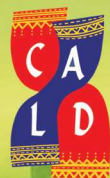


CALD CONFERENCE ON
**DEMOCRATIC
TRANSITIONS**

CONFERENCE REPORT



Council of
Asian Liberals
and Democrats

**18 NOVEMBER 2012
BANGKOK, THAILAND**



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CONCEPT PAPER

Reform is a matter of substance, as well as a matter of the right speed and the right sequencing. Reforms are difficult and complex, especially in a country like mine where we have not known what reforms meant for many, many decades.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
Speech at the dinner hosted by National Democratic Institute &
International Republican Institute, USA, 19 September 2012

...there was an understanding that things could not go on the way they were, there was a need for this change.

President Thein Sein
"Myanmar Leader Looks to Ethnic Peace"
Financial Times (11 July 2012)

The core feature of all political transitions is uncertainty.

Professor Larry Diamond
"The Need for a Political Pact"
Journal of Democracy (October 2012)

In May 2000, the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) held the conference *Democratic Transitions in Asia: Agenda for Action* in Jakarta, Indonesia. At that time, opposition political parties in Indonesia (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) and Taiwan (Democratic Progressive Party) dramatically won elections which ended decades of one-party rule. These historical victories followed similar successes in South Korea and Thailand in 1990s, where the rise to power of Kim Dae Jung and Chuan Leekpai, respectively, was interpreted as propitious to democracy. Earlier, in 1986, the people power revolution in the Philippines dismantled the two-decade old Marcos dictatorship and restored democracy in Asia's first democratic republic.

More than twelve years after, CALD returns to the issue of democratic transition, primarily because Burma, Southeast Asia's foremost pariah state, witnessed political reforms which may be construed as leaning towards democracy. As what Daw Aung San Suu Kyi rightfully observed, the reform process, by its very nature, is "difficult and complex", particularly in a country like Burma which had been under a military dictatorship for almost half-century. Without a doubt, political transition in this mainland Southeast Asian state is subject to unforeseen contingencies, unfolding processes and unintended outcomes, which makes this period a critical juncture in shaping the country's future.

How does one interpret the recent political reforms in Burma? Do these reforms signal the country's future transition to democracy, or are they just meant to ensure the military's long-term political survival? What are the transitional, contextual and systemic problems which could obstruct this potential regime change? Alternatively, what are the factors which could facilitate democratic transition? Are there lessons from Asia's democratic transitions which could be relevant and useful to Burma?

These are just some of the questions which inspire *CALD Conference on Transitions to Democracy*. The event deals with the general theme of regime change from authoritarianism to democracy and the challenges that accompany it. In particular, it looks at Burma's political transition and identifies the country's difficulties in managing the political struggles between competing forces, in building democratic institutions and the rule of law, in forging ethnic harmony and a democratic union, and in encouraging "democracy- and human rights-friendly" investments and environmental protection. It also tackles possible ways of addressing these challenges, drawing from the experiences of other Asian countries which made the successful transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

The Complexity and Uncertainty of Political Transition

Political scientists Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986), in their excellent, succinct work on regime change, defined 'transition' as "... the interval between one political regime and another... Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative." Taking this definition into account, democratic transition can be defined as the intermediate period between the breakdown or decay of authoritarian regime and consolidation of democracy.

It is important at the outset to distinguish democratic transition from democratic consolidation and even from political liberalization. Democratic consolidation is most usefully construed as "the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine" (Diamond, 1997). Political liberalization, on the other, hand, "implies an easing of repression and extension of civil liberties within an authoritarian regime" (Mainwaring, 1989).

A number of countries in Asia transitioned from authoritarianism to democracy, but it does not mean that they are already consolidated democracies. Democratic consolidation takes time and effort, and can only be realized when all relevant political actors consider democracy as 'the only game in town.' Countries in the region have also, in various instances, liberalized politically but remain to be under an authoritarian political set-up. Without regime change, these instances can never be considered as democratic transitions. Political liberalization can lead to democratic transition, but not in an automatic fashion. In this regard, it becomes imperative to ask: "Are the political reforms in Burma simply manifestations of political liberalization, or are they steps towards democratic transition?"

Democratic transition, by nature, is a period of great political uncertainty, one especially fraught with confusions, sensitivities and risks. It is also marked by a hybrid regime: institutions of the old regime coexist with those of the new regime and authoritarians and democrats often share power, whether through conflict or by agreement (Shih, 1994). Its barometer of success is the installation and survival of democratic government.

Renowned political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, in his classic work, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991) identified the installation of democratic government as part of the transition phase in the democratization process. This phase is preceded by the end of the authoritarian regime, and may lead to democratic consolidation, subject to how obstructive or facilitative factors play out (see Figure 1 below).

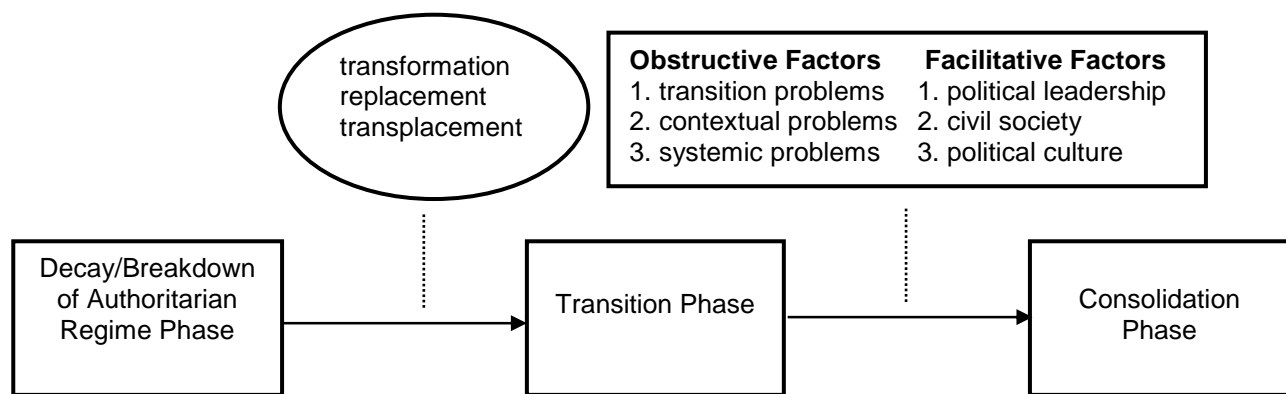


Figure 1: Huntington's Stages of Democratization Process¹

Huntington also categorized the different methods that can bring about a democratic transition. **Transformation** occurs when the elites in power take the lead in bringing about democracy. **Replacement** ensues when opposition groups take the lead in installing a democratic government after the authoritarian regime collapsed or was overthrown. **Transplacement** happens when democratization results largely from joint action by government and opposition groups. Huntington emphasized, however, that in virtually all cases, groups both in power and out of power played some roles, and these categories simply differentiate the relative importance of the government and the opposition.

The author further distinguished the variety of groups in both the government and the opposition based on their attitudes toward democracy. For him, the most crucial participants in the democratization process are the standpatters, liberal reformers, and democratic reformers in the governing coalition; while democratic moderates and revolutionary extremists figure prominently in the opposition. Their political attitudes toward democracy are summarized in Figure 2 below. The figure shows that

¹ Adopted from Aries Arugay, "Transitions to Democracy: The Southeast Asian Experience", Paper Submitted in Political Science 270, University of the Philippines.

supporters of democracy, in both government and opposition, occupy middle positions in the left-right continuum.

	Attitude toward Democracy		
	Against	For	Against
Government		Reformers Democratizers Liberals	Standpatters
Opposition	Radical Extremists	Democratic Moderates	

Figure 2: Political Groups Involved in the Democratization Process

Once a democratic government is installed, the movement towards democratic consolidation commences. Huntington identified three types of problems in developing and consolidating new democratic political systems. First are the **transition** problems, which stem from the phenomenon of regime change from authoritarianism to democracy. They include problems of establishing new constitutional and electoral system, weeding out pro-authoritarian officials and replacing them with democratic ones, repealing or modifying laws that were unsuitable for democracy, abolishing or drastically changing authoritarian agencies, among others. The author identified two key transition problems: one is the **torturer** problem – how to treat authoritarian officials that have blatantly violated human rights, and the **praetorian** problem – how to reduce military involvement in politics and establish a professional pattern of civil-military relations. The second category is the **contextual** problems, which flow from the nature of the society, its economy, culture, and history, and are in some degree endemic to the country, whatever its form of government. They tend to vary from country to country, although the most prevalent in third wave democracies are insurgencies, communal conflict, and regional antagonisms, poverty, socio-economic inequality, inflation, external debt, and low rates of economic growth. Finally, transitions are confronted with **systemic** problems, which stem from the workings of a democratic system. Examples are stalemate, inability to reach decisions, susceptibility to demagoguery, domination by vested interests, among others.

Burma at present is already confronting these problems in varying degrees. How the country responds to these difficulties will determine its future trajectory – whether it will move forward toward democratic consolidation or suffer a democratic reversal.

Burma's Political Transition: Quo Vadis?

Burma's political transition caught its citizens and the international community by surprise, probably in the same way the fall of the Berlin wall came as a shock to everyone, including the most zealous international observers. Under military rule since 1962, and under de facto Martial Law from 1988 to 2011, the prospects for political change in Burma appeared remote at best. The military junta which ruled for half-century was considered as one of the world's most rigidly authoritarian regimes, and it

presided over the descent of Burma into the ranks of the world's least developed nations.

In response to pressures for reform, the junta laid out in 2003 its “seven-step road map” to a “modern, developed, and democratic nation”, which paved the way to the adoption of the widely criticized 2008 Constitution.

Under this constitution, the 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections took place under highly fraudulent conditions, leading into resounding wins for 65-year old premier and former general Thein Sein and the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), but tainted by the boycott of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

In late 2010, however, things began to change. Despite retaining a firm hold on power and facing no urgent domestic or international threats, the military-backed civilian government instituted political reforms which liberalize politics and society.

Within half a year, the transformation was unmistakable. The government freed most political prisoners, including prominent figures such as Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been held under house arrest for most of the two previous decades; revised political-party laws in ways that allowed Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) plus other opposition parties to take part in politics; entered ceasefire negotiations with a number of ethnic groups; relaxed press censorship and control of civil society; and permitted leading dissidents to return (Zin and Joseph, 2012).

What is the nature of the changes and what are the factors which drive them? What are the main problems which could obstruct the transition process? Alternatively, what are the facilitative factors which could lead to democratic breakthrough and consolidation?

Political transition, as pointed out above, is a complex and difficult process. As noted by civil society activist Min Ko Naing: “We are free but not free. We are neither here nor there. It is no longer clear what we are fighting for. We prepared for revolution but we never prepared for transition. Today, we understand that we need to take part in the transition, but we do not know what role to play.” The fact that Burma confronts the reality of simultaneous transitions on several fronts does not help. At present, Burma is said to be transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy, from military to civilian rule, from a closed and monopolistic to an open and competitive economy, and from an ethnically fractured state to a more viable and coherent union.

