvenir to Minister of Supervision Ma Wen during his visit to the Ministry of Supervision in Beijing.

## 43 officials punished for quake relief frauds

Twelve officials have been sacked and 31 punished for misappropriating earthquake relief funds and materials, the country's top discipline watchdog announced.

Most of the sacked officials were serious offenders at the grassroots level and directly responsible for distribution of relief, Ma Wen, Minister of Supervision, said.

But she did not say what sort of punishment the others were given.

The quake that rocked Sichuan province (and parts of Gansu and Shaanxi) on May 12 had claimed 69,181 lives.

The government has received 1,178 public complaints (till June 20) against official misdeeds, said Ma, who is also the head of the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention (NBCP).

"Of these, 1,007 cases have been probed and resolved," she told a press conference organized by the State Council Information Office.

A vast majority of the complaints were against improper distribution of tents and food, with most of the others related to slow or inefficient official response.

Ma said a supervision and inspection network on relief distribution has been set up, both at the central and local government levels, with the help of the supervision, finance and civil affairs ministries and the audit office.

"This is the first time (in more than three decades) that such a big tragedy has struck the country so the urgency and heavy responsibility of ensuring transparent and proper relief distribution poses a great challenge we have relatively less experience,"

Ma said.

Her ministry has already released an 11-item regulation on supervision of relief distribution, and punishment for misappropriation and violation of laws and Party discipline. The regulation will be maintained for as long as reconstruction continues.

Ma urged government bureaus and State-funded agencies at all levels to cut their expenditures by stopping the use of public funds for unnecessary travels and dinners. The money so saved can be used on reconstruction in the quake-hit areas.

The central treasury has vowed to allot another 70 billion yuan as reconstruction reserve, to be used over the next few years, Vice-Minister of Finance Liao Xiaojun said.

Source: Xinhua News Agency.





## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OMBUDSMAN OF HONG KONG PUBLISHED

The annual report of the Ombudsman of Hong Kong for the year 2007-2008 was published in July. The report shows that in the year under review, 4,987 complaints were received, which was slightly lower than last year's peak of 5,606 but still stayed at a high level. Enquiries totaling 12,169 were comparable to the level three or four years ago. Housing continued to be the most complained about subject.

In recent years, sudden influx of massive complaints arising from topical issues of public concern has created considerable pressure on the Ombudsman's staff. To cope with the peaks in caseload, the office had to be flexible in internal staff redeployment and also employed temporary investigators to cope with the changing demand for its services.

During the year, 103 recommendations were made on completion of 38 full investigations and four own-motion investigations. So far, 98 recommendations

(95.1%) of them have been accepted by the organisations for implementation and the rest are still under consideration.

In addition, 237 suggestions were made in cases concluded by "preliminary" (simple) inquiries. Most of them have been accepted, resulting in concrete improvements in public administration such as clearer operational guidelines, closer inter-departmental co-ordination, better services and clearer information to the public.

In this Annual Report, the Ombudsman highlighted some areas of concern relating to a general lack of understanding of the Code on Access to Information in the civic service; conflicting policies on controlling "junk" messages by fax, telephone, email and post; and inadequate coordination among Government departments. She also highlighted our investigation into two systemic issues that have been the cause for many complaints, namely, water seepage in

aged multi-storey buildings and street management problems such as illegal commercial promotional activities and parking of bicycles.

The Ombudsman reported on the jurisdictional review which was completed last year. After re-examining the criteria for including public bodies within her purview, she recommended the addition of a few organisations that are publicly funded, performed executive functions and had public surface with the community.

She also examined the legislative intent for some of the restrictions on the Ombudsman's investigative powers, and surveyed developments in ombudsmanship worldwide to examine implications those could have on the ombudsman system if those developments were adopted in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Administration is considering the Ombudsman's recommendations.

Source: Office of the Ombudsman, Hong Kong.

## DIRECT INVESTIGATIONS COMPLETED

### Alleged overcharging of water bills

Some users were levied with excessive water charges as a result of a combination of factors: the Water Supplies Department's propensity to estimating water charges for operational convenience, faulty checking procedures of its customer service and billing computer system and manpower constraints which hampered necessary back-up for the system.

The Ombudsman recommended that the Department should enhance staff alertness to inaccurate charging; improve its monitoring of such cases and their causes; reduce charge estimation by using it only if warranted; ensure adequate back-up manpower for fault checking; and maintain open channels for public enquiries and complaints. All her recommendations were accepted.

### Handling of water seepage complaints

A Joint Office comprising representations from two departments with jurisdiction and statutory authority was formed to provide a one stop service for citizens with seepage complaints.

Unsatisfactory handling of seepage complaints by the Joint Office resulted from:

- ✎ The loose and uneasy partnership among the departments.
- ✎ Insufficient target time lines and

practically no performance pledge.

✎ Ineffective management of consultants, leading to long delays and unsatisfactory service.

The Ombudsman made 17 recommendations to Government to address the deficiencies. All were accepted.

### Government and examinations authority to improve special examination arrangements for students with specific learning difficulties

Students with specific learning difficulties ("SpLD") may apply for special arrangements in public examinations. In response to The Ombudsman's investigation, the examination authority has decided to release the application results one month earlier than before and in two batches. As a matter of fairness, in rejected cases, it will provide candidates with specific reasons for rejection. The time-limit for appeal will also be extended from one week to four weeks to allow more time to prepare the grounds of appeal.

In the course of The Ombudsman's investigation, the Education Bureau introduced an assessment tool for junior secondary school students, which can facilitate the decision on special arrangements in internal and public examinations.

### Effectiveness of the Integrated Call Center in handling complaints

The Integrated Call Center was to replace the myriad of Government hotlines, fax numbers and email addresses with a single number. Seven years into implementation, its service covered only one-third of the 58 Government departments and agencies. It inherently lacked authority and expertise to handle substantive issues of complaint. However, it has been heavily relied upon to identify department(s) responsible for handling complaints which no department accepts responsibility. This was not only unrealistic and inefficient, but often led to delay or inaction.

The call center also needed clear publicity about its role in handling complaints to avoid confusion and frustration to the public.

The Ombudsman considered that the call center should focus on providing directory service and handling of enquiries and simple complaints. The Ombudsman also made other recommendations pertaining to its operations, enforcement of monitoring mechanism, performance and satisfaction gauging, publicity and mode of communication. Source: Office of the Ombudsman, Hong Kong.



