

MACC TODAY

Together



FIGHT CORRUPTION

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'I will protect MACC's independence at any cost'



Men of Honour (left to right) Datuk Akhbar Satar, TI - Malaysia President, Mr. Akere Muna, IACC Chair, Datuk Paul Low, Minister in the Prime Minister's Dept, Datuk Mustafar Ali, MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention), and Mr. Jose Ugaz Transparency International Chair. *Bernama Images*

THE Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will be further empowered in combating graft and abuse of power as it will be given more bite.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan said the country's graft-fighting body would be strengthened by turning it into a separate service commission.

This, he said, would allow the commission to not only improve its capacity and staff professionalism but allow it to better control the terms and conditions of their employment.

The government, he said, was also committed to make the appointment and tenure of the Chief Commissioner more secure.

"I will protect the sanctity and independence of the MACC. I will protect it at any cost," he said at the opening of the 16th International

Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

The 16th edition of the IACC, themed, 'Ending Impunity: People, Integrity, Action', is organised jointly by the MACC and IACC consultative council, Transparency International and Transparency International Malaysia.

More than 1,000 participants from more than 130 countries attended the conference.

The opening ceremony was also attended by Dato' Akhbar Satar, President of Transparency International Malaysia; Jose Ugaz, Chair of Transparency International; Akere Muna, Chair of IACC Council, and Datuk Mustafar Ali, MACC's Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention).

Low added that the office of the Auditor General would be given more powers and a

wider audit scope. The Auditor General would report to a bi-partisan special committee in Parliament.

"We are currently in the process of strengthening these two entities," he said.

Malaysia, Low said, under the aegis of its National Integrity System, recognised the importance of having good governance and the need to eradicate corruption.

It was well aware that if the scourge is not kept in check, Malaysia's aim of being a developed nation by 2020 would otherwise be unattainable.

He said under the National Key Results Area (NKRA) for Corruption, Malaysia had set for itself the target of achieving a Transparency International CPI (Corruption Perception Index) score of 70, from the current 52.

Malaysia also aims to move up the ranks of countries surveyed, from the current 50, to be in the top 30 by 2020.

Low told delegates at the conference that one of the hallmarks of a society with high integrity was the upholding of social justice, where the rights of the citizens are safeguarded and where wealth distribution is equitable and inclusive.

He also cautioned against an unhealthy relationship between politics and business as this would be a strong hindrance for reform towards a government that is more transparent and accountable.

Low said the government recently launched the National Consultative Committee for Political Financing, which would act as a forum for the people to recommend best practices and required legislation, regulations and institutional support.

The minister also called for a more extensive public engagement that would forge stronger collaboration with the relevant interest groups or non-government organisations at all levels of civil society.

'MACC officers are ready to make sacrifices in the public's interest

"ACT without fear or favour." This was the message from the Chief Commissioner of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed at the 16th International Anti-Corruption Conference at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, yesterday.

In the special message read by Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention) Datuk Haji Mustafar

Ali, Tan Sri Abu Kassim said he had always reminded MACC officers to act without fear or favour.

"I have always reminded MACC officers to act without fear or favour. We do not practice impunity in our investigations.

For that reason, the MACC officers are ready to make sacrifices in upholding the public's interest.

"We believe to stop impunity, all institutions in the criminal justice system must act according to the merits of the case.

"As for the MACC, we must uphold the importance of independence in our investigations.

"For civil society and the public, they must be the protector and our conscience to defend the anti-corruption institution from



any interference which will affect its independence. For the lawmakers, regardless of their political differences, they must be united in helping us to create a truly independent anti-corruption institution.

“Last but not least, the prosecutors in Malaysia who play a role of taking charge of prosecution, shall be purely non-selective in their line of duty,” he read.

Mustafar added that the global fight to end graft requires firming up systems and procedures, and creating and promoting cultures that detest all forms of corruption, abuse of power and malpractice.

He said central to this struggle was a leadership by integrity, responsibility, accountability and transparency.

“Ending impunity is the journey where we aspire in establishing, restoring, implementing and executing the principles of integrity and governance,” said Mustafar.

He said MACC had, in the past five years, made progress in being an independent, transparent and professional anti-corruption agency.

“Much has been achieved but more needs to be done. The MACC is committed to continuously



MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner (Prevention) Mustafar Ali
“MACC is committed to continuously improving and strengthening itself as a renowned, world-class anti-corruption agency,”

improving and strengthening itself as a renowned, world-class anti-corruption agency,” he said.

Mustafar said IACC had developed into a conducive gathering which brings together anti-corruption activists, experts from government agencies, private sector, civil society organisations and individuals from all over the globe.

The aim is to share and expand on ground-breaking and cutting-edge initiatives in fighting corruption.



Senator Datuk Paul Low and Datuk Mustafar Ali visiting the MACC booth.
 MACC Images



Opening Ceremony for the 16th International Anti-Corruption Conference. MACC Images

What is People Power and How Does it Impact Corruption and Impunity?

WHAT exactly is people power and collective nonviolent action? Without understanding the dynamics of these related elements of bottom-up change, we cannot effectively engage, empower and mobilise our fellow citizens, support and protect integrity champions, channel public outrage to productive nonviolent action, and maximise our use of on-the-ground and online tools, as well as other new technologies.

The plenary session on People Power serves to:

1. Examine how people power works when applied to fighting impunity and corruption and the role of power dynamics in achieving social justice.
2. Discuss the critical role of strategy to design effective monitoring tactics that can disrupt the corrupt status quo, and create opportunities for engagement with power holders.
3. Highlight successful “people power essentials”, including nonviolent discipline, the many dimensions of unity, and the “three intangibles” - collective responsibility, collective identity and legitimacy.
4. Review a people power checklist for effective citizen mobilisation and action.

Ms. Shaazka Beyerle, author of ‘Curtailing Corruption: People Power for Accountability & Justice’ which documents grassroots citizen campaigns, movements and local community initiatives from all over the world targeting and impacting corruption and impunity.

Beyerle shared two examples where a non-violent people movement have successfully applied social, economic and political pressure in order to make their voices heard and bring forth the changes that they wanted – for the collective good of their community.

Brazil: It is estimated that between 26 and 33 percent of politicians have more than one criminal record. Most Brazilians will tell you their country has a long and storied history of juicy political corruption scandals here in South



Rapt attention. Participants listening to Ms Shaazka Beyerle. *Bernama Images*

America's largest democracy. On an almost yearly basis there is at least one major political corruption scandal that erupts into a national frenzy and points a spotlight on the dark side of Brazilian politics.

However, the country is taking huge strides to wash away corruption in politics with a groundbreaking new law referred to as Fich Limpa – which means ‘clean slate’ in English. This law came about because a coalition of civil organisations and from across the society managed to get 1.6 million signatures to petition the congress to pass a legislation to bar those who have been convicted of more than one criminal charge from holding public office.

Afghanistan: As a result of corruption, social infrastructure construction projects like roads and housing were frequently shoddy and sub-standard. The local community began to closely monitor how the budget for these construction are spent. Under the rights to information bill (RTI) they petitioned the local council to provide them with records of the expenditure and the receipts. People physically take the measurements and inspect the construction projects to ensure the contractors meet the specifications. As a result, there were

no more leakages and sub-standard delivery.

Mr. Vijay Anand, president and co-founder of 5th Pillar India, an International non-profit organisation that uses a document called the Zero Rupee Note as a non-violent method of non-cooperation to bribery.

Anand related an incident in the state of Tamil Nadu where the police kept some students in jail for more than 30 hours and expected the parents pay a bribe for their sons' release. Instead of money, one of the students gave the police a Zero Rupee Note and out of shame and guilt, the police let them go without further ado.

In another case, villagers were deprived of their monthly ration cards when a corrupt government supply office staff who was supposed to distribute the ration cards, had withheld them for the black market. The villagers banded together, and using India's Right To Information (RTI) Act 2005, petitioned the supply office to furnish them with the identity of the said staff and his monthly performance record in distributing the ration cards. The following month, all 400 villagers received their ration cards.

In each of the above cases, people power has empowered those affected by corruption to get services that are due to them without paying bribes or encountering delays. However, in their fight against corruption and the pursuit of justice, civil societies and organisations must ensure that they are transparent, accountable, and uphold noble values and integrity.

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