



**CALD Statement on the Appointment of Hon. Ong-art Klampaiboon to the Cabinet
and on Democrat Party's Victory in Bangkok's District Council Elections
June 7, 2010 | Manila, Philippines**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) congratulates CALD Founding Secretary General and current Member of the Thai Parliament, Hon. Ong-art Klampaiboon for his recent appointment as Minister in the Office of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva.

Mr. Klampaiboon, who also serves as Head of the Bangkok MPs and Member of the Democrat Party's Policy Committee, will be primarily responsible for improving operations at the Public Relations Department and the Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) by virtue of his new post.

CALD recognizes that the appointment of Mr. Klampaiboon and other new ministers, and the reshuffling of cabinet heads, are in line with the Democrat Party's objective of instituting broad and far-reaching reforms that address the root causes of the recent political crisis.

While much more needs to be done to realize this objective, the Democrat Party has shown the willingness, determination, and commitment to bridge the political, economic and social divides in Thai society which the recent crisis made apparent.

This, without a doubt, is an enormous task which may take time to accomplish, but the Democrat Party has certainly taken the important first steps towards the direction of reform, as evidenced by the new cabinet appointments.

CALD is pleased that this reformist stance of the Democrat Party has been recognized by the people of Bangkok, who have rewarded the party with a landslide victory in the recently concluded district council elections.

The Democrat Party won 10 out of the 14 Bangkok districts in the first round of district council elections held last June 6, with 79 Democrat candidates securing seats in the district council. This number of winning candidates is three times bigger compared to the number of seats secured by the Democrats four years ago. It is also the party's best electoral performance in Bangkok district elections for the past twenty years. That this victory was achieved after the recent political turmoil that afflicted the Thai capital is a validation of the trust and confidence of the citizens of Bangkok -- who were most affected by the crisis -- to the DP-led government of Thailand.

It is in this light that CALD extends its warmest congratulations to Party Leader Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, to Bangkok Governor and former CALD Chair Sukhumbhand Paribatra, and again to Mr. Klampaiboon, who also served as Party Director for Bangkok District Council elections.

This electoral victory notwithstanding, there are still numerous and difficult challenges confronting Prime Minister Vejjajiva and the DP-led government. Forces which threaten to sow political instability still loom large, and an outbreak of violence would definitely put to waste whatever gains have been painstakingly achieved in recent weeks.

CALD strongly believes in the capability of the Democrat Party and its leadership to surmount these challenges and to institute the necessary political, economic and social reforms that address the fundamental issues and concerns which continue to fuel social unrest, in particular, the recent violent clashes in Bangkok between the Red Shirts and government authorities. It also expresses its optimism and faith in the commitment of the party to heal the wounds of the political crisis and pave the way for genuine national reconciliation.