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BREAK THE CORRUPTION CHAIN

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Walk Against Corruption

NGOs Voice Their Support In Fighting Graft

By Mohd Azhar Ibrahim



TI-M President Datuk Akhbar Satar launching the launching of Coalition called Governance, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency (GIAT).
Pic courtesy of TI-M

Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) organised a Walk Against Corruption event themed 'A Nation Free of Corruption Starts with You' at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa in conjunction with the International Anti-Corruption Day.

Held in collaboration with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), the NKRA Against Corruption, Performance Management Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the event served as the platform to raise awareness and promote public-private sector cooperation in fighting corruption. More than 1,000 people, including Anti-Corruption Secretariat members from various higher learning institutions participated in the 1.4km walk to demonstrate their support and commitment to end corruption.

Chief Commissioner (Prevention) Datuk Mustafar Ali, TI-M Secretary General, Datuk Loi Kheng Min, NKRA Against Corruption Director, Ravindran Devagunam and Royal Malaysian Police Department of Integrity and Standard Compliance (JIPS) Director, Datuk Zubaidah Md. Ismail.

The Walk Against Corruption is part of a comprehensive outreach programme to get the public, especially the youths, to make their stand in fighting corruption and promoting a zero tolerance against corruption, TI-M's President, Datuk Akhbar Satar said in his opening address.



TI-M President Datuk Akbar Satar (squatting, third right) with participants before the Walk.
Pic courtesy of TI-M

Also present were TI-M President, Datuk Akhbar Satar, MACC Deputy

In the spirit of the key theme of the day, which was Public-private sector was solidarity and collaboration in fighting corruption, prominent activists Cynthia Gabriel, Maria Chin Abdullah, Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan and youth leaders Akmal Saufi Mohamed Khalid and Jufitri Joha gave short speeches urging for public in fighting corruption.

Cynthia Gabriel who founded the Centre to Combat Corruption and Cronyism (C4) urged civil societies to stand united in their fight against corruption. "Let us fight the war against corruption together," she said.

Cynthia noted that while the Witness Protection Act and Whistleblower Protection Act encourage people to report corruption to MACC, laws such as the Sedition Act and the Official Secrets Act seem to have the opposite effect. People are scared to report corruption if it involves powerful political figures, she said.

Bersih 2.0 chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah highlighted the irony that, while

Malaysia's ranking in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2014 has moved up three notches, the Merdeka Centre survey conducted between November 26 and December 5, 2014 indicates that 77 percent of Malaysian voters feel corruption is still rampant in the country. "That the Sarawak Chief Minister has come out strongly against corruption in the timber logging industry in the state only adds to the perception that corruption is still very much at our doorstep," she said.

Maria implored the politicians in Malaysia to emulate their counterparts in Denmark by declaring their assets in the name of transparency. She also called for a free and independent media that is not beholden to any political party as only such a media can be vigorous in reporting corruption, she said.

Meanwhile Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan pointed out that illegal land clearings – made possible by corruption – were the cause of the recent disaster in the Cameron Highlands. "Corruption can kill," she said.

Ambiga, who formed the NegaraKu coalition against racism and extremism in Malaysia, took comfort in fact that government agencies and NGOs are coming together to fight corruption. "We are glad that the MACC has assured us that it will leave no stone unturned to bringing the culprits responsible for the tragedy in Cameron Highlands to book," she added.

"The fight against corruption should start while you are still small. Teach your children that it is not right to give or receive bribe," Ambiga said.

TI-M president Datuk Akhbar Satar also launched the coalition called Governance, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency (GIAT) to curb and eradicate corruption in the country. GIAT members comprise Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), Pertubuhan Amal Seri Sinar, Citizens Network for Better Malaysia and C4.



Participants at the Walk Against Corruption. Pic courtesy of TI-M



Break The Corruption Chain

By Mohd Azhar Ibrahim

UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser, M Shervin Majlessi . *Bernama Images*

Malaysia's anti-corruption effort officially began during the early 1950s with three different government agencies taking up the task of fighting graft in the newly independent country. A small unit in the Prime Minister's Department carried out prevention activities, a Special Crimes Unit within the Police Force handled investigations, while the Prosecution Division of Ministry of Justice took charge of prosecution.

When the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) was established in 1967, it took over all three functions. The ACA changed its name to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in 1973 and was relegated to the Home Ministry. However, with the enactment of the ACA Act in 1982, it reverted to its old name.

With the enactment of the MACC Act on January 1, 2009, the ACA became the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). Five independent panels act as the check and balance mechanism to ensure the MACC carries out its duties and responsibilities in an independent,

transparent and professional manner, without fear or favour.

The five independent panels are the Anti-Corruption Advisory Board; Special Committee on Corruption; Complaints Committee; Operations Review Panel; and the Consultation and Corruption Prevention Panel. Panel members who comprise former senior government officials, politicians from the ruling coalition and opposition, professionals, academicians, lawyers and distinguished individuals, help to enhance the MACC's efficiency and effectiveness.

On January 1, 2010, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak rolled out the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) designed to transform Malaysia into a developed nation by 2020. The GTP hinges on six National Key Result Areas (NKRAs). Fighting corruption is the second NKRA.

The NKRA Corruption Monitoring And Coordination Division, which is also known as the NKRA Against Corruption,

acts as the secretariat that monitors and coordinate the implementation of nine anti-corruption initiatives outlined in the GTP. These initiatives are:

1. To strengthen and empower the compliance units within key regulatory and enforcement agencies.
2. To define parameters of Support Letters in the government procurement process.
3. To disclose details in government procurement contracts.
4. To enforce existing political laws and conduct a study on revamping political funding.
5. To promote zero-tolerance for corruption supported by a robust Whistleblower Protection Act.
6. To strengthen the independence of key institutions.
7. To complete prosecution of corruption cases within one year.