As regards the impetus for the transition, five interrelated reasons have been forwarded to account for Burma's recent political reforms. They are: 1) an internal timeframe governed by the regime's “seven-step roadmap” and the retirement of long-time top general Than Shwe; 2) a recognition that Burma had become too reliant on China politically, economically, and militarily; 3) fear of another popular uprising; 4) a recognition of the need to engage the West; and 5) a desire to address Burma's lack of development (Zin and Joseph, 2012).

A number of factors have been credited for the smooth pace of the transition thus far. “These include an extraordinary democratic leader with broad moral authority in Aung San Suu Kyi; a passionate aspiration for democracy on the part of a society that has risen up repeatedly and courageously to demand it, most recently in the 2007 Saffron Revolution; an emerging civil society that is now blossoming with programs to educate, mobilize, and prepare citizens for democratic self-rule; and the dominance within the authoritarian government of soft-liners who now appear to have a compelling mix of strategic incentives to sustain political reform” (Diamond, 2012).

Despite these, it is important to be reminded that the military or Tatmadaw (Defense Services) is the institution that has defined and controlled the reform process. To this day, serving or retired generals control every important institution, and the constitution guarantees military domination.

For this reason, the future of the transition remains uncertain, and whether the reforms would lead to democracy depends on how Burma addresses the multi-fold problems which are now at play. Taking a cue from the categories of Huntington above, the main problems facing Burma at this transition phase are the following: (1) transition problem – crafting a political pact between competing forces; (2) systemic problem – building democratic institutions and the rule of law; and (3) contextual problems – forging ethnic harmony and a democratic union and encouraging “democracy- and human rights-friendly” investments and environmental protection.

Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces

Key personalities and groups, and how they view democracy, could spell the difference between success and failure of the democratization process. In the case of Burma, the success (or for that matter, continuance) of reforms can be attributed to the favourable or, at the very least, complicit attitude of key political actors.

President Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are the public face of these reforms. The president pulled out a surprise by launching liberal political reforms and appointing reformist ministers which appear to signal a loosening political grip of the military. Aung San Suu Kyi, on the other hand, has shown willingness to engage with the government, a stance which bestows the reform process the support and legitimacy that it needs.

Reforms could not have proceeded without the support or acquiescence of the military. It appears that for as long as the reforms do not impinge on the institution’s political veto and economic interests, the military would find the current dispensation tolerable. The NLD and the rest of the democratic opposition also played a role in the process, by pressing for reforms and making reforms work.

Despite the support of these key actors to political reforms, a lot more needs to be done, particularly in the crafting of political agreements. Transition pacts are by their nature difficult and often painful compromises. For this reason “a viable pact must begin by identifying the core interests of each constituency. In particular, the military needs guarantees that its autonomy will be respected, its members will not be

prosecuted, and its wealth will not be confiscated. And Burmese democrats need to know that the country is on a clear path to genuine democracy, even if there are limits for a period of time” (Diamond, 2012).

Without a doubt, key personalities matter in crafting political pacts which introduce reforms. However, strong institutions guarantee that reforms would be sustainable.

Building Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

It has been said that ending an authoritarian regime and the installation of a democratic government are the easier part of the democratization process. Building democratic institutions and promoting the rule of law after decades of authoritarian rule are the more difficult phase of the struggle for democracy.

Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986) observed that when countries move from one regime type to another, the rules are “in constant flux” and “are usually ardously contested.” Thus, in all transitions, at least two types of contests proceed simultaneously. One is the substantive competition over power and policy outcomes. The other is the constitutional struggle “to define rules and procedures whose configuration will determine likely winners and losers in the future” (Diamond, 2012).

In the case of Burma, the legal struggle begins with the 2008 Constitution. The document, officially adopted after a highly questionable national referendum, essentially institutionalized a hybrid political system – partly democratic, partly military-dominated. It allows the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces to appoint a quarter of the members of each house of parliament, giving the military the power to block any constitutional amendment; it provides the military six seats in the powerful eleven-member National Defence and Security Council; it insulates the military from civilian control and oversight; it disqualifies Aung San Suu Kyi from contesting the presidency; it sets broad exceptions in the practice of civil liberties, among others.

With these provisions in place, it is hard to imagine that Burma would become a true democracy. However, there are also claims that this document has played a role in the success of reforms by guaranteeing that the military's interests are protected. While the constitution's power-sharing provisions are useful during the transition process, their utility would definitely be put in question as democratization progresses.

Related to this issue of constitutional reform is the electoral system. The current first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system results in distortion of votes-seats ratio and may not be attuned to the continuing success of reforms. Reforms toward proportional representation or mixed system may reduce the risk of a backlash by giving the military, and more importantly, the minority parties, a chance to be part of institutional politics.

Success of any democratic reforms also rests on an active and empowered citizenry, and it appears that civil society groups have responded well to the democratic opening. As one scholar observed: “One result of national-level reforms is that citizens, the media, the opposition, and NGOs now enjoy access—via multiple channels both inside

and outside the government—to issue areas that used to be cordoned off as “matters of national security.” These include not only education, press freedom, labor organizing, and Internet access, but also macroeconomic policies regarding banking, exchange rates, capital, and landholding” (Callahan, 2012).

Institutions matter in a democracy. However, for institutions to survive and thrive, a peaceful and inclusive environment would be necessary.

Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union

Burma is probably one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the region, and even in the world. Almost one-third of the country’s estimated 54 million people are outside the Burman majority (who live in central and southern areas), sharing neither its language nor its ethnic identity. More than a hundred minorities—including the Shan, the Karen, the Karenni, the Chin, the Kachin, the Mon, and the Arakan—live mainly on the resource-rich periphery of Burma. Since independence in 1948, they have had a history of violent conflict with the center in what has amounted to a decades-long, intermittent civil war. In some of these areas, fighting still rages. For decades, the military has been trying to defeat ethnic insurgencies and control resources found in minority areas (Diamond, 2012).

There have been attempts, however, to address the civil war. In 1947, Aung San, father of Aung San Suu Kyi and founder of modern Burma, signed the Panglong accord with leaders of the Shan, Chin, and Kachin minorities. The Panglong accord laid the basis for a Union of Burma in which frontier minority groups would enjoy “full autonomy in internal administration,” and even the right to secede after ten years of national independence. But Panglong did not specify these groups’ autonomous powers and rights, and the rise of secessionism in the late 1950s was a key factor in the military’s takeover of power (Diamond, 2012).

To this day, the power of the military emanates from its role in ensuring the territorial integrity of the state. This, however, has been achieved through the use of violence, repression, and political opportunism. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that fighting continues in northern Shan State and Kachin State, while bloody communal strife ensues between Arakans and Rohingyas in the western portion of the country.

Recognizing that political reforms cannot continue amidst this conflict, President Thein Sein formed in May 2012 a twelve-member peace committee, which includes himself, to talk with armed ethnic movements. As a result of this, the government has secured ceasefire deals with a dozen armed ethnic groups over the past year.

Lasting peace and genuine integration, however, requires a broad shift from the current over-centralized form of government. Unless this is achieved, the continuing conflict will give the military a prominent role, with serious repercussions on the democratization process.

Once achieved, a democratic and peaceful union needs to be sustained by effective and sustainable development policies – policies which promote both economic and political development, as well as environmental protection.

Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly” Investments and Environmental Protection

Burma, as pointed out above, is undergoing simultaneous transitions on multiple fronts – political, social and economic. As the country transitions from a closed and monopolistic to an open and competitive economy, the issue of sustainable development comes to the fore, especially as Burma's rich natural resources are attracting the attention not only of neighbouring countries but also of investors outside the region.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in a number of recent speeches, has called attention regarding the need for “democracy-friendly” and “human-rights friendly” investment – “investment that prioritizes transparency, accountability, worker's rights, and environmental sustainability.” While she understood that investors do not come for purely altruistic reasons, she pointed out in her University of Oxford speech that “... investing in Burma should be done with a sense of responsibility, ...those who are thinking of making use of the new opportunities that Burma is offering to remember that we, the people of Burma, need to benefit from these investments as much as the investors themselves.”

The benefits that she has in mind are not purely economic like job creation or acquisition of skills. She looks at foreign investments as having a role to play in the democratization process. For one, for investments to flourish, the domestic environment should be structured in such a way that promotes property rights and the rule of law. In her ILO Conference speech, she said: “What I would like to see for our country is democracy-friendly development growth. I would like to call for aid and investment that would strengthen the democratization process by promoting social and economic progress that is beneficial to political reform.”

CALD Conference on Transitions to Democracy

In recognition of the importance of Burma's political transition not only for Burma but also for the broader Asian region, the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) chose the theme “Managing Burma's Political Transition: The Challenges Ahead” for its annual conference.

The conference will take place in Bangkok, Thailand on 16-19 November 2012. The objectives of the event are as follows:

- To understand the conceptual, theoretical and practical issues and debates on democratic transitions, particularly those that are relevant to the Asian region;

- To discuss in detail the political, military, economic and social challenges that go with Burma's political transition, and how the experiences of other Asian countries can provide guideposts in responding to them; and
- To identify specific political and policy-relevant recommendations on how Burma's political transition can be managed effectively.

The conference is divided into four sessions. These sessions are capped by a synthesis, where the major issues and recommendations are to be summarized and elaborated. Below are short descriptions of each of the conference sessions. Please note that the issues cited are only meant to facilitate conceptualization and discussion. Speakers may tackle other related issues apart from those mentioned.

Session I: Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces

This session will tackle the main actors, key issues and problems, and dynamics of negotiating a political pact during the process of democratic transition.

It will feature speakers from the National League for Democracy of Burma (NLD) and Democratic Party of Hong Kong (DPHK). The NLD speaker may tackle the current state of negotiations between the government and the opposition, while the DPHK speaker may draw lessons from his party's experience as part of the political opposition in Hong Kong.

It will be chaired by a representative of Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP), a party which played a prominent role in Indonesia's successful democratic transition.

Session II: Building Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

The session will address the difficulties associated with establishing democratic institutions and promoting the rule of law in societies transitioning from, or still living under, authoritarianism.

Representatives from NLD, Democrat Party of Thailand (DP) and Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) are invited to make presentations in this session. The NLD speaker may discuss the remaining impediments to democratic reform in Burma, and how the NLD intends to surmount them. The DP representative may dwell on the difficulties of Thailand in consolidating its democracy while the SDP speaker may speak on how the party embeds democracy in Singapore despite the city-state's authoritarian political set-up.

This session will be chaired by a representative from the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), which, like SDP, is struggling to play the role of democratic opposition in an authoritarian political landscape.

Session III: Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union

In this session, the difficult issue of nation-building in a multi-ethnic society will be scrutinized.

Speakers from three countries with extensive knowledge and experience on this issue are invited to make presentations. The speaker from Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP) may discuss the recently signed Bangsamoro Framework Agreement which aims to lay the groundwork for peace in southern Philippines, while the speaker from Liberal Party of Sri Lanka (LPSL) may speak on the reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in his country in the aftermath of the civil war. These cases can be compared to on-going negotiations with ethnic groups in Burma, which the speaker from National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) may discuss.