## DIRECT INVESTIGATIONS UNDERWAY

### Support for students with specific learning difficulties

Having completed two phases of a thematic direct investigation, the Ombudsman initiated inquiries into the adequacy of support generally for students with specific learning difficulties (“SpLD”).

This investigation would cover support services for SpLD students in primary and secondary schools; the role and responsibilities of the Education Bureau; coordination between the Bureau

and other Government departments; and between Government and non-government organisations; the efficiency and effectiveness of the current mechanism and other related issues.

### Abuse of special grants under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

The Ombudsman initiated a direct investigation into the adequacy and effectiveness of the Social Welfare Department's system for preventing abuse

of special grants under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme.

This would focus on the procedures for handling applications for special grants; the criteria for approving and disapproving applications; the mechanism to guard against abuse; the mechanism for monitoring processing of applications; and areas for improvement.

Source: Office of the Ombudsman, Hong Kong.

## YEMEN



### More Coordination Needed for Fighting Corruption, Officials Say

In the 7th meeting of parties concerned with combating corruption, Vice-president Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi asked for setting a national strategy to regulate the work between the different authorities involved with protecting the public money and fighting corruption.

Hadi also called for changing a number of laws and regulations adopted now by the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption (SNACC) in order to fit into the international treaties ratified by Yemen.

He stressed the importance that this should find its way to practice, especially when the country is about to join World Trade Organizations (WTO).

For his part, the director of the Central Administration for Control and Auditing Abdullah Al-Sanafi assured that there should be constant coordination and partnership between all parties concerned with corruption to ensure protecting the public money.

SNACC director Ahmed Al-Anesi revealed there is no symmetry in statistics relating to corruption in control authorities like the Interior Ministry, Attorney General and other concerned parties, stressing such confusion could provide a cover for corruption issues.

Minister of Justice Shaif Al-Aghbari emphasized the importance of having a pragmatic and objective observation of corruption and away from any political and partisan overbidding.

Head of the preparatory committee Mohammed Al-Sayani noted that combating corruption and drying its sources requires a high level of coordination between the different involved authorities.

The meeting discussed the roles to be played by judiciary, SNACC, general prosecutions and

Finance Ministry to prevent any waste or corruption.

In April, the cabinet witnessed ministerial reshuffle and it was reported then that such a move was prompted by corruption scandals. The removal involved Oil and Mineral Minister, Electricity, Fish Wealth Minister and Expatriate Affairs Minister.

### Yemen Takes Part in the European Congress on Financial Supervision in Poland.

Head of the Central Organization for Controlling and Auditing (COCA) Abdullah al-Sanafi participated in the 7th Conference of the European Financial and Accounting Group in Krakow city on 2-5 June.

Al-Sanafi's participation in the conference came in response to an invitation from the head of the Polish Financial Supervision Authority, head of the Spanish Financial Supervisory Authority and head of the German Federal Financial Supervisory Authority.

Al-Sanafi was nominated as the head of the Arab Group of Supreme Financial and Accounting Control Agencies (ARABOSAI). At the conference he delivered the group speech that highlighted promoting cooperation between the two groups, particularly amid preparations for holding a joint meeting next year that would be hosted by the French Audit Court.

From Poland al-Sanafi traveled to Qatar to take part in a conference on promoting transparency and public management and accountability in the Asian countries.

Source: www.Yemenpost.net

### Ministers Removed over Corruption Scandals

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdul Karim Al-Arhabi revealed that the recent ministerial amendment is set against objective considerations and accurate evaluation for the performance of ministries.

Al-Arhabi added that there was also a necessity to fill in the gaps after some ministers nominated themselves as governors in the recent elections.

Informed sources told the Yemen Post that the ministerial reshuffle is prompted by corruption scandals and files verified by the Anti-corruption Committee as is the case with Oil, Electricity, Fish and Expatriates Ministries.

The sources also mentioned that there are governmental directives to refer other files of other ministers to the committee to look into them over the few coming weeks.

For his part, Al-Arhabi maintained that the government will not be lenient with any official involved in corruption issues whatever his post is, hinting it will take the legal measures and deal with corruption issues with firmness.

He added the government will present a new reform matrix over the next three months to be implemented during the three coming years including corruption combating, reforming judiciary and modernizing the civil service as well as public finance reforms.

Reports released by the Central Organization for Control and Auditing disclosed numerous cases of corruption and public money waste in Oil Ministry exceeding YR 10 billion.

The reports also pointed to a gas station meant for generating electricity which its implementation was delayed because of Electricity Ministry's legal violations that incurred huge losses on state treasury.

Concerning the Fish Wealth Ministry, it's corruption scandals relates to granting licenses illegally for some fishing companies as well as the deterioration of investments of this sector.

Source: www.Yemenpost.net

## MACAO SAR CHINA



### The Commission Against Corruption, Macao SAR

#### Macao Ranked 4th Least Corrupt Country in the Report of "Trend of Corruption in Asia"

The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy released the annual report of "Trend of Corruption in Asia" in March 2008. Macao ranked 4th among the 13 Asian countries/regions, following Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. Conclusions in the report were made after carrying out a large-scale survey in January and February through questionnaires and interviews. Responses were obtained from over 1400 foreign businessmen and expatriates in the countries/regions surveyed.

Macao has been listed in the report

since 2006 and ranked 4th for the third consecutive year. Its grade of 3.3 this year is the best so far, indicating a noticeable improvement in the integrity situation of Macao. The report referred to the corruption case of the ex-Secretary for Transport and Public Works as: "On the one hand, there is so much more money involved with the boom that the magnitude of corruption has the potential to be much larger than ever before. On the other hand, the fact that Ao was arrested, tried in very public manner, and convicted shows the system is also beefing up

its policing efforts more than before." Despite the existence of these two conflicting forces, the survey results turned out to be positive. The report stated that "corruption pressures are increasing, but so is the government's determination to fight corruption". Moreover, the public is also becoming less tolerant of corruption.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao

#### Trend of Corruption in Asia (2006 - 2008)

Countries/Regions	2008		2007		2006	
	Grade	Ranking	Grade	Ranking	Grade	Ranking
Singapore	1.13	1	1.20	1	1.30	1
Hong Kong	1.80	2	1.87	2	3.13	3
Japan	2.25	3	2.10	3	3.01	2
Macao	3.30	4	5.18	4	4.78	4
South Korea	5.65	5	6.30	8	5.44	5
Malaysia	6.37	6	6.25	6	6.13	7
Taiwan	6.55	7	6.23	5	5.91	6
India	7.25	8	6.67	9	6.76	8
Vietnam	7.75	9	7.54	10	7.91	12
China	7.98	10	6.29	7	7.58	9
Indonesia	7.98	10	8.03	11	8.16	13
Thailand	8.00	11	8.03	12	7.64	10
Philippines	9.00	12	9.40	13	7.80	11

Grades range from zero to 10, with zero being the best grade possible and 10 the worst.  
Source of Information : Political & Economic Risk Consultancy Ltd

#### New Publications

##### "Love for Integrity II"

Following the launch of the book entitled "Love for Integrity" in early 2004, the CCAC published "Love for Integrity II" (Chinese version) in February 2008. The book is a collection of 31 selected articles from the local newspapers column called "Clean Administration Forum" contributed fortnightly by the CCAC. It is divided into three parts 1. Fighting Corruption, 2. Administrative Complaints, 3. Ethics of Public Servants aiming to raise the law-abiding and rights-safeguarding awareness in public and private sectors for creating a just and fair society.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao.



#### Research Awards on Comparative Studies of Ombudsman Systems in Asia

In October 2006, the Commission Against Corruption of Macao and the Macao Foundation launched the "Research Awards on Comparative Studies of Ombudsman Systems in Asia". In January 2007, the Jury Panel selected three award-winning research projects:

1. Comparative Studies of Ombudsman Systems in Asia Examinations of the Systems of Macao, Korea and India;
2. Comparative Studies of Ombudsman Systems in Asia (Macao, Taiwan Territory and Japan);
3. Exploration of the Direction of Development of the Ombudsman System in Macao Comparative Studies of Ombudsman Systems in Asia. The three projects were completed on schedule in February 2008 and the reports will be

submitted to the AOA after being translated into English.

##### Major Corruption Cases Adjudicated

On 30th January 2008, the ex-Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Ao Man Long, was convicted of 57 counts of passive corruption, abuse of power, money laundering and unjustified wealth by the Court of Final Appeal. He was sentenced to an imprisonment of 27 years and was ordered to pay a compensation of MOP240,000 to the Macao SAR government. His corrupt proceeds were all confiscated.

On 4th June 2008, the Collegial Bench of the Court of First Instance pronounced sentences on the 7 accused involved in the corruption case of Ao Man Long. Ao Man Long's wife, Chan Meng leng, brother, Ao Man Fu, sister-in-law, Ao Chan

Wa Choi and father, Ao Veng Kong were found guilty of money laundering and were sentenced to imprisonments of 23 years, 18 years, 13 years and 10 years respectively. The 3 businessmen who were accused of bribing Ao Man Long - Ho Meng Fai, Chan Tong Sang, Frederico Marques Nolasco da Silva - were convicted of money laundering and giving bribes. They were respectively sentenced to imprisonments of 25 years, 7 years and 10 years and were ordered to pay compensations of MOP50 million, MOP20 million and MOP30 million to the Macao SAR government. Chan Meng leng and Ho Meng Fai were convicted in absentia. They are globally wanted through Interpol Red Notices.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao.



## Contacts and Exchanges with Other Institutions

### Visit to Malaysia and Singapore

In early April 2008, the Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U, led a delegation to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The delegates visited the Public Complaints Bureau and shared working experiences with the Director General, Mr. Chua Hong Teck. The delegates also visited the Anti-Corruption Agency Malaysia and exchanged opinions with the leaders on the system of declaration of incomes and properties.



The CCAC delegation with the leaders of the Anti-Corruption Agency Malaysia

Both parties agreed to establish a mutual case investigation mechanism. A tour of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy was arranged afterwards. It was agreed that staff training and exchange is an important measure to increase the capability for fighting corruption.

After the trip to Malaysia, the delegation of the CCAC proceeded to Singapore, joining the delegation of the Monitoring Committee on Discipline of the CCAC Personnel, and



The Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U presenting a souvenir to the General Director of the Public Complaints Bureau, Mr. Chua Hong Teck



The delegates listening attentively to the staff of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau

visited the Public Service Division, the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau, the Singapore Police Force and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

The delegates expressed particular interest in the systems of checks and balances, the code of conduct for public servants as well as the disciplinary procedures adopted by the authorities.

Since the integrated casino resort in Singapore is expected to be completed in 2009, representatives of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau were keen to learn from the experiences of Macao in preventing and combating casino-related crimes to minimize the negative impact of



A group photo of the delegation in the Chinatown of Singapore

the gaming industry. Throughout the trip, the delegates were deeply impressed with the government officials' visionary leadership and determination to uphold probity and justice. Singapore, as a role model for good governance, shows that a culture of integrity and excellence can only be

fostered through concerted and unswerving efforts of the whole society.

### Visit by the Australian Consul-General to Hong Kong and Macau

In late April 2008, the Australian Consul-General to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr. Les Luck, paid a courtesy call on the Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U. Mr. Cheong introduced the past and recent efforts of the CCAC in combating corruption and malpractices. Mr. Luck emphasized the importance of the support of the community and the government and commended on the achievements made by the CCAC. Both parties agreed to further strengthen cooperation in staff training and intelligence Exchanges.



The Australian Consul-General to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr. Les Luck and the Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U

### Visits to Beijing, China

In early June 2008, the Commissioner, Mr. Cheong U, led a delegation of 7 members to visit Beijing, China. The delegation had meetings with Vice-Ministers of Supervision, Mr. Yao Zengke and Mr. Qu Wanxiang, Deputy Prosecutor-General of Supreme People's Procuratorate, Mr. Zhang Geng and Director General of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, Mr. Ye Feng. The delegates were briefed on the holistic approach and pragmatic strategies of the Central Government for combating corruption and eliminating malpractices. The visits strengthened the foundation for future collaboration, particularly in the area of staff training. During their stay in Beijing, the delegates also visited the Dongcheng District Government Service Center and the facilities for the Beijing Olympic Games to witness the latest development in China.

Source: Commission Against Corruption, Macao.

## ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



### Iran and Indonesia Call for Mutual Cooperation in Fight against Corruption

Iran's General Inspection Organization and Indonesian Commission in Fight against Corruption agreed on mutual cooperation in uprooting corruption in their societies.

The agreement reached in a meeting between head of Iran's General Inspection Organization Mohammad Niazi and the head of Indonesian Commission in Fight against Corruption (KPK) in Jakarta, Iran's embassy in Jakarta reported Monday, quoted the Iranian News Agency of IRNA.

The Indonesian official Taufik al-Rahman Rouki explained the commission's duties and responsibilities since 2003, the year it was established.

He said, "The commission recommends the government on improving budget structure and expenditure, raising employees and managers' salaries and educating public about financial corruption and bribery with the help of religious ulema." Niazi, for his part, said, "There are appropriate ground for cooperation between the two countries, especially in the field of fight against corruption."

He evaluated the political intention of governments to fight against corruption 'important' and appreciated Indonesian government for holding annual Conference of International

Society of Anti-Corruption Organizations in Bali.

The Iranian official also met with Indonesian Prosecutor General Hend Armen Sopanchi and discussed judiciary and legal issues with him.

Heads of Islamic countries judiciary bodies will gather in Tehran on December 4, 2007 to have a meeting in which Indonesian justice minister as well as head of supreme court and the general prosecutor will be present.

D-8 Organization is very keen to support all efforts of its member states to fight corruption, and to help creating a conducive business environment and boost intra-trade relation among the member.

The secretariat right now is preparing a Roadmap for Dynamic Cooperation 2008-2018, with a supplement of "Monitoring and Evaluation of Doing Business in D-8 Countries" to serve the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of bureaucratic service to trade, business, investment and industries.

Source: IRNA



## MALAYSIA



### The Public Complaints Bureau (PCB) in the Prime Minister's Department Welcomes Ideas from the Public on Improving the Public Delivery System.

Dr. Chua Hong Teck, Director-General Public Complaints Bureau welcomed suggestions from members of the public for improving service delivery in the public sector.

In response to suggestions sent by a citizen, Dr. Teck said that the Bureau agrees with the citizen's opinion that an effective complaints system is an essential part of the provision of quality service in the public service. The Bureau is always concerned that speedy services should be provided to the public as stated in their client charter as a way to improve the public delivery system.

Dr. Teck added that since the end of last year, all agencies have been directed to monitor news and complaints regarding the public service published in all major newspapers. They have also been directed to reply to the complaints within three working days.

The Bureau, which has developed a module in its complaints management system to monitor the news

and complaints, will be more accessible to all Malaysians with the opening of another five new state offices in Perlis, Kedah, Selangor, Kelantan and Negri Sembilan soon, adding to the network of existing nine offices.

The Director General of the PCB further stated that members of the public are encouraged to lodge their complaints online from anywhere and at anytime through the Bureau's website at [www.bpa.jpm.my](http://www.bpa.jpm.my)

Complaints can also be emailed to the Bureau at [aduan@bpa.jpm.my](mailto:aduan@bpa.jpm.my) or lodged over phone at 03-88887777 or fax 03-88887778.

To further facilitate the public, they can also lodge complaints or make inquiries and suggestions to the Bureau through its mobile complaints counters and during the meet-the-public programmes carried out throughout the country.

Source: Complaints Bureau, Malaysia.



## The Regional Leaders of the Administrative Counselors Assembled in Tokyo for the Annual Meeting

On the 14th of March 2008, nine regional leaders of the administrative counselors, assembled in Tokyo for the annual meeting. The Director of the Administrative Evaluation Bureau (AEB) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), and other Executive staff members of the Bureau also attended the meeting.

There are around 5,000 administrative counselors in Japan, who are commissioned to receive people's complaints regarding governmental action, give appropriate advice and refer issues for resolution to the

administrative organs concerned from the Minister of the (MIC). The administrative counselors, who are private citizens (not public servants), are deployed in every municipality all over Japan so that even in the rural areas, where the regional branch office of the AEB is not established, the public can lodge a complaint through the administrative counselors.

In the meeting, each representative reported the on the regional administrative counselors' activity and discussed with the executive members of the AEB various issues, such as the

effective way of PR of the administrative counselors; the method of training and development for newly commissioned counselors who do not have much experience; and how to deal with the change of circumstances caused by the consolidation of municipalities, which was achieved between 2000 to 2005 all over Japan, decreasing the number of municipalities by 45%. The AEB executives listened to the opinion of the counselors and agreed to take steps for early resolution of the issues raised by the counselors.

Source: Administrative Evaluation Bureau, Japan.

## Administrative Grievance Resolution Promotion Council Meeting Held in Tokyo

On the 21st of March 2008, the representative meeting of the administrative grievance resolution promotion council was held at the headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) in Tokyo.

In 1987, the Administrative Grievance Resolution Promotion Council (AGRPC) was set up within the Administrative Inspection Bureau, which was the predecessor of the Administrative Evaluation Bureau (AEB) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC). Its objective is to consider and deal with difficult administrative counseling cases that require changes in laws and regulations, necessitate budgetary action, and any other cases that are faced with several obstacles leading to settlement.

At present, the AGRPC, has the status of an advisory body to the Minister of the MIC, and comprises seven members of the civil society, with knowledge in various fields, including a university professor, former prosecutor, journalist, and the president of the National Federation of Administrative Counselor's Association. Apart from the council in headquarters,

the MIC has also established a similar council in 12 branch offices at the level of the Regional Administrative Evaluation Bureaus and District Administrative Evaluation Offices. The representative's meeting is held annually at the headquarters of the MIC. For this year's meeting 11 representative of regional councils, as well as the headquarters council, attended the meeting.

During the meeting, each representative reported the result of the each council's activities, introduced the cases the councils handled, considered and proposed the idea of settlement of cases, and exchanged their opinions on common issues.

Source: Administrative Evaluation Bureau, Japan.



## REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA

### Korea Establishes the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC)



With a view to providing the general public a one-stop service related to grievance redress, protection of rights and fighting corruption, the Government of the Republic of South Korea established a new institution, the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) on February 29, 2008 under the 'Act on the Establishment and Operation of the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights

Commission (ACRC)' (Act No. 8878).

The ACRC comprises the erstwhile offices of the Ombudsman of Korea, the Korea Independent Commission against Corruption (KICAC) and the Administrative Appeals Commission (AAC). In order to reduce dispersion of similar functions among several institutions, and avoid confusion and inconvenience to the public, the ACRC

will now provide a consolidated service to help improve administration systems and establish a corruption-free bureaucratic and social environment.