8. To enforce stiffer punishment for corruption offences.
9. To develop a name-and-shame database of convicted corruption offenders.

On top of this, the MACC initiated its very own Transformation Programme in 2011, to enhance its operation, human capital and corruption prevention measures.

At the same time, the prime minister appointed prominent businessman and activist, Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan, as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department overseeing Integrity, Good Governance and Human Rights. Low made it his priority to nurture a culture of integrity and good ethics in the government machinery. He initiated the establishment of integrity units in all government department, agencies and government-linked companies.

The initiatives, coupled with MACC's proactive anti-corruption measures bore fruit when Malaysia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) ranking for 2014 moved up two notches to 52 from 50 in 2013.

To ensure that Malaysia continues to climb up in the CPI ranking, Low has proposed for amendments to section sections 23 and 36 of the MACC. This will make it an offence for the immediate relatives of public officials who chair a government procurement tender committee to participate in the tender, and empower the MACC to require those who appear to live beyond their means to declare their assets, respectively.

Another proposal is to include a Corporate Liability provision into the Act, which would make a company liable for any corruption offence perpetrated either locally or abroad, by its employee.

In addition, the Special Committee on Corruption has proposed for the establishment of the MACC Services Commission to deal in matters concerning the appointment, confirmation, promotion or dismissal of MACC staff. This includes alleviating the



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan

office of the MACC Chief Commissioner to equal that of the Attorney-General and the Auditor-General.

Malaysia's anti-corruption efforts have attracted international attention and recognition. In its Review Report issued on February 7, 2014, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) has acknowledged twenty-three of Malaysia's anti-corruption initiatives as best practices worthy of emulation by anti-corruption authorities across the globe.

UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser for Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim, Shervin Majlessi, who is also the UNCAC secretariat, was an international observer during the 10th Annual Meeting of the South-East Asia Parties Against Corruption (SEA-PAC) recently. Majlessi was greatly impressed by MACC's initiative in promoting anti-corruption cooperation across the Southeast Asia region.

On the education front, the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy (MACA) conducts more than one hundred courses annually to enhance the capacity and professionalism of not only MACC officers, but also those from other government agencies including the private sector. The academy also conducts CeIO programmes for international participants.

MACA gained international recognition when the Vienna-based International

Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) chose to conduct a module of its International Masters in Anti-Corruption Studies (MACS) programme at the academy. In addition, SEA-PAC members have widely acknowledged the MACA as the anti-corruption training hub for the regional.

MACA's Certified Integrity Officer Programme (CeIO) has thus far produced 250 CeIOs from both the public and private sectors. These CeIOs have gone on to head the Integrity Units that have been set up in all government departments and agencies, including multi-national corporations, to inculcate a culture of integrity.

The NKRA Against Corruption has endeavoured to promote awareness and inculcate zero tolerance to corruption at all levels of society. Elements of integrity are injected into the curriculum for primary and secondary schools; anti-corruption secretariats are established in public universities and teacher training institutions across the country; there are integrity committees in almost all sectors of businesses ranging from street hawkers to construction companies and multi-national corporations; even members of parliaments regularly undergo a refresher course in ethics and integrity.

Although no stone is left unturned in the quest to break the corruption chain, much remains to be done.

MACC Open Day Reaching Out To The Public

By Mohd Azhar Ibrahim



Anti-corruption mascot Agent Lang (centre) and popular children cartoon characters Upin and Ipin posing with young fans. *Bemama Images*

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) held its inaugural Open Day at the Mid Valley Convention Centre in conjunction with the International Anti-Corruption Day 2014 recently.

MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention) Datuk Mustafar Ali said the people-friendly event serves to bring the public closer to the country's anti-graft body and promote public-private sector synergy in combating corruption.

"Eradicating corruption is a collective effort between the government and the public as such, it is important for the MACC to interact with ordinary citizens and win their cooperation in fighting corruption," Mustafar said.

The event started with a forum on 'Public-Private Partnership in Combating

Corruption: Issues and Challenges', which was moderated by Malaysian Institute of Integrity, Director of Public Sector, Mohd Nizam Mohd Ali.

Panel speakers comprising Petronas Chief Integrity Officer Datuk Samsiah Abu Bakar, SME Corp Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hafsa Hashim, Top Glove Corporation Berhad Executive Director Lim Cheong Guan and Datuk Saw Choo Boon who is co-chairman of the Special Task Force to Facilitate Business (Pemudah), spoke on the integrity-enhancement measures they initiated in their respective organisations.

This was followed by a dialogue session with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan and Mustafar, during which members of the audience asked questions and voiced their opinions on the MACC's ongoing efforts

to strengthen integrity and governance to combat corruption.

Various interesting activities lined up for the Open Day include a colouring contest for children, poetry recitation, career talk and a special appearance by MACC's anti-corruption mascot Agent Lang and popular children cartoon characters Upin and Ipin. A large whiteboard provided visitors with the opportunity to write down their own anti-corruption messages.

Several corporations that have signed the Corporate Integrity Pledge (CIP) opened up their exhibition booth where the public can learn how these companies have successfully nurtured a culture of zero tolerance to corruption among their employees.



The People have spoken. Anti-corruption messages of support from visitors at the MACC Open Day. *Bemama Images*



(From left) Mohd Nizam Mohd Ali, Datuk Samsiah Abu Bakar, Datuk Hafsa Hashim, Lim Cheong Guan, and Datuk Saw Choo Boon. *Bemama Images*