Considering the success of Malaysia in forging a multi-ethnic society, the session chair comes from Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM).

Session IV: Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly” Investments and Environmental Protection

This session looks at the political economy of democratic transition, particularly on how political liberalization can be harmonized with economic growth, with emphasis on sustainable development.

Speakers from two countries with relatively successful experiences in the politics-economics nexus are invited to make presentations. The speaker from Taiwan may discuss how the country’s economic development played a role in the consolidation of democracy. The representative from Civil Will Green Party (CWGP), the party which controls Mongolia’s Ministry for Nature, Environment and Green Development, may tackle how the country protects the environment even as it opens the economy to foreign investments, particularly in mining.

The session will be chaired by a representative from Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a party which has a proud history and legacy in forwarding environmental protection.

This conference aims to tackle one of the most crucial issues in the Asian region today – the political transition in Burma and the challenges it poses not only to the country but also to the region. CALD believes that a successful democratic transition in Burma could have implications for the future of democracy in other Asian countries, which, to this day, are still struggling to entrench and develop democracy in their societies.

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PROGRAM

I. Description

This conference deals with the general theme of democratic transitions and the challenges that accompany them. In particular, it looks at Burma's political transition and identifies the country's difficulties in managing the political struggles between competing forces, in building democratic institutions and the rule of law, in forging ethnic harmony and a democratic union, and in encouraging "democracy- or human rights-friendly" investments and environmental protection.

A seminar on *Best Practices on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness*, launch of CALD Party Management Handbook, and CALD Executive Committee meeting are also included in the line-up of activities.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the conference are as follows:

- To understand the conceptual, theoretical and practical issues and debates on democratic transitions, particularly those that are relevant to the Asian region;
- To discuss in detail the political, military, economic and social challenges that go with Burma's political transition, and how the experiences of other Asian countries can provide guideposts in responding to them; and
- To identify specific political and policy-relevant recommendations on how Burma's political transition can be managed effectively.

The objectives of the seminar are as follows:

- To describe the climate change and disaster challenges in Asia and what have been done to address them;
- To present and analyze cases of successful climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness in Asia; and
- To discuss mechanisms and initiatives at the regional level which can be utilized in crafting a coherent and effective response to climate change and disaster challenges.

III. Program of Activities

16 November 2012, Friday

Variable Arrival and Check in at the hotel

Grand Sukhumvit Hotel Bangkok

99 Sukhumvit Road
Soi 6, Klongtoey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

โรงแรมแกรนด์ สุขุมวิท กรุงเทพฯ
99 ซอยสุขุมวิท ซอย 6 ถนนสุขุมวิท
แขวงคลองเตย เขตคลองเตย
กรุงเทพฯ 10110

Tel: +66 2 2079999
Fax: +66 2 2079555
<http://www.grandsukhumvithotel.com/>

18:45 Assembly at hotel lobby and departure for welcome dinner

19:00 Welcome Dinner

Rosabieng Restaurant

3 Sukhumvit 11, Wattana
Bangkok, Thailand

17 November 2012, Saturday

Meeting Venue for 17-18 November:

Le Pin Room 1, 3rd Floor, Grand Sukhumvit Hotel

Seminar on Best Practices on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness

08:30 Registration

09:00 **Opening Session**

Session Chair:

Sec. J.R. Nereus “Neric” Acosta, Ph.D

Secretary General, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection,
Office of the President, The Philippines

Keynote Address

H.E. Abhisit Vejjajiva, MP

Former Prime Minister of Thailand

Leader of the Opposition, House of Representatives

Leader, Democrat Party, Thailand

Group Photo

09:45

Introduction to the Seminar by the Facilitator

Sec. J.R. Nereus “Neric” Acosta, Ph.D

Secretary General, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection,

Office of the President, The Philippines

CALD Climate Change Conference Summary Video

10:00

Session I: Understanding Climate Change Threats and Disaster Vulnerabilities

This session aims to identify the main climate change-related threats and disaster vulnerabilities that Asian countries confront, and how they have been addressed. The session will commence with a presentation on the topic by a resource person, followed by a quick round of sharing.

Atty. Antonio Oposa, Jr.

2009 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee

Professor of Environmental Law,

College of Law, University of the Philippines

11:00

Coffee/Tea Break

11:15

Session II: Fostering Climate Change Adaptability and Disaster Preparedness

This session will include a sharing of best practices on building climate change adaptability and disaster preparedness. In discussing the best practices, the presenters are expected to include the following in their discussion: the problem that the practice hopes to address, the main features of the practice, its impact, the challenges in its implementation.

Hon. Jerry Velasquez

Senior Regional Coordinator

UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
Asia-Pacific, Thailand

Hon. Alfredo Arquillano

UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
Champion for Making Cities Resilient
Vice Mayor, San Francisco, Cebu Province, Philippines

12:45

Closing Session

In this session, the facilitator will synthesize the results of the seminar and identify possible follow-up activities.

End of Seminar

13:00

Lunch

14:30

CALD Executive Committee (Execom) Meeting

17:30

End of CALD Execom Meeting

19:00

Dinner

Le Pin Room 2, 3rd Floor, Grand Sukhumvit Hotel

Book Launch

Freedom to Organize

*CALD Political Party Management Series
Vol. 1: Best Practices*

Opening Remarks

Sec. J.R. Nereus “Neric” Acosta, Ph.D

Secretary General, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection,
Office of the President, The Philippines

Reviews of the Book

Mr. Jules Maaten

Country Director, Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom, Philippine Office

Dr. Pimrapa Dusatdeeisariyakul

Programme Manager, Friedrich Naumann Foundation
for Freedom, Thailand Office

18 November 2012, Sunday

***Conference on Managing Burma's Political Transition:
The Challenges Ahead***

08:30 Registration

09:00 **Opening Session**

Session Chair:

Hon. Nutt Bantadtan, MP

Member, Democrat Party, Thailand

Welcome Remarks

Hon. Sam Rainsy, MP

Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

President, Cambodia National Rescue Party

Leader of the Opposition, Cambodia

Hon. Kiat Sitheeamorn, MP

Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Democrat Party Leader

Democrat Party, Thailand

09:30 **Session I: Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces**

Session Chair:

Mr. Muhammad Rakyen Ihsan Yunus

Secretary, Department of International Affairs

Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan

Speakers:

Dr. Myo Aung, MP

Dagon Seikkan Constituency

National League for Democracy, Burma

Hon. Sin Chung-kai, SBS, JP

CALD Individual Member

Deputy Chairperson, Democratic Party, Hong Kong

Open Forum

11:00 Coffee/Tea Break

11:15

**Session II: Building Democratic Institutions
and the Rule of Law**

Session Chair:

Ms. Selyna Peiris

Chair, CALD Youth

President, Association of Young Liberals of Sri Lanka

Speakers:

Hon. U Naing Ngan Lin, MP

Dakkhina Thiri Constituency

National League for Democracy, Burma

Hon. Nataphol Teepsuwan, MP

Director General

Democrat Party, Thailand

Dr. James Gomez

Head, Policy Unit

Singapore Democratic Party

Open Forum

13:00

Lunch

14:30

Session III: Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union

Session Chair:

Hon. Lau Chin Hoon

State Assemblyman of Johore

Central Committee Member,

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia

Speakers:

Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon

Member, Technical Working Group on Power Sharing

GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations

Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Office of the Political Advisor

Office of the President, The Philippines

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP

Leader, Liberal Party, Sri Lanka

Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation,
Office of the President, Sri Lanka

Mr. Nyo Ohn Myint

Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee
National Council of the Union of Burma

Open Forum

16:00 Coffee/Tea Break

16:15 **Session IV: Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly” Investments and Environmental Protection**

Session Chair:

Mr. Shih-Chung Liu

Director, Department of International Affairs
Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan

Speakers:

Professor Kuang-Jung Hsu

Department of Atmospheric Sciences,
National Taiwan University

Open Forum

17:45 **Closing Session**

Synthesis

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP

Leader, Liberal Party, Sri Lanka
Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation,
Office of the President, Sri Lanka

Closing Remarks

18:30 End of Conference

Free Night

19 November 2012, Monday

Variable Departure of participants

PROFILE OF SPEAKERS AND SESSION CHAIRS

Keynote Speaker



H.E. Abhisit Vejjajiva, MP

*Former Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand
 Leader of the Opposition, House of Representatives
 Leader, Democrat Party of Thailand*

H.E. Abhisit Vejjajiva is the Leader of the Opposition, House of Representatives and the Leader of Democrat Party of Thailand. He served as Prime Minister of Thailand from 2008-2011.

In a speech he delivered at a United Nations meeting, then Prime Minister Abhisit stressed the importance of addressing climate change and called for the passage of international agreements dealing with the issue.

Khun Abhisit graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), First Class honours, Oxford University, UK. He went on to receive Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Economics in the same university.

Seminar Facilitator



Sec. J.R. Nereus "Neric" Acosta, PhD

*Secretary General, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
 Member, CALD Climate Change Committee
 Philippine Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection*

Sec. Neric Acosta is an experienced legislator, educator, ardent advocate of the environment, and international scholar. Currently CALD Secretary General, Philippine Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection, and General Manager of Laguna Lake Development Authority,

Sec. Acosta also served as Secretary General of Liberal Party of the Philippines and as representative of Bukidnon province in Northern Mindanao to the Philippine House of Representatives.

His major legislation included bills on clean water, solid waste management and biodiversity protection. Sec. Acosta is also the principal author of the groundbreaking Clean Air Act, a model of environmental legislation in Asia.

Sec. Acosta's passion for education earned him various scholarships. After completing his BA in Political Science from the University of the Philippines, he went

on to complete an MA in Public Affairs (International Relations and Political Studies) from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Hawaii as an East West Center Scholar. He also attended the special programs Leaders in Development (1999) and Environmental Economics (2002) at the Kennedy School of Government of Harvard University. In 2004, he was named the first Filipino World Fellow of Yale University.

CALD Seminar on Best Practices on Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness

Session I: Understanding Climate Change Threats and Disaster Vulnerabilities



Atty. Antonio Oposa, Jr.
*Professor on Environmental Law
College of Law, University of the Philippines
2009 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee*

Atty. Antonio Oposa, Jr. pioneered the practice of Environmental Law in the Philippines and is on the forefront international arena of Environmental Law. As a lawyer and environmental activist, Atty. Oposa made his mark with an unusual case that later popularized the "Oposa Doctrine" in international legal circles. A triumph of principle, the case set a precedent for how citizens can leverage the law to protect the environment on the basis of "intergenerational equity."

In 1997, Atty. Oposa was awarded the UNEP Global 500 Roll of Honor. He was also Junior Chamber Philippines' Outstanding Young Man in 1993 for his work in environmental law. He was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award (reputedly Asia's Nobel Prize) in 2009 for his crusade to engage Filipinos in acts of enlightened citizenship that maximize the power of law to protect and nurture the environment for themselves, their children, and generations still to come. Atty. Oposa earned his law degree from the University of the Philippines and his master's degree in environmental law from the Harvard Law School.