The full text of the Act under which the ACRC has been established is available at [www.aoa.org.pk](http://www.aoa.org.pk).

Source: Anti-corruption & Civil Rights Commission, Korea.

## Yang Kun, Hanyang University's Professor of Law, Appointed as ACRC's Chairman

Hanyang University's Professor Yang Kun was appointed as ACRC's Chairman of on 13 March 2008. Professor Yang will enjoy the status of a Cabinet minister. In addition, three Vice Chairmen, with vice ministerial status, were also appointed: Lee Yeong-geun, Korea Independent Commission against Corruption (KICAC)'s Policy Planning Chief; Park In-je, KICAC's Non-Standing Commissioner; and Lawyer Kim Pil-gyu.

The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC), established as a result of new governmental reorganization, will function as an agency to prevent corruption, preserve and protect civil rights and will combine the functions of the KICAC, the Ombudsman of Korea under the President and the Administrative Appeals Commission (AAC) under the Prime Minister.

New Chairman YANG was born in Hamkyungbukdo in 1947. He graduated from Seoul National University and worked as President of the Korean Public Law Association (KPA) and Dean of College of Law, Hanyang University in Seoul.

▲ Chairman: Yang Kun (61), Professor of College of Law, Hanyang University; Cheongjin, Hamgyeongbuk-do; Seoul National University; President of Korean Public Law Association, Dean of College

of Law, Hanyang University

▲ Vice Chairman: Lee Yeong-geun (55), KICAC's Policy Planning Chief; Seoul; Korea University; Former Financial Planning Director-General and Budget Management Agency Chief of the Ministry of Planning and Budget (MPB)

▲ Vice Chairman: Park In-je (56), Lawyer, KICAC's Non-Standing Commissioner; Gyeongnam; Seoul National University; Former Korea Bar Association (KBA)'s Information Director and Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ)'s Chairman of the Citizens' Legislation Commission

▲ Vice Chairman: Kim Pil-gyu (49), Lawyer; Seoul; Sungkyunkwan University; Former Senior Prosecutor of the Special Division, Suwon District Prosecutors' Office and Senior Prosecutor of the Financial Examination Division, Seoul District Prosecutors' Office

Professor Yang assumed office on 17 March 2008 after an inauguration ceremony at the Commission's head office. Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman emphasized that "The ACRC would have to be a commission that serves people truthfully and faithfully," adding that, "now is an era of change and innovation; we need to work with a new attitude different from those of previous

governments."

In addition he asserted, "We must make every effort possible so that the ACRC can be a commission for the people with a sense of duty, and act as a guardian settling people's difficulties and sufferings and a leader aiming to make a transparent and clean government."

He further pointed out that, "our Commission is newly born with the combination of three committees: Ombudsman of Korea, Korea Independent Commission against Corruption (KICAC), Administrative Appeals Commission (AAC)" and added, "such integration has enabled us to be an extended family and thus people expect more swift and faithful services from us. If however we revert to narrow-minded egoism, we will not be able to serve people.

If the ACRC is to be a commission that deals with matters efficiently, we ought to dispense with unnecessary activities with a creative and pragmatic spirit." He continued, "in as much as all public officials and people ask us for high degrees of ethical standards we must draw the line between public and private affairs with rigor."

Source: Source: Anti-corruption & Civil Rights Commission, Korea.

## REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA



### Reorganization of Unreasonable Administrative Regulations, such as Instructions and Rules

As part of the efforts to introduce administrative simplification, the unreasonable regulations, which include more than ten thousand administrative rules, instructions and notices, are to be reorganized on a full scale. Though the administrative rules have been simplified and easily enacted without external interference, this improvement is expected to have a wide impact on previously heavily regulated corporate activities and civil life.

On 14 May, 2008, The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) Chairman Yang Kun presented to President Lee, the main tasks and a plan for implementing them. According to its implementation plan, the ACRC has first decided to examine the legitimacy of the regulations of more than ten thousand administrative rules and improve them by analyzing the database of civil complaints, administrative appeals and corruption reports

accumulated on e-People.

In addition, the Commission has decided to pursue reorganization of administrative rules in partnership with the Prime Minister's Chamber and the Ministry of Government Legislation (MGL) after reporting its improvement plan to a Cabinet council.

To attain this objective, the Commission plans to organize the Task Force for Reorganizing Administrative Rules in partnership with the Legal Secretarial Chamber under the Presidential Chamber, the Petition System Secretarial Chamber, the Prime Minister's Chamber and the Ministry of Government Legislation to devise an improved Bill of Administrative Rules by June.

As a prior action, the Commission decided to revise and implement the administrative rules under the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTM) and to expand target agencies on a step-

by-step basis.

The Commission decided to have public officials specify the items of the statutes involved in dealing with the complaints by linking "the e-People" to the MGL's Law Information System to understand the statutes that cause civil complaints and to recommend competent agencies to revise the statutes in question.

Moreover, the Commission decided to resolve petitions more quickly by conducting provincial counseling tours focused on rural regions and remote islands on the one hand and the installation of counseling centers on the other. These are currently located in five cities of Seoul, Gwacheon, Daejeon, Daegu and Busan, in Honam, Gangwon and Jeju areas. Furthermore the "Honorary Civil Rights Counselors System" will be introduced. Source: Anti-corruption & Civil Rights Commission, Korea.

### Free Legal Services Strengthened for the Socially and Economically Underprivileged

The Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) entered into an agreement with the Korea Bar Association (KBA) on 30 May 2008, for joint cooperation to expand and develop the free legal services for the socially and economically underprivileged. Based on this agreement, which was concluded in the presence of the ACRC's Chairman YANG and KBA's President Lee Jin-gang,

the Commission plans to expand and develop the free legal services through support of the lawyers registered at the KBA.

In addition, the KBA decided to actively cooperate with the ACRC's projects for improving unreasonable systems and counseling activities to protect the rights of the socially underprivileged, such as residents in rural areas and

remote islands, laborers from the third world, and immigrants of inter-racial marriage.

ACRC's Chairman YANG stressed, "this conclusion of the service agreement will make it possible for the ACRC to ask the KBA for free legal services, enabling quicker and fairer settlements on civil rights infringements."

