

**CALD Statement denouncing the recent spate of ISA arrests in Malaysia  
(September 16, 2008)**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), denounces the arrests of the opposition lawmakers, Ms. Teresa Kok, and two other journalists, Mr. Raja Petra Raja Kamarudin and Ms. Tan Chee Hoon, under the recently invoked Malaysian Internal Security Act (ISA), a law that provides for the detention of people suspected of threatening the national security with the directive to keep suspects in custody indefinitely without trial. Ms. Tan has since been released.

CALD lauds Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, a CALD member party, on strongly urging the Malaysian government to amend or abolish the ISA. Gerakan acting president Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Koon said that the existence of the act painted a very negative perception of the country to the outside world, adding that it was also irrelevant considering the country had a sound judicial system in place.

CALD steadfastly upholds the principle respecting freedoms of dissent, assembly and expression. These rights are elemental in the strengthening of democratic processes and the rule of law. CALD calls upon the Malaysian government to immediately and unconditionally release Ms. Teresa Kok and Mr. Raja Petra so as to sustain Malaysia's trajectories towards fuller democracy.