Session II: Fostering Climate Change Adaptability and Disaster Preparedness



Mr. Jerry Velasquez
*Senior Regional Coordinator
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) Asia & Pacific,
Thailand*

Mr. Jerry Velasquez previously worked for the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), the United Nations University (UNU), the Global Environment Information Centre (GEIC), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) before joining UNISDR. His published work includes edited books, journal articles, interactive software, and policy briefs. His latest book is titled "Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2012 – Reducing Vulnerability and Exposure to Disasters" released in October 2012.



Hon. Alfredo Arquillano

*UNISDR Asia Pacific Champion for Making Cities Resilient
Vice Mayor, San Francisco, Cebu Province, The Philippines*

Vice Mayor Alfredo Arquillano is Vice Mayor of San Francisco, Cebu Province, Philippines. Prior to his current post, he was San Francisco's mayor from 2001-2012. Under his mayorship, the municipality of San Francisco won several awards for environmental protection and good governance including the UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011 for its community empowerment program to boost the resilience of a mostly poor population living below the poverty line.

Vice Mayor Arquillano implemented a system of solid waste management that contributes to better sanitation and drainage, which considerably reduces the risk of floods caused by clogged waterways. He has presented the success of his municipality in Durban, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Switzerland among others. His award-winning approach to sustainable development and community empowerment continue in his responsibility as vice mayor.

Book Launch: Freedom to Organize



Mr. Jules Maaten

*Country Director, Philippine Office
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
Former Member of the European Parliament*

Mr. Jules Maaten is the Country Director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty in the Philippines. He was elected as a Member of the European Parliament in the European Elections of 10 June 1999 as a member of the Dutch Liberal Party (VVD). He subsequently joined the Liberal Group in the Parliament. He worked on the Committee for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Affairs and, since 2002, the Foreign Affairs Committee. During the first part of the legislature he sat on the Economic and Monetary Committee. Since the end of 2001, he has been leader of the VVD-group in the European Parliament.

Before his election as MEP, Mr. Maaten was secretary general of the world union of liberal parties, the Liberal International, in London (1992-1999), during which time he was involved among others in supporting democratic movements in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. Prior to that (1986-1991) he was a municipal councillor in his hometown of Amstelveen, near Amsterdam, where he dealt with public finance education and social affairs. As President of the International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLRY) from 1983 to 1989, he worked on issues of disarmament and east-west co-operation.



Dr. Pimrapa Dusadeeisariyakul
Programme Manager, Thailand
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Dr. Pimrapa Dusadeeisariyakul is currently a Programme Manager in Thailand Project of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. She joined the foundation in April 2004 as a Programme Manager in Malaysia Project and later moved to Thailand Project in 2011 until at present. Dr. Pimrapa obtained her doctorate degree in International Relations in 1999 from the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom and obtained her master degree in International Politics in 1993 from the University of Aberystwyth in the United Kingdom. Her main study is on South Asian security and non-nuclear proliferation.

Conference on Democratic Transitions

Opening Session

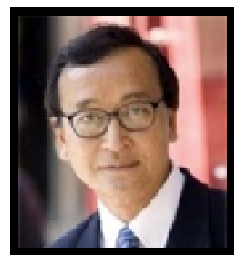
Session Chair



Hon. Nutt Bantadtan, MP
Member of Parliament, Kingdom of Thailand

Mr. Nutt Bantadtan is a Member of Parliament from Democrat Party of Thailand who currently represents District 15 in Bangkok. In addition to his political career, he has a background in business and banking finance. Mr. Bantadtan received a Bachelor's Degree in Banking Finance from University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Management from University of Plymouth in the UK.

Welcome Remarks



Hon. Sam Rainsy, MP
Leader of the Cambodian Opposition
President of the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP)

Hon. Sam Rainsy is the President of CNRP, a Member of Parliament and leader of the national opposition of Cambodia. His political career began with Prince Ranariddh's Funcinpec Party, becoming the Prince's European representative in 1989. He had previously served as Minister of Finance in a coalition government that emerged in Cambodia after the UN-supervised elections in 1993, and was a Member of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia from 1992 to 1993.

In 1995, he formed the Khmer Nation Party, which became the current SRP when it was forced to change its name in order to contest the 1998 elections, in which he was re-elected to the Parliament. In the July 2003 elections, the SRP garnered the

second largest number of votes.

Prior to his entry to politics, he was a financial analyst and investment manager with various banks and financial institutions, positions which included chairman and chief executive officer of DR Gestion, a Paris-based investment company and Bank Director at Paluel-Marmont. Sam received his MBA from INSEAD Paris.

In 2006, Liberal International awarded him with the Prize for Freedom honoring his dedication to championing human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.



Hon. Kiat Sitheeamorn, MP

*Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Democrat Party Leader
Democrat Party, Thailand*

Hon. Kiat Sitheeamorn is a member of the House of Representatives and DP. He is a former president of Thailand Trade Representative and a former Chairman of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC-Thailand). In the past 10 years, he has played a crucial role at the Board of Trade of Thailand in proposing policies and strategies to various governmental organizations related to trade and investment. Hon. Kiat received his Bachelors Degree in engineering from Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. He then pursued a Masters of Art Degree in International Affairs from Fletcher School USA and MBusiness Management from Harvard Business School (OPM25).

Session I: Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces

Session Chair



Mr. Muhammad Rakyan Ihsan Yunus

*Secretary, Department of International Affairs
Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*

Mr. Muhammad Rakyan Ihsan Yunus has been the Secretary of the Department for International Affairs of PDI-P since 2011. Concurrently, he is the President Director of PERCA GROUP – a private company that concentrates on the printing, publishing and security-printing field.

Mr. Yunus earned his bachelor's degrees in art and commerce in the University of Queensland; where he also earned his master's degree in economic studies.

Speakers



Dr. Myo Aung, MP

Dagon Seikkan Constituency

National League for Democracy, Burma

A doctor by training and a political activist at heart, Dr. Myo Aung was active in government duty as a medical officer from 1976-1988. He then became a medical officer for the Government Health Department until 1992. His developing political activism since 1990 prompted his joining the NLD in 1996. He was detained twice, adding up to four years in camp.

Dr. Aung is now an elected member of the Lower House of Burma, representing Dagon Seikkan.



Hon. Sin Chung-kai, SBS, JP

CALD Individual Member

Deputy Chairman and Central Committee Member

Democratic Party, Hong Kong

Mr. Chung-Kai Sin is an elected Legislative Councillor of Hong Kong serving a term of 4 years from Oct 2012 to Sep 2016. Mr. Chung-Kai Sin has been the deputy chairman of Democratic Party since 2006 and has served as a member of the Central Committee of Democratic Party of Hong Kong since the party was founded in 1994. Mr. Chung-Kai Sin served as a Member of Legislative Council from 1995–1997 representing New Territories South and 1998 to 2008 representing the Information Technology Sector. He served as an elected representative at all three tiers of the Government – Legislative Council, Regional Council (abolished by the HKSAR Government in 1999) from 1988 to 1994 and the Kwai Tsing District Council from 1985 to 2003.

Born and educated in Hong Kong, Chung-Kai Sin obtained his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Hong Kong in 1982 and his Master in Business Administration degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1997. Chung Kai is a life and fellow member of the Hong Kong Computer Society.

Session II: Building Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

Session Chair



Ms. Selyna Peiris

Chair, CALD Youth

President, Association of Young Liberals of Sri Lanka

Ms. Selyna Peiris is an alumnus of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, Austria where she successfully completed her Masters in Advanced International Studies. She has previously graduated with LLB Honours from the Hull University in the UK and a further LLM in International Business Law at the University College London. After having worked at the United Nations in Vienna, she has recently returned to Sri Lanka and is currently working at Julius and Creasy, a leading law firm in Sri Lanka, and completing the Attorney-at-Law at the Sri Lanka Law College. She joined the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka in 2003 and currently serves as president of its youth wing. She is also the incumbent Chair of CALD Youth.

Speakers



Hon. Naing Ngan Lin, MP

Dakkhina Thiri Constituency

National League for Democracy, Burma

Since elections held this year, Hon. Naing Ngan Lin has been a member of parliament with the NLD representing Dakkhina Thiri. He is a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Monitoring Reforms and Development.

He was a township Youth Leader for NLD in 2007 and is the founder on the Free Education Network for Youth on 2009 – the same year he was detained. In addition to being a parliamentarian, he has been an English teacher for the NLD since 2008.

Hon. Lin earned his diploma in politics and government at the Open University of London.



Hon. Nataphol Teepsuwan, MP

Director General, Democrat Party, Thailand

Hon. Nataphol Teepsuwan, MP, is the director general and secretary to the Bangkok Operation and activities committee of the Democrat Party of Thailand and represents Bangkok District 26 in Parliament. He also served as the election campaign director of the Democrat Party for Bangkok city and district councilors in 2010.

Hon. Teepsuwan received his Postgraduate degree in Marketing (International

Programme) from Thammasat University and has a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from Boston University in the US. He was secretary general of the Thailand Taekwondo Association and Thai National Team.



Dr. James Gomez

*Head, Policy Unit
Singapore Democratic Party*

Dr. James Gomez is Head, Policy Unit of the Singapore Democratic Party. He contested in the last Singapore general elections in 2011 and since then contributed to policy papers outlining alternatives to the high ministerial salaries and improvements to the city-state's healthcare and public housing.

Dr. Gomez is presently Visiting Professor (Human Rights) at the Faculty of Political Science at Thammasat University. Previously from 2009 to 2011, he served as the Deputy Associate Dean (International) for the Faculty of Arts and Head of Public Relations at the School of Humanities, Communications and Social Sciences at Monash University in Australia. Just prior, from 2008 to 2009 he was Visiting Academic at the Faculty of Law, Department of Political Science at Keio University, Japan. Between 2006 and 2008, Dr. Gomez was Programme Officer, Political Parties at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in Stockholm, Sweden. And for nearly ten years before he was the Regional Research and Project Manager for the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Thailand and Singapore.

Session III: Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union

Session Chair



Hon. Lau Chin Hoon

*Central Committee Member
Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia*

Hon. Lau Chin Hoon is a central committee member of the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia and is serving his second term as an elected member of the Johore Legislative Assembly. Apart from being a speaker during the CALD Colombo Conference 2010, Mr. Lau has recently published: "New Aspiration in Ethnic Community Development and Relationship Management: A Community-based Public Administration System" and "The Future of Innovation is Enabling Hope at the Frontiers of Systems, Values and Politics", a chapter in "The Future of Innovation" (2009).

Speakers



Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon

*Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Office of the Political Advisor
Office of the President, The Philippines*

Usec. Jose Luis Martin C. Gascon is currently Undersecretary at the Office of the Political Advisor in the Office of the President, Republic of the Philippines. He is a political activist and social reformer who has been working on democratic governance concerns for close to three decades.

He became the National Chair of the Philippine Young Liberals and the first Asian Vice-President of the International Federation of Liberal and Radical Youth. He later served as Undersecretary for Legal, Legislative and Special Concerns at the DepEd (Department of Education). He now also serves as Chair for the Philippine Governments human rights monitoring committee that peace process.