Source: Source: Anti-corruption & Civil Rights Commission, Korea.





## Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman)

### Wafaqi Mohtasib determines PTCL's advertisement to be misleading and issues show cause notice to CEO PTCL

Upon investigation of a complaint lodged by a citizen, the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), Mr. Javed Sadiq Malik, has determined that PTCL's advertisements regarding the facility of making international calls to 16 countries around the world at Rs. 2 per minute, was misleading and was thus deemed to be a perverse and unjust practice, falling within the definition of 'maladministration' as given in the President's Order No.1 of 1983.

The investigation revealed that the abovementioned advertisements appearing in the national press were designed and presented in a manner that did not transparently reveal the full cost per minute for international calls. Although the advertised rate of Rs. 2 per minute was qualified by small print indicating that it was valid for calls made from landline and mobile phones in only 4 countries, the small print was placed sideways and in a way that made it difficult to be readily spotted by readers. In actual fact, apart from the 4 countries, this lower rate was only applicable to the other 12 countries if calls were made from a landline to a

landline telephone. Because of this, customers could be misled into using PTCL's services at a much higher rate than was immediately obvious from the advertisements.

In broader public interest and to protect the rights of the PTCL customers, the Ombudsman has directed PTCL to readvertise the package, clearly indicating the countries to which calls will be charged at Rs. 2 minute when called from landline and mobile phones, and those where the rate is applicable only if calls are made from landline to landline phones.

Pursuant to these directions and in view of the delay in their implementation, the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) has also served a Show Cause Notice to the CEO of PTCL, calling upon him to provide reasons why proceedings for Defiance of Recommendations under the Ombudsman's laws should not be initiated and the matter referred to the President of Pakistan.

Source: Wafaqi Mohtasib, Pakistan.

### Widow Receives Her Insurance Claim on Intervention Of the Federal Ombudsman

On a complaint by a widow regarding the refusal of the Postal Life Insurance (PLI) to honour her insurance claim filed after the death of her husband, the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) directed the PLI to make payment. Complying with the Ombudsman's directions, PLI has released payment to the widow.

2. During investigation of the complaint filed by the widow of the policy holder, it came to light that the Agency had been receiving premia from the late husband of the widow from April 1988 to March 2006. When the husband of the complainant died in April 2006, the Agency declined to pay the benefits of the policy on the ground that because the deceased had made late payment of the premia in the year 1992, his policy had expired in that year and consequently no benefit was due to the widow.

3. The Ombudsman

found it extra ordinary that PLI continued to accept further annual premia for the next 14 years without giving timely information to the insured that the policy had lapsed. He considered it inconceivable that the Agency would have the license to continue to receive money from people of modest means over such a long period and then suddenly inform their kin in times of distress that all payments made by the insurant were in vain and no benefit would be extended to them. He termed this as mal-administration at its worst and directed that not only the death claim of the policy be paid to the complainant but the Agency should also look into its policy and procedure to monitor the receipt of premia and inform a policy holder in a timely manner if his policy had lapsed.

Source: Wafaqi Mohtasib, Pakistan.

### Stamp Duty and Registration Fees on Mortgages Reduced by 75% in Islamabad Capital Territory On Directions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman)

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has complied with the recommendation of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman), to reduce the stamp duty and registration fee from 1% to 0.25%--a decrease of 75%-- on registration of mortgage deeds. This recommendation followed a detailed investigation by the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) on a complaint regarding the ICT's violation of the directives of the federal government and actions in contravention of the provisions of the National Housing Policy 2001, which called for a reduction in stamp duties and registration fees. While all the provincial governments had implemented this aspect of the National Housing Policy, the ICT had failed to do so.

The investigation carried out by the Ombudsman determined that the issue was the subject of unwarranted delays and red-tape, with the decision to notify reductions in stamp duty and registration fees pending approvals by the ICT administration for several years.

As a result of this delay and inefficiency on part of the ICT administration, the public suffered and continued to pay stamp duty and registration fees at rates higher than anywhere else in Pakistan. In order to remove this anomaly and to provide relief to the public, the Ombudsman directed the ICT administration to immediately notify a reduction of stamp duty and registration fee on housing mortgage. The ICT administration responded swiftly to the Ombudsman's directions and recently notified the 75% reduction in the abovementioned charges.

The reduction of the duty will likely lead to enhanced registration, improve documentation and increase the government's revenue receipts, which was the intent of the National Housing Policy as well.

Source: Wafaqi Mohtasib, Pakistan.



## Sindh Mohtasib

### Ombudsman Orders Inquiry into KIBGE Appointments

Taking notice of the irregularities in the appointment of lecturers at Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (KIBGE), the Sindh Ombudsman has ordered the constitution of a high-level committee to probe the selections made by the former director general KIBGE and taking appropriate action against the official(s) found responsible for the matter.

The Ombudsman also directed the Vice Chancellor of Karachi University to advertise the posts of scientific officers and lecturers and make fresh

appointments on merit and in a transparent manner.

The decision came on a joint complaint filed by two citizens, alleging irregularities and discrimination in the appointment of lecturers at the posts which were advertised on May 28, 2007. They alleged that eleven candidates had not appeared in the written test but were unlawfully appointed as scientific officers by the then Director General KIBGE. The complainants asserted that representation against these appointments was to the relevant authorities, but no action was

taken.

Sindh Ombudsman Asad Ashraf Jehangir, after conducting the proceedings, observed that the allegations leveled by the complainants were genuine and the process of selection of lecturers and scientific officers was in fact not transparent. Disposing of the complaint, the Ombudsman directed the re-advertisement of the posts of scientific officers and lecturers for making fresh appointments on merit and in transparent manner.

### Ombudsman Directs Early Resolution of Fares Issue and Service Standard of Metro Buses

The operators of Metro buses in Karachi, declining the recommendations formulated by a committee with regard to enhancing the fares and linking renewal of route permits to the revival of service standard, have demanded a fixing of fares as per their wish as well as tax exemption and subsidy on the purchase of diesel.

In a recent meeting of Karachi Public Transport Society (KPTS), under which the Metro Buses and radio cabs operate in the city, the operators said that they could not sustain fares in the face of the hike in the price of diesel and other related items.

A non-government organization had filed a complaint to the Sindh

Ombudsman regarding traffic violations and the charging of excessive fares by the Metro buses despite its low service standard.

Taking notice of such complaints, the Ombudsman had directed the DCO Karachi and former chairman of KPTS to revive the service standard of Metro buses to the level maintained in the past or else ensure the lowering of fares to the level of ordinary coaches.

The former chairman of KPTS convened a governing body (GB) meeting on May 10 wherein the Metro bus operators complained of high price of diesel. However, after a detailed discussion, a Monitoring & Inspection Committee was constituted to

check the service standard of Metro buses as per the KPTS agreement and submit a report for consideration in next GB meeting.

The report, presented in a GB meeting held on July 7, and presided over by Secretary Transport, Sindh/new chairman of KPTS, Rasheed Alam, suggested that the renewal of route permits of Metro buses should be linked to revival of service standard, which, at present, has declined considerably, and the payment of KPTS service charges dues.

It is expected that in compliance with the Sindh Ombudsman's recommendations, the issue will be resolved in the near future.

Source: <http://www.apnakarachi.com>

### Dadu Residents Hold Rally to Support Ombudsman Official

Activists and workers of the Dadu Citizens Alliance, comprising more than 20 different political and social organizations, took out a rally and staged a sit-in to protest against corrupt officials of the district, who had hatched a conspiracy against an honest and popular Regional Director, Sindh Ombudsman's office, Dadu, by initiating a probe against him on a complaint filed by two notorious police officials.

The Alliance also sent faxes and

letters to the Sindh government in this connection, requesting it to look into the matter.

The Dadu Regional Directorate of the Sindh Ombudsman, was created to attend to hundreds of complaints against corrupt officials of the district.

A very popular and honest official Saeed Ahmad Moubenjo was appointed as the Regional Director (RD). Immediately after taking over his office, Moubenjo

started providing speedy justice to the people and ordered action against corrupt officials without giving consideration to their rank or status. The Alliance claimed that this created resentment in the district administration and local political elite, but the RD's actions earned him respect and support within the public, who vowed to not accept any injustice meted out to the Ombudsman official.

Source: <http://www.thenews.com.pk>



## Ombudsman Probe Details Cover-up Scheme in Fertilizer Fund

An Ombudsman fact-finding probe dissected in detail how the P728-million fund meant for fertilizer and farm implements in 2004 was plundered by House members, agriculture and local officials and private individuals.

Documents obtained by abs-cbnNEWS.com/Newsbreak show a hasty manner in which the fund was siphoned off, leaving a trail of clues on the anomaly.

The P728-million fund is just part of the more that P2.8 billion that was supposedly released to the Department of Agriculture before the May 10, 2004 national elections.

Described by the Senate committees on agriculture and Blue Ribbon as "the rape of the nation," the fertilizer fund scam has been largely identified with former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante. He was tagged as the main architect of the scam, the one who called the shots in distributing the P728-million largesse meant to boost the election success of the administration's political allies.

The Senate inquiry pinned down agriculture officials led by Bolante for criminal culpability and recommended further investigation and possible filing of charges against local officials. It found a web of officials within the DA which plundered the fertilizer fund.

Further investigation by the Ombudsman has shown that many players are as liable as Bolante.

The first part of this report explained the participation and culpability of House members in the fertilizer fund. (Please see 'Ombudsman report: some House

members liable for fertilizer scam'). In that report, House members were shown to have a "direct hand" and knowledge in the misuse of the fund.

Source: abs-cbnnews.com

### Ombudsman approves filing of charges vs Jocjoc

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez has approved the filing of charges of graft and corruption and illegal use of public funds against former agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante and other Department of Agriculture (DA) officials tagged in the P728-million fertilizer scam.

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni said Gutierrez has created a panel to conduct a preliminary investigation on Bolante and the other suspects.

"We will start the preliminary investigation on this case (fertilizer scam) very soon," he said. "We are just finalizing the initial report from the (Field Investigation Office)."

Jalandoni said the Office of the Ombudsman has found ample grounds to pursue investigation on allegations against Bolante and other DA officials supposedly involved in alleged anomalies in the fertilizer project.

The preliminary investigation would determine probable cause on whether the complaint would be sent to the Sandiganbayan for trial, he added.

Violation of Republic Act 3019, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, and Article 220 of the Revised Penal Code refer to giving undue injury to any party, including the government, caused by

giving any private party any unwarranted benefit, advantage or preference in the discharge of his official administrative or judicial functions, Jalandoni said.

Also recommended for indictment were Agriculture Undersecretary Belinda Gonzales and Assistant Secretaries Jose Felix Montes, Edmund Sana and Ibarra Poliquit.

The case arose from alleged anomalies in the distribution of the government's P728-million fertilizer fund through the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program before the national elections in 2004.

The project was also supposedly overpriced by at least P127 million.

Bolante fled to the US in 2005 at the height of a Senate investigation into the fertilizer scam.

However, his asylum bid was denied twice by a Chicago Immigration Court in a ruling dated Feb. 9, 2007 and a Board of Immigration Appeals decision, dated June 25, 2007.

"More suffering and abuses will trigger social unrest, even a revolution," he said.

Source: Philippine Star.



ABS-CBN



## Vietnam Inspectorate Reports Progress in Tackling Corruption

In the first six months of this year, the government inspectorate came to a conclusion on eight inspections that detected fraud worth nearly 970bn dong [approx 58m US dollars] and more than 45,000 US dollars, according to the Central Steering Board for Corruption Prevention and Control.

Inspectors from 64 provinces and cities also detected misdeeds in economic management worth nearly 400bn dong, including the misuse of more than 1,000 hectares of land. Sixty-one cases of corruption were uncovered in 64 provinces and cities, mostly in Hanoi, Ca Mau, Ha Tay, An Giang, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Vinh Phuc and Yen Bai. By May 2008 judicial agencies had brought to court 158 cases, involving nearly 400 people on charges of corrupt behaviour.

These figures testify to a great effort made by ministries, sectors and localities in detecting and dealing with corruption. They have tried to quickly settle administrative procedures and perform in an open and transparent manner. Many localities have carried out inspections. In addition to senior officials declaring property and incomes, almost all ministries, sectors and

localities have paid their workers' salaries directly into their banks.

Notably, many provinces and cities have issued regulations verifying the responsibility of the heads of organizations and agencies in implementing the anti-corruption law. For instance, in the northern midland province of Phu Tho the heads of state agencies will be subject to discipline if they leave more than 2 per cent of corruption cases unsettled in their agencies. Meanwhile, the Central Highland province of Lam Dong has asked its inspectors to make clear the discipline that would be imposed on heads of state agencies if they are found involved in scandals. Recently, three ranking officials in the province were disciplined for their irresponsible behaviour in dealing with corruption cases within their agencies.

Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong, who is deputy head of the Central Steering Board for Corruption Prevention and Control, says that despite such results, the anti-corruption fight has not dramatically turned the corner as expected. According to the deputy PM, the implementation of regulations to prevent

corruption has been slow going. Many localities are still confused about how to enforce the anti-corruption law that requires senior officials to declare their property and incomes. In fact, only a few corruption cases have been detected by state agencies.

Pham Huu Bong, vice-chairman of the Vietnam War Veterans' Association, complains that notorious cases have been settled at a snail's pace due to a lack of consistency in the way the judicial sector dealt with the offenders. In his opinion, the Central Steering Board for Corruption Prevention and Control should focus on preventive measures rather than administrative measures.

One of the main tasks for the remaining six months of this year is to intensify inspections to discover and strictly deal with cases of corruption, particularly those of great public concern. In addition, all provinces and cities should be active in dealing with fraud in their localities to avoid prolonged complaints and petitions.

Source: BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific.

## Chief Inspector Confirms Top Priority in Anti-corruption

In his reception for the Indonesian anti-corruption chief in Hanoi on July 22, Truyen said the Government has been speeding up administrative reforms and gearing up State agencies' operations toward transparency and openness as measures to fight corruption.

"Vietnam has promulgated the Anti-Corruption Law and a number of relevant legal documents," Truyen said.

"The country has also been preparing to issue an anti-corruption strategy for 2020 and compiling a project on monitoring incomes of public employees and Government officials as well as a project to include anti-corruption into a training program."

The Indonesian guest praised the host country's socio-economic achievements as encouraging, especially in the current world economic situation.

Azhar said Indonesia is interested in Vietnam's experiences in corruption control as the two countries share similar conditions.

Azhar also revealed a plan to expand his committee's current influences, now limited to Jakarta, to the national scale.

Both sides said they hoped to boost ties between their inspection and anti-corruption agencies through concrete and practical programmes of cooperation.

### Deputy PM meets Indonesian anti-corruption boss

Deputy Prime Minister and Vice Chairman of the Central Steering Board for Anti-Corruption Truong Vinh Trong received Indonesian Anti-Corruption Committee Chairman Antasari Azhar in Hanoi on July 22.

Azhar, who came to study Vietnam's experiences in the fight against corruption,

praised the country's dynamic economic growth, especially the surge in foreign direct investment which he attributed to the progress made in its anti-corruption work.

Indonesia was looking for further cooperation and further exchange of experiences in the corruption combat, he said.

Trong pledged to share relevant experiences with Indonesia, emphasising that if the work has not been done well, public confidence would be fading, which would harm national development and global economic integration.

He said discovering corruption and holding open and transparent trials is the best way to prevent future cases.

Source: VietNamNet Bridge



## Hanoi & HCM City customs commit financial wrongdoing worth trillions

**The Government Inspectorate, Vietnam's central inspection agency, had detected trillions of dong worth of financial mismanagement committed by Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City customs (VND1 trillion = US\$62.5 million).**

This source reported that customs offices in the country's two biggest cities made serious errors in setting cargo tax codes, surveying goods quality, applying tax exemptions and vetting Certificates of Origin (C/O) last year.

In particular, Ha Noi customs let many enterprises owe huge taxes for long periods past Government limits without imposing fines.

There are even cases when such enterprises were considered for tax exemption.

The Inspectorate has asked Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to discipline the head of the Ha Noi City Customs Office and a number of senior officials, the source said, adding the agency has finished auditing the General Department of

Customs and detected many wrongdoings there.

Earlier, when asked if the amount mishandled by Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City customs runs up to hundreds of billions of dong (VND100 billion = \$6.25 million), the Inspectorate's head Tran Van Truyen declined to reveal but told Sai Gon Giai Phong "it is much higher than that".

Around 400 Certificates of Origin were initially found to have been faked, Truyen said.

Meanwhile, at a conference on the 11th January in Ha Noi, the Inspectorate announced that in 2007 nearly VND8.35 trillion (US\$521.8 million) was mismanaged, up over VND300 billion compared to 2006.

Over 8,780 hectares of land was also misused.

Last year, the country detected 584 cases with 1,299 offenders, causing total losses of over VND865 billion (US\$53 million). As many as 435 cases with 987 suspects were indicted and 360

cases with 843 defendants went to trial.

The Inspectorate has proposed the Government take back over VND6 trillion, of which VND3.4 trillion has already been returned to central budgets.

In addition, it recommended disciplines to over 2,300 state employees and transferred 153 cases to the police for further investigation. It also recommended criminal action against more than 200 officials.

In other news, the Inspectorate officially launched the online version of its publication - Thanh Tra (Inspection) Newspaper at [www.thanhtra.com.vn](http://www.thanhtra.com.vn).

The e-newspaper is expected to help the Inspection Newspaper reach out to more readers and contribute to the fight against corruption.

(Source: SGGP)

## Officials' asset declarations must be reported before June

*VietNamNet Bridge* Speaking on the sideline of the ongoing National Assembly session, Chief Government Inspector Tran Van Truyen said state agencies and local governments have to submit enumerations of officials' assets by June 15.

Truyen said the Government Inspectorate has received reports from 15 ministries, agencies and provinces.

He said that on June 15 the agency will report to the Prime Minister and any agency and

province that hasn't submitted the report will be punished.

According to regulations, the declarations of officials' assets were to have been finalised in late March and the results to be reported to the Prime Minister in April. However, some local governments couldn't fulfill this task on time.

(Source: TP)



## Around The Ombudsman World

News in Brief: Please click on the links below to read the news in detail.

- ▶ Ombudsman Ontario "Sharpens Teeth" of watchdogs from six Nations
- ▶ Guyana's President begins process to examine failure to Appoint Guyana Ombudsman Since 2005
- ▶ April 7-11, 2008 Second African Ombudsman Association Conference Tripoli, Libya
- ▶ Tajikistan is establishing a Human Rights Ombudsman Institution