

**CALD Statement reiterating the call for greater democratic space in Singapore and to respect the right of the Singapore Democratic Party to exist  
(October 16, 2008)**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) reiterates for its call for greater political space and the respect for political dissent and human rights in Singapore. The CALD expresses shock and deep concern over the repressive and punitive action taken against the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) and Dr. Chee Soon Juan and Ms. Chee Siok Chin over a 2006 article published by the party's newspaper, The New Democrat, regarding the scandal involving the National Kidney Foundation.

CALD is greatly alarmed that following the Singapore High Court's decision to order the SDP to pay damages to Mr. Lee Kuan Yew and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong up to \$280,000 and \$440,000, respectively, the SDP would be declared bankrupt and subsequently de-registered as a political party.

CALD enshrines the belief that the democracy's strength lies in preserving the open spaces of freedom of expression and the respect for human rights, tolerance of legitimate dissent and the independence of the judiciary. CALD is disheartened with the manner with which the Singapore government suppresses the SDP and stifles democratic debate and freedom of press and assembly.

In safeguarding freedom and democracy, CALD strongly appeals to various democracy-promoting groups and organizations and the larger liberal family to help advance the cause of democracy in Singapore and respect to right of the SDP and all other political parties to exist, and not be arbitrarily dissolved or de-registered as a legitimate political entity.