Prior to returning to government after victory in the 2010 general elections, he was the Liberal Party Director-General from 2008 and Political Affairs Director of its 2010 campaign. He is the first Filipino recipient of both the *Democracy and Development Fellowship* at Stanford University's Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law in 2005 and the *Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellowship* at the International Forum for Democratic Studies of the National Endowment for Democracy in 2006.

He obtained his BA (Bachelor of Arts) and LL.B (Bachelor of Laws) degrees from the University of the Philippines. He also earned his LL.M (Master of Law) degree specializing in International Law at St. Edmund's College in the Cambridge University as a joint British Chevening & Cambridge Overseas Trust Scholar.



Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP

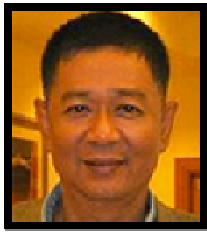
*Sri Lankan Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation
Member of CALD Climate Change Committee
Leader, Liberal Party of Sri Lanka*

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha is a Member of Parliament, Sri Lankan Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation, Leader of the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka and Member of CALD Climate Change Committee.

He previously served as Secretary General of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process in Sri Lanka and as Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights.

Hon. Wijesinha is a leading liberal theoretician in South Asia, and had conducted workshops on liberalism in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan and Indonesia. His publications include: *Liberal Values for South Asia*, *Declining Sri Lanka* and *Political Principles and Their Practice in Sri Lanka*. He recently released a collection of speeches entitled, *Asian Liberal Perspectives: Promoting Democracy, Equity, Pluralism*.

Mr. Nyo Ohn Myint



*Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee
National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)*

Mr. Nyo Ohn Myint is the director of the foreign affairs committee of the NCUB and secretary of the foreign affairs committee of NLD-LA. He has been a policy adviser to the democratic movement since 2003. He graduated from Rangoon University in 1984 with a BA (Honors) in History. He received his second bachelor's degree in Asian Studies and economics at the University of Texas in 1997. He also served as visiting researcher at the Harvard Institute for International Development.

***Session IV: Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly”
Investments and Environmental Protection***

Session Chair



Mr. Shih-Chung Liu
*Director, Department of International Affairs
Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan*

Before joining Taiwan's main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as director of International Affairs Department in June 2012, Mr. Liu Shih-chung was director of the Research Center at the Taipei-based think tank Taiwan Brain Trust since 2010. From September 2008 to December 2009, Mr. Liu was a visiting fellow at the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies of the Washington-based Brookings Institution. Starting July 2012, Mr. Liu is also an advisor to the Mainland Affairs Council.

Mr. Liu also spent eight years in the DPP government as a senior foreign policy adviser to former President Chen Shui-bian in the Presidential Office from 2000 to 2006 and then joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Vice Chairman of Research and Planning Committee.

Mr. Liu has been a frequent editorial contributor and political columnist for the *Taipei Times* and the *Taiwan News* in the past decade. His research covers the fields of Taiwan's domestic politics and foreign policy, cross-strait relations and US-Taiwan relations.

Mr. Liu earned his M.A. from the Department of Political Science at Columbia University where he was also a PhD candidate.

Speakers



Prof. Kuang-Jung Hsu

*Professor, Department of Atmospheric Sciences,
National Taiwan University
Member, Executive Committee,
Taiwan Environmental Protection Union*

Prof. Kuang-Jung Hsu received her Bachelor of Science from Department of Chemistry, National Taiwan University, PhD in Chemistry from University of Pittsburgh, and MPA degree from Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She has been in NTU's faculty since 1988. Courses taught include: Air Pollution, Atmospheric Environment, Atmospheric Environment, Energy Policy, and Environmental Policy Analyses.

Her duties in Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU) include: member of Academic Committee, Coordinator of Academic Committee, Vice Chair, and Chair. Prof. Hsu's social service also include: Commissioner of Environmental Impact Assessment Commission at national level and local governments; Commissioner of National Sustainable Development Committee; and various environmental related committees.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Keynote Address

- Uncertainty is part of life. In a rapid changing world, it is always present in the dimensions of climate change and political transitions.
- Communication can help address climate change disruptions.
- The courage and political will of leaders are key factors establishing a political pact.
- Public awareness on the best practices of a functioning democracy as well as on effective implementation of good governance would help in building democratic institutions.
- Democratic transitions would be most effective in a peaceful society where stakeholders are part of the decision making process.
- Political freedom and economic freedom go hand-in-hand.

Session I: Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces

- The three goals that NLD adopted leading to the 2012 elections are: 1) to establish the rule of law; 2) to embark upon national reconciliation; and 3) to amend the 2008 Constitution. NLD's policy to achieve national reconciliation is to engage in genuine political tasks based on mutual respect, and political commitment to reach long-lasting peace and reconciliation.
- NLD does not consider a formal pact with any party at the moment, but they are not discounting the possibility in the future. However, the dialogue between President Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi continues.
- In Hong Kong, democratic forces need to be in solidarity and to work together as a single unit in order to compete with the pro-Beijing camp. The influence of China has been a challenge in achieving universal suffrage and more democratic space in Hong Kong.

Session II: Building Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

- The Parliament in Burma plays a crucial role in performing checks and balance on the Executive and Judiciary, which are still experiencing cynicism from the people.
- The success in upholding rule of law would depend on how democratic the institutions are, how well people enjoy the democratic practices, and how well human rights are respected and protected.

- Civil society organization help ensure transparency, accountability, and public participation that leads to stronger democratic institutions.
- In order to build strong democratic institutions, political parties must start within the party. Parties must be strong within its own organization first and it must continue to build within the rule of law despite the threat of compromises and populist actions.
- Communications within the party is also essential to adjust to the changing parameters of winning elections.
- Media is a powerful institution that can either be abused for political gain or be maximized to communicate a message of hope and reform to the people.
- There are regional developments that help strengthen democratic transitions: 1) the role of democracy foundations; 2) national human rights institutions; and 3) cooperation with inter-governmental or regional instruments that work on democratic developments.

Session III: Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union

- In Burma, there is a general distrust between ethnicities and that compromise is the fundamental quality of ethnic harmony. The issue of property rights is also vital for Burma to progress.
- The reconciliation process in Burma can be done in three steps: ceasefire, dialogue, and a peace accord. For any reconciliation process to take place, trust and respect of rights needs to be installed.
- In the Philippines, there are two kinds of political violence; one comes from ideology and the other from religion. Unless problems of ethnic rebel groups can be resolved, there is no true democracy and progress.
- The cessation of violence comes in two forms: a ceasefire, which preceded the end of hostilities, or Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR or Normalization).
- There are two significant steps in reconciliation: 1) to surface all issues and concerns of all parties and 2) to set guidelines between parties in hostility to keep the situation from worsening.
- The presence of third parties can be very helpful in any step of a peace process. Third party actors also have an important role to play in the monitoring of implementation to ensure that the decisions and programs agreed upon are delivered.
- Many countries suffer from sectarian conflict, which comes from long periods of oppression wherein a majority wins over a minority or minorities.
- In Sri Lanka, a liberal form of government is applicable to better represent all sectors and mitigate the dominance by a majority.

Session IV: Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly” Investments and Environmental Protection

- Political parties in power are responsible for balancing opposing stances concerning political, economic and even environmental issues.
- Economic development and environmental protection can be mutually beneficial. Governments and private companies focus more on economic development and tend to disregard the environment because its benefits are not as clear and easily observable.
- The concept of market economy demands an efficient use of resources or a sustainable consumption of the environment.
- The relationship or rapport between governments, political parties, and NGOs, plays an important role in crafting and implementing sound and acceptable environmental policies.

CONFERENCE REPORT



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Hon. Abhisit Vejjajiva, MP

Former Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand
 Leader, Democrat Party

Vejjajiva, who was originally invited to talk about the political transition of Burma, was able to speak on the day of the Climate Change seminar that preceded the Burma conference. He, however, brilliantly and concisely linked the two themes together through one word: **uncertainty**. Vejjajiva said “uncertainty, whether we like or not, is just part of our lives and increasingly so whether it is a natural phenomenon...such as climate change and its effects, as well as political uncertainties, democratic transitions being the focus here, which surprisingly in a world of rapid changes is likely to arise not just in countries that are moving towards democracies, but even



established democracies find themselves and their institutions, their political cultures, also need to adopt to the changes that are happening in the world.”

On climate change, Vejjajiva briefly discussed the number of natural disasters that destroyed lives and properties in Asia Pacific. He said that these “disruptions” -- flood, storms, droughts and earthquakes, among others, reflected that countries and economies are not yet prepared to face natural disasters that are becoming “more frequent and more severe in their impact.” Vejjajiva said that the most important thing they learned when a large area of Bangkok was submerged in flood was that “losses could have been avoided.” While the amount of rainfall and weather conditions cannot be controlled, Vejjajiva emphasized that with better management, preparations, and reforms to some of the systems, losses could have been avoided.



Vejjajiva emphasized the need for better infrastructure to face calamities and better financial instruments and systems to have a more resilient economy, but more than these, as a society, he said people need “good and strong communication -- from early warnings to dealing with the actual disasters as they happen.” Informing the people would make a big difference in evacuation plans, relief efforts, and coordination between the government and society. The major challenge for the countries in the region right now is “to raise the awareness of people about the risk of natural disasters.” Providing early warning advisories, the risks involved, as well as the real changes in climate patterns would help manage the way people would deal when calamities occur, Vejjajiva observed. And since these calamities affect not just individual countries, but also the region, he said that it is also vital to continue to push for the development of regional and global efforts. Vejjajiva urged ASEAN and the ASEAN Plus framework to expand its initiatives in dealing with problems of

disaster reliefs and preparedness for climate change. In terms of disaster relief efforts, for instance, Vejajiva suggested that ASEAN set up a regional fund or a regional plan to prepare the region in terms of relief operations.

Uncertainty, though in a different form, is also greatly part of political democratic transitions. Vejajiva said that even for established democracies, institutional and cultural changes must continue to happen to cope with the changing world. For countries transitioning to democracy, however, the challenge is more difficult. While Burma is surprisingly showing good signs of reforms, Vejajiva said, “we should also recognize that there is a long hard road ahead.”



He then shared his thoughts based on the four important steps to a successful democratic transition as indicated in the conference concept paper. First, he said that democratic transition in Burma seems impossible without **establishing a political pact**. The interests of the military and the political parties must be aligned, while conflicts must be mitigated and addressed. The current progress happening in Burma, Vejajiva said, can be credited to the leaders involved. President Thein Sein showed political will and courage to carry out the reforms he had in mind. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the other hand, was graceful and restrained in pursuing the ideology she embodied all her life. However, a political pact needs to go beyond the leaders, Vejajiva stressed. “This pact, which I think is somehow implicit, has to become more transparent so that each side is comfortable with the moving ahead of this transition to democracy.” Regionally, it is important for neighboring countries to continue to support the reform process in Burma, but not in a way that would upset the balance of the political pact.

Second, Vejajiva noted that **building democratic institutions** vis-à-vis political and cultural developments are important to sustain democracy. To sustain the right ideas and intentions of leaders, to make the framework to democracy work, and to achieve liberal democracy, every country needs institutions and the facets of good governance – transparency, rule of law, accountability, and inclusive participation, among others. Vejajiva said that the speed of the success in institution-building would depend as well on how the public understands what is required in a democratic society. Looking into the best practices in the region, the Indonesian transition for instance, would also help the public be aware of the lessons learned in the process of democratic transitions.

Third, democratic transitions would be most effective in a peaceful society. **Forging ethnic harmony** is very important in Burma, where ethnic groups and minorities struggled for decades to achieve a conflict-free environment. Vejajiva shared that Burma can focus more on decentralization and a certain degree of autonomy that is acceptable in the society where all stakeholders can decide for themselves. The Philippines with the help of Malaysia, he said, made progress with the framework agreement to achieve peace in Mindanao.

Finally, the need to encourage democracy-friendly and environment-friendly investments must be present in democratic transitions. Vejjajiva expounded on this and said that there is a need for Burma to create a market system because he believes that “liberal democracy and market system feeds on each other...that political freedom and economic freedom go hand-in-hand.” The process of liberalization, from a controlled- to a market-economy, is difficult and challenging because there are risks at hand (e.g. corruption, transfer from military to new private monopolies), and institutions that resist changes. Vejjajiva explained that “whether the economic structure that will emerge from this transition will help the democratic transition or not will very much depend on the competitive environment that emerges in Burma.”

In conclusion, Vejjajiva said that uncertainty is a fact of life and we need to “face up to these uncertainties, face up to these challenges without fear.” Adaptability is key in democratic transitions. “Adaptability is best served when we encourage people to exercise their freedoms and rights and we provide the environment for those freedoms and rights to be exercised fully,” he underscored.

WELCOME REMARKS



Hon. Sam Rainsy, MP

Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
President, Cambodia National Rescue Party
Leader of the Opposition, Cambodia

Sam noted that the theme of the conference is a very relevant topic because his country, Cambodia, goes through another phase of transition. In life, he explained, people live from childhood to adulthood, from middle age to old age, from two different points where evolution takes place. However, not all transitions are real. Transitions have the tendency to be fake or misleading. As older people use cosmetics to hide the imperfections and reflections of old age, Sam observed that politicians are clever enough to do the same by governing towards a façade democracy. He expressed concern that Cambodia is currently heading towards what used to be the Burmese way- towards dictatorship. While Burma, he said, might still head towards the Cambodian way - towards a façade democracy.



Cambodia, he noted, was guaranteed to have a democracy through the Paris Peace Accord of 1991 under the aegis of UN, which the major world powers and neighboring countries signed to guide the country in having free and fair elections. However, Sam said that the institutions that were placed did not serve the people and no real transition to democracy happened. The monarchy was re-established,

but has no power. There is a Parliament, but it is a “rubber stamp” parliament. The Judiciary serves as a “kangaroo court” because the tribunals are being used by the ruling power to “crack down the opposition and to secure impunity for those in power.” Elections did happen, but they were manipulated. Results were known in advance by manipulating the voter’s list. The ruling party is all out in eliminating the opposition. Sam said Cambodia is now transitioning from a façade democracy to a real dictatorship. “This transition is not very encouraging,” he added.

Sam said that the international community must continue to be cautious in dealing with transitions. Burma was a dictatorship and now transitioning to what may appear a real democracy. The institutions and democratic processes must reflect genuine transition towards a true democracy. Sam hopes that Cambodia and Burma will move toward this kind of real transition.

Hon. Kiat Sitheeamorn, MP

Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Democrat Party Leader
Democrat Party, Thailand



Sitheeamorn welcomed the participants to the “land of smiles” and shared his views on the current political situation in Thailand. He also shared what transpired in the World Economic Forum that he recently attended in Dubai and explained the new pattern happening in the region and in the world. Thailand is still in transition, Sitheeamorn emphasized. They are currently facing difficulties and challenges posed by a new form of “parliamentary dictatorship” that adheres mainly on populist policies. He said the current government is under the guise of a democracy that justifies the current system which puts the development of democracy and society in danger.

In the recently concluded World Economic Forum where 1000 business and political leaders gathered to map out the trends and challenges the world is facing, Sitheeamorn said that the leaders realized the world is in turmoil. It may appear healthy, but in reality they are not sure if the needed fundamentals are present to move the world forward to the next decade. The global meeting presented more questions than answers. Three major challenges that the world is facing today were identified: 1) no clear global leadership unlike in the past where there is unilateral power; 2) rise of tremendous technical evolution and development that continues to change the meaning of employment and jobs (borderless employment and shifting productions bases around the world); 3) identity influenced by globalization and interdependency. “We have multilateral system that is not working well,” Sitheeamorn noted. The world has all kinds of fora, not to mention global institutions such as WTO, UN, and G20, that try to push the common interests of the world. However, every time leaders return to their countries, “they don’t walk the talk... what’s good for the world is very seldom taken up by individual country.” The focus of leaders is the local constituency. Global institutions need new ideas and better systems. “Global governance lack political energy to do it,” as actions are needed

after decisions, stressed Sitheeamorn. The global financial institutions need new growth models and measurement systems to create sustainable economic programs that would focus on three pillars: 1) job creation; 2) inclusion of social dimension in economic program; and 3) environment.

As the world continues to become less and less predictable and volatile, the shift in demographic becomes a big challenge. Sitheeamorn called for more international cooperation and coordination to address the economic and political uncertainty of the world. And as the conference focuses on Myanmar, Sitheeamorn said that the challenge at hand is for Myanmar to address economic reform hand in hand with political reforms. There will be no successful political reforms without jobs and food on the table. Sitheeamorn said that Myanmar must also focus on a clear ceasefire agreement between the government and minorities and a clear legal structure providing certainty to the business sector.

SESSION I
Crafting a Political Pact between Competing Forces



Session I discussed the key issues as well as the dynamics of negotiating a political pact during the process of democratic transition. The speakers shared firsthand experiences in engaging ruling parties in an effort to come up with an understanding, if not an agreement, on how to mutually move forward in a democratic transition. As members of opposition parties, the presenters focused on their struggles and dilemmas that affect the dynamics within the party and with other democratic allies. Mr. Ihsan Yunus, secretary of the Department of International Affairs of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), served as the session chair. The speakers were Dr. Myo Aung, MP, from the National League for Democracy of Burma (NLD) and Hon. Sin Chung-kai, JP, CALD Individual Member and deputy chairperson of the Democratic Party of the Hong Kong (DPHK).

Dr. Myo Aung, MP

Dagon Seikkan Constituency
National League for Democracy, Burma

Myo, who attended the CALD conference for the first time, was thankful for being invited to speak in a gathering of liberals and democrats that discusses crucial issues about his country, Burma. In his presentation, he gave a brief background on the current developments in Burma and shared the vital electoral strategies that the party charted during the 2012 election. Myo also explained the challenges of the

party and the current problems that need a cautionary approach to undertake political reforms.



In the year 2011, the world witnessed the unprecedented political changes that happened in Burma. Myo described it as a “great surprise” because prominent political personalities such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and majority of the political activists from the 1988 student uprising were released from prison by the newly elected president, U Thein Sein. A number of ethnic leaders were also set free by the new government. This historic move was then followed by “genuine dialogues” between Suu Kyi and President Thein which resulted in the amendments of the election law which consequently paved the way for the NLD and Suu Kyi to participate in the elections. For Myo, participating in elections would mean approaching the transition legally. Though there were no guarantees, Suu Kyi considered that the initial phase of transition has started. “Friends of Democratic Parties,” formed among ten political parties, has met with the president a few times for dialogue. Student leaders also engaged the president in dialogues. While the results and plans of actions were not revealed, Myo said that it is assumed that these initiatives enhanced the reform process.

During the by-elections of 2012, an election held to fill 46 vacant parliamentary seats, the NLD adopted three strategies: 1) to establish the rule of law; 2) to embark upon national reconciliation; and 3) to amend the 2008 Constitution. These are the party’s bases for pushing for political reform, Myo said, but there are still impending problems at hand that need to be addressed before real transition can happen.

The present government, Myo noted, inherited a “malaise economy” with “small export-oriented industrialization.” Democratic processes are hampered as well, due to armed conflicts and half-a-century of ethnic insurgencies since the independence. Communal conflicts continue to rise in an “epidemic way” as reflected by the violence in Rhakine State that killed nearly 150 people in just two months. In Burma, Myo explained, a total of 17 ceasefire treaties were observed, but no peace agreement was ever signed. In terms of administration, Myo explained that while the current government tries to change towards greater transparency and accountability, the local level continues to experience a backward “mindset” in public service. Judicial affairs at the local level, in particular, hinder sustainable development and genuine transformation, and this is why it is part of NLD’s primary drive for reform.

Since NLD won almost all the seats in the last elections, 43 NLD MPs are now cooperating with the majority party. However, NLD “does not consider a formal pact with any party,” but they are not discounting the possibility in the future. In a more informal manner, Suu Kyi met with President Thein three times to discuss the problems in transition. In addition to this, there are frequent meetings with the Speakers of the Houses of Parliament as well as with the Chairmen of the parliamentary committees. Myo said, however, that a meeting with MPs who are part of Tatmadaw or the Myanmar Armed Forces is unlikely at the moment. Forging political pacts are not the only way out of the difficulties according to Myo, but NLD is

convinced that without the support of the military, the reform process would not occur at the right speed. Whether or not Tatmadaw would have the political will to form a pact with NLD and other democratic forces remains to be seen.

To achieve national reconciliation, the policy of NLD is “to engage in genuine political tasks based on mutual respect, and political commitment to reach long-lasting peace and reconciliation.” Cooperation would not only entail efforts from the government and NLD, but also from ethnic nationalities and other democratic forces. To sustain the reform process, Myo said that Burma would need another “Grand Conference” to produce a “Grand Pact,” similar to the historical “Panglong (Pinlon) Agreement” which was a result of the conference convened on the eve of Burma’s Independence in 1947.

Hon. Sin Chung-kai, SBS, JP


CALD Individual Member

Deputy Chairperson, Democratic Party, Hong Kong

Hong Kong, a tourist haven, is a great place to shop and spend a relaxing vacation. However, one would not notice that the country is struggling in its pursuit for more democratic space. In his presentation, Sin walked through the political situation in Hong Kong and shared the party compositions and how the basic law played out with the grip of Beijing still intact throughout the years. The China factor is what makes them different from other Asian countries. Besides competing in elections, they are competing with a bigger force, which is the driving influence of Beijing in the political affairs of Hong Kong.



Politics in Hong Kong is mostly focused on the Chief Executive and Legislative Council (LegCo). The LegCo was established in 1843 under British rule is the current legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) after the formation of HKSAR. Sin explained that the LegCo is not entirely democratic because of the concept of functional constituency, which gives interest groups such as commercial industries, labor, engineering, health services, and the like, the right to participate in the electoral process. In functional constituencies, corporations and legal entities are given the right to vote which means members have the right to vote as a person and as part of corporate voting. With this kind of setup, candidates are not popularly elected.

<div> <div>Pan-Democrat vs. Pro-Beijing/Government in LegCo</div>  </div>			
	Pan-Democrat Camp	Pro-Beijing / Pro-Government Camp	Total Seats
1998 (1 st term)	20 (33.33%) (13 seats-DPHK) (3 seats-The Frontier)	40 (66.67%) (9 seats-DAB) (10 seats-Liberal Party)	60
2000 (2 nd term)	21 (35.00%) (12 seats-DPHK) (2 seats-The Frontier)	39 (65.00%) (11 seats-DAB) (8 seats-Liberal Party)	60
2004 (3 rd term)	25 (41.67%) (9 seats-DPHK) (4 seats-Article 45 Concern Group)	35 (58.33%) (10 seats-DAB) (10 seats-Liberal Party)	60
2008 (4 th term)	23 (38.33%) (8 seats-DPHK) (5 seats-Civic Party)	37 (61.67%) (10 seats-DAB) (7 seats-Liberal Party)	60
2012 (5 th term)	27 (38.57%) (6 seats-DPHK) (6 seats-Civic Party)	43 (61.43%) (13 seats-DAB) (6 seats-HKFTU)	70

In 1991, the Democratic Party of Hong Kong (DPHK), won almost all the allotted seats, winning 17 out of 18 seats. During the provisional Legislative Council elections after the 1997 transition, DPHK won 13 of the 20 allotted seats for the Pan-Democrat camp composed of other democratic parties such as the Civic Party, League of Social Democrats, People Power, and Labor Party. The Government or Pro-Beijing Parties were the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, Liberal Party, and New People's Party. DPHK used to be the largest party, but their seats decreased through the years. They won 12 seats in 2000, 9 seats in 2004, 8 seats in 2008, and 6 seats in 2012. Despite the decrease, the Pan-Democrat still enjoys the popular vote, which is around 60% of the votes. According to Sin, Beijing has been trying really hard to hit the biggest parties. They tried to disintegrate DPHK into smaller parties.

The Chief Executive (CE) of Hong Kong is the head of HKSAR elected by a committee of 1,200 people rather than the general population, shared Sin. The candidate must also have 150 nominations from the Election Committee, which has ties with the Chinese government. Since the first CE election in 1996, it was only in 2007 when the first CE election debate was held.

<div>Chief Executive (CE) Election</div> 				
	Election Committee	No. of Nominations required	Candidates / Contenders (No. of Nominations)	Votes in Election
1 st term	400	50	董建華 Tung Chee Hwa (206)	320
			楊鐵樑 Yang Ti Liang (82)	42
			吳光正 Woo Kwong Ching (54)	36
2 nd term	800	100	董建華 Tung Chee Hwa (762)	Elected Uncontested
2 nd term (By-election)	800	100	曾蔭權 Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (674)	Elected Uncontested
			李永達 Lee Wing Tat (52)	Invalid
			詹培忠 Chim Pui Chung (21)	Invalid
3 rd term	800	100	曾蔭權 Donald Tsang Yam Kuen (641)	649
			梁家傑 Alan Leong Kah Kit (132)	123
4 th term	1,200	150	梁振英 Leung Chun Ying (293)	689
			唐英年 Henry Tang Ying Yen (379)	285
			何俊仁 Ho Chun Yan (184)	76

To answer why the system cannot be changed, Sin said it is because of the China factor. Under their Basic Law, China has the final say. The reforms in the law are dependent on the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Sin said that in their negotiations with China, China offered packages that are really undemocratic. In 2010, he said they compromised and the negotiation resulted in the creation of five new "super seats" that added five seats in geographic elections and five more in the functional constituency. In 2012, the 5th term LegCo was composed of 70 members (35 members from the functional constituencies and 35 members from the geographical constituencies). Why did they participate in the years of undemocratic suffrage? Sin said explained that they needed to put a record in history that they indeed participated and contested even in a democratically challenged system.

Hong Kong currently faces tough challenges ahead according to Sin. Whether or not Beijing would allow universal suffrage during the 2017 CE election and whether the Nomination Committee would "screen-out" Pan-Democrat candidates remains to be seen. What is important, he added, is for all democratic forces to be in solidarity and to work together as a single unit in order to compete with the pro-Beijing camp. By pushing for genuine universal suffrage, there would always be hope to achieve more democratic space in Hong Kong.

Session I Open Forum

Models of Transitions



Undersecretary Chito Gacon from the Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP) provided input and reaction to further spur debate on the topic. He said in forging political pacts in relation to democratic transitions (moving away from authoritarianism towards democracy), there are two models: 1) The Pact Model, where the contending forces on opposite sides, in the course of political development, have agreed that they will manage the transition so that it does not divide society (e.g. South Africa); and 2) The Revolutionary Transition Model, which means the contending forces will not come to some agreement and one force will win over the other in a peaceful or non-peaceful manner (e.g. Revolution in the Philippines).

Gascon said that the presentations both showed the importance of multiple pacts. In Burma and Hong Kong, we have seen the importance of democratic forces to come together and be in solidarity to challenge internal and external hegemonies. Transitioning towards democracy is critical. Gascon stressed that to strike an impact, it is important to make sure that the democratic forces become overwhelming for the authoritarian forces so they won't have any other choice but to negotiate. He also added that it is vital to know the conditions that still need to be in place to make sure that the deal will ultimately be made.

Dealing with the devil

Hon. Saumura Tioulong, MP, from the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) of Cambodia, focused her comments on the idea of a pact. She asked what factors triggered the opening up of Burma as well as the minor developments in Hong Kong vis-à-vis China. She also asked whether a pact with the devil (authoritarian leaders and governments) is possible. If it is possible, is it good if it opens a dialogue between rivals?



Tioulong pointed out that negotiations with the devil are opportunities to create a channel for discussions and dialogue. For her, it is better than resorting to violence. But the dilemma is would it be democratic to allow an undemocratic process towards the hope of democracy? In Burma and Hong Kong and even Cambodia, the devil might be China. She asked if it is possible to bend the will of China.

Sin observed that with all of the influences and pressures they have on countries, China still wants to gain the respect of the international community. However, he said that it would be difficult to bend the will of China. They do not want to be blamed for breaking promises, but they can brutally postpone promises. The continuing call of the democratic forces in Hong Kong for a more democratic election has been delayed for a long time, but Sin said that they are still willing to fight, to

participate, to engage and negotiate in the hope that a more open democratic space will develop in the future.

Myo shared that the trigger of the opening up of Burma are the increasing economic problem as well as the mounting domestic pressure. Despite the government's seven-step process of restoring democracy in the country, the military continues to take hold of the institutions. Myo said that while initial reforms are felt, they do not expect changes to happen very fast. It is important for them, he explained, to forge solidarity with other democratic forces and they are currently doing that on the sidelines of the parliament. They are meeting weekly with groups from various sectors including ethnic leaders to discuss the progress of possible agreements. As a party, he said, they are planning to hold a party convention to elect the next leaders who could steer and help bring direction towards democracy. With regard to legally dealing with the government, he said it is still impossible.

Elements of a Transition: The Taiwan Experience



Mr. Shih-Chung Liu from the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan shared Taiwan's own experience in democratic transition. He noted six elements that characterized Taiwan's transition: 1) Launched or triggered by bottom-up, opposition movement; 2) External pressure (e.g. US in Taiwan's case); 3) Mediators who can play a constructive role to initiate dialogue between competing forces (liberal scholars played a role in Taiwan as channel of dialogue); 4) Leadership perception - the extent to which they manipulate or dictate the pace and sphere of the transition; 5) Role of the military, the intermediate steps of a new government to cooperate with military; and 6) China factor, the handling of the pressures from China as it uses economic leverage, dictate the freedom of speech, etc. Liu said that Taiwan's transition to democracy is not complete, and because of the continuing influence of China, they are experiencing "backwardness" in democratic transition.

SESSION II

Building Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law



In this session, participants addressed the difficulties associated with establishing democratic institutions and promoting the rule of law in societies transitioning from, or still under, authoritarianism. The speakers discussed the challenges they faced as opposition parties, the failed approaches they made in the past, and the adjustments and lessons learned in contending with undemocratic forces. Ms. Selyna Peiris, chair of the CALD Youth and member of the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka, chaired the session. The speakers were Hon. U Naing Ngan Lin, MP, from NLD Burma, Hon. Nataphol Teepsuwan, MP, director general of the Democrat Party of Thailand, and Dr. James Gomez, head of the Policy Unit of the Singapore Democratic Party.

Hon. U Naing Ngan Lin, MP
Dakkhina Thiri Constituency
National League for Democracy, Burma



Naing shared his views regarding Myanmar's recent experience in terms of strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law. He said that, though positive changes are happening, they are still faced with a lot of challenges that need to be addressed as the political space continues to open. He said his country is currently experiencing political and social reforms at a "more rapid and broad" pace. The opposition was welcomed in Parliament, and so far, they are allowed to function "freely" as Members

of Parliament. Though freedom of media is still “partially ensured,” civil society organization are able to operate much more, but with still unresolved difficulties.

Naing, being a first time MP, noted that the Parliament is the most important institution in order to provide clear and hopeful changes in his country. Parliament, he added, plays a crucial role in checking and balancing other institutions such as the Executive and Judiciary – both still experiencing the lack of trust from the people. The Judiciary, for instance, is still dominated by the rich and powerful and the courts continue to be subjugated by corruption. Abuse of power is still present – “development projects are used as incentives for ex-military officials” and “the 2008 Constitution still embodies undemocratic provisions that “reserve 25% of national parliamentary seats and a third of state and regional parliamentary seats for military representatives only nominated by Commander-in-Chief.”

While the opposition enjoys a “certain level of transparency and freedoms in raising questions, submitting proposals and discussing or drafting the bills,” Naing noted that they need a stronger Parliament that can implement independent decisions. The Union Commission, for example, a commission composed of the Upper House and Lower House, set up a land acquisition parliamentary session to help solve farmers’ land cases. However, the farmers in places where the Union Commission has not been to, were still charged under municipal and forestry acts. Naing said that institutions must strive to earn the trust of the people.



In the quest to achieve a “deepening democracy” in Myanmar, Naing also said that civil society organizations must play a fundamental role to promote democratic values. CSOs help “ensure transparency and accountability, public participation...” and help uphold human rights. While CSOs in Myanmar are in a better condition than before in terms of operation, they still encounter constraints such as expensive registration fees of 500,000 kyat or US \$600. Naing expressed that CSOs need more technical and financial support in order to promote advocacies and initiatives in the country. “The lack of democratic institutions...excludes the people from participating in decision-making,” he added.

Naing explained that the success in upholding rule of law would depend on how democratic the institutions are, how well people enjoy the democratic practices, and how well human rights are respected and protected. Moreover, it would also depend whether the legal system “ensures equality before the law, certain and easy-to-understand legal materials, active anti-corruption and bribery laws and unbiased and strong legal mechanism.” He said Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, chair of the Lower House Committee for Rule of Law and Tranquility, is working hard to push for judicial reforms by engaging judges of States and Divisions.

In conclusion, Naing expressed the importance of stronger democratic institutions and rule of law to help Myanmar move towards sustainable and more democratic reforms. “Respect for the rule of law and human rights, active

participation, access to knowledge, transparency and accountability in all democratic institutions are...key factors,” he noted. He cautioned though that rapid change might lead to “socio-political chaos” if the approaches are not careful, not systematic and not focused on serving the people.

Hon. Nataphol Teepsuwan, MP

Director General

Democrat Party, Thailand

Teepsuwan provided a realistic view on current Thai politics. He discussed the struggles they had as a party and the continuing adjustments they are exploring after the Puea Thai party won the last the elections. He said they are in a continuing learning process -- going back to the drawing board and making each step count to come up with the necessary information they want to share to the people. However, Teepsuwan said, not all the processes of winning and governing should be “according to the book.” In the context of Thailand, a different, “out of the box” approach should be explored.



Thailand currently is mired with street protests and rallies which Teepsuwan said is unfortunate because they believe in the power of the parliament and they prefer to solve problems in the parliament. Personally, he believed that there is not much light at the end of the tunnel because the division in Thailand is getting “very, very deep.” In this current situation, it is very difficult to resort to reconciliation and negotiation. The Democrat Party (DP) has not received any positive response from the majority parties in terms of developing reconciliation talks. As DP Director General, Teepsuwan said that he has been going to the police station almost everyday to answer questions about DP breaking the law in the past elections. Now that Puea Thai is in power, this kind of adverse struggles start to take its toll on the DP.

Teepsuwan said DP could not hold on to power for more than two years. Even after the coup, when older, wiser, and more experienced political advisers tried to help and move the the country forward, the Thaksin-backed party came to power. When not in power, Puea Thai gains momentum and become stronger in every campaign. Teepsuwan explained that this is mainly due to the influence of money politics and populist policies. Campaigning for a 300 baht increase to the minimum wage, for instance, made a difference in the last election. However, now that they are in power, Puea Thai has not kept its promises. The sad truth about this is there is no punishment given. On the other hand, the DP tried everything, democratically, to win elections. But they continue to fail because the people are asking for populist policies. The DP is hopeful though that people will see the results of these broken promises. Teepsuwan believed that in order to compete, DP must continue to build a strong democratic institution within the party. He said it is vital that they start within.

Another problem they are facing, which could eventually become a solution, is media. Controlling the media helps politicians and it can make them win elections. Communication and messaging, Teepsuwan noted, is very important in campaigning and the party is realizing this to focus more on the power of media in order to communicate to the people their platform for good governance. Puea Thai is

supported by red shirt TV channels while DP has no presence on TV before. It is just now that they are starting to tap on to this strategy and they are learning how effective media can be used to advance their reach. Now they are in cooperation with a DP supporter who started a channel and Teepsuwan said they are amazed by the result of this initiative. “We find it to be so powerful that we cannot live without it,” Teepsuwan said. He said he is hoping that the support will be sustained if not increased. This channel, envisioned to operate for only two months, now can run by itself because of advertisements and endorsers.



The DP as a party has not been successful. Is it because it is too democratic? Is it because they do everything by the book? Teepsuwan recalled how former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva followed a step-by-step approach during the violent rally in Bangkok. He took careful measure against the crowd, but still people were upset that he did not take a firm stand on it. And now, he is facing charges as well because of his actions. Vejjajiva was slated to be the best Prime Minister because of his vast knowledge on governance. He knows how to come up with good policies and implement them for the benefit of the people. But the question is, will these sound efforts translate to election wins? “Building institutions is one thing, winning campaign is another,” Teepsuwan noted.

Teepsuwan said there’s still so much to learn and so much to do as political parties. In building democratic institutions, parties must be strong within its own organization first. It must continue to build within the rule of law despite the threat of compromises and populist actions. He said that DP is not strong enough, but they strive to improve everyday. The power of youth is important, he added, to fill in the holes of the party and provide fresh ideas. Communications within the party is also essential to address the ever-changing society and adjust to the changing parameters of winning elections.

Dr. James Gomez

Head, Policy Unit
Singapore Democratic Party



Gomez discussed the challenges in building democratic institutions and gave a snapshot of what is currently happening in Singapore. Singapore, he said, being considered as a country with “authoritarian tendencies” has experienced big changes in terms of political awareness. For over 40 years of one-party rule, the ruling party has recently been challenged by braver citizenry – a citizenry that is not afraid. The emergence of this new population was caused by the increase of the cost of living and decrease in wages. Another reason is that the country brings in a lot immigrant workers, around 1.5 million, and annually adds a minimum of 20,000 new citizens from China, Gomez explained. Singapore’s current population stands about 5.3 million, of which 3.8 million are permanent residents. The People’s Action Party (PAP), “accused of gerrymandering” in the past, would probably now depend on the increasing conservative voters coming in as new citizens.

With regard to the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP), positive things are happening. Gomez said his party enjoyed a 14% swing in its popularity in the last

elections. They are currently working on a series of policy papers that are in clear contrast with the ruling party's policies on health, public housing, among others. The current government requires citizens to pay more on health benefits and the state to pay less. Public housing has become a "real estate speculation," he added. Gomez explained that SDP's policies are geared towards increasing the state share and reducing the citizen's share.

Gomez found it interesting to note that twelve years ago, CALD discussed as well the theme democratic transition with Indonesia being the focal point of discussion. He said, they hardly spoke on matters involving China which is currently a big factor in terms of national and regional, even global transitions.

Gomez also raised three regional developments that reflect democratic transitions. First is the role of democracy foundations (e.g. South Korea's democracy foundation during Kim Dae-jung's time, the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, etc.) Gomez said that democracy work depends on the sitting government and the politics behind every institution. "When you have democratic government coming to power, chances are there will be movements that would move towards those kinds of institutions," he noted. Second, the national human rights institutions. Philippines was in the forefront of this after the 1986 EDSA revolution establishing the Commission on Human Rights. Indonesia followed in 2001 with the National Commission on Human Rights. Myanmar, in 2011, established the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, although the genuine purpose of which is highly debated. Lastly, coordinating with inter-governmental or regional instruments that focus on democratic developments. National democratic movement and even CALD must be connected or "hooked" to such channels of regional dialogue.



The experience of Singapore in terms of the role of China, its economic development, and the influx of new citizens might also be a transition phase that Myanmar would encounter.

Session II Open Forum

The session chair, Ms. Selyna Peiris, chair of the CALD Youth, shared a few point before the open forum. She said that parties that won elections might have been ignoring an important segment in governance, the policy makers. These policy makers, she explained, are “bureaucrats and civil servants who are constantly in service and who are already used to the system” and “sensitive to the nuances.” They are overlooked as parties put in place political appointees. Peiris said working with them and cooperating with them may be beneficial when parties come into power and countries transition to democracy.



Reconciliation and Rule of Law in Myanmar



Ms. Katrin Bannach, FNF project manager for Cambodia, Myanmar, and Malaysia, asked more clarity on the case of Myanmar regarding the three priorities of NLD: rule of law, national reconciliation, and amending the constitution of Burma. Noting that there are only three years to go before the election and two years to go for NLD to campaign and start negotiations with the military on the “mechanisms of transformation,” Bannach asked Naing how the reconciliation efforts would go hand-in-hand with the rule of law. The elections she said would be a “decisive moment where the will of the military will be tested” if they are willing to handover power to the NLD.

Naing said reconciliation is very important, but like DP Thailand, the NLD is also experiencing the hard conditions of being in opposition. Even before the elections, NLD’s approach was “cautious optimism.” He said they are cooperating cautiously with the parliament, the government, and trying hard to build the party as a democratic institution to make people understand the plans and aspirations of the party for the country. “There are many difficulties and challenges but we are determined,” he said. Naing is hopeful that through the influence of their leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, changes in political culture will follow.

Shared Political Struggles

Hon. Sam Rainsy shared that matters involving democratic institutions and rule of law do not apply to Cambodia because the authoritarian party is very reluctant to transfer or share power. They are, however, very keen in showing a pretense of good will or façade of democracy. SRP shares similarities with the experience of DP Thailand. Sam said that democratic parties must pay close attention to three institutions: police (a tool to harass opponents), the court (a tool to secure impunity for the powerful people and to crack down the opposition and maintain power), and



the national election commission (a tool for electoral fraud). The Cambodian government has been controlling all three institutions ever since.

Liu said DPP also had the same experience. “Most our senior officials were hunted down by investigators and prosecutors,” he said. Liu believes that building democratic institutions is essential, but with ruling parties operating without democratic principles, it’s very hard to fight for changes. He said that democratic parties must go beyond establishing institutions and move towards the transforming and deepening of the public consciousness on democratic values.



Teepsuwan encouraged Sam to be persistent. He said for DP, it is an uphill battle. They get harassed, money politics overshadows them, legislative pressures haunt them as the ruling party pushes for the pardon and re-entry of Thaksin, etc. But they decided to work harder, to persevere, and to continue to provide the right information and political awareness that people deserve.

Naing agrees with what Teepsuwan shared. He added that leaders have to ensure people that you are working for them and that you are determined to work hard for them. This is how a leader builds reputation. As NLD members get jailed and persecuted, their reputation just becomes stronger and more genuine to the people.

SESSION III

Forging Ethnic Harmony and a Democratic Union



Reviewing the cases of Malaysia, the Philippines, Burma and Sri Lanka, Session III observed successes and failures in ethnic integration efforts. Hon. Lau Chin Hoon, State Assemblyman of Johore and Central Committee Member of the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM), opened the discussion by likening politics to chemistry: there is a need to calibrate and recalibrate institutions and policies for racial harmony. He said that in the case of Malaysia, they have a very high percent of ethnic minorities. Historical factors and lack of racial competition for employment among others are major factors as to why Malaysia is not plagued by ethnic disputes.

Session III presented the issues confronted in nation-building vis-à-vis the presence of multi-ethnic societies. Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon, member of the Technical Working Group on Power Sharing in the GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations and serves as the Undersecretary for Political Affairs of the Office of the President, discussed the recently signed Bangsamoro Framework Agreement which aims to lay the groundwork for peace in southern Philippines. Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP, leader of the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka and the presidential adviser on Reconciliation of the Office of the President discussed the reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the civil war in Sri Lanka. Mr. Nyo Ohn Myint, secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) shared the on-going negotiations with ethnic groups in Burma.

Mr. Nyo Ohn Myint

Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee
National Council of the Union of Burma

Nyo pointed out that the fundamental quality of ethnic harmony is compromise. He said that in Burma, where ethnic tensions have become full-blown civil wars, there is a general distrust between ethnicities. For any reconciliation to take place, trust and respect of rights must be present – as is the case of Malaysia. Recent land grabs have aggravated the longstanding antagonism between border-states and the capital. According to Nyo, there needs to be fair ownership of property, starting with land, for Burma to progress.



The lack of trust and respect for rights has hindered the steps of the reconciliation process. Nyo identified three steps in the reconciliation process: ceasefire, dialogue, and a peace accord.. His presentation's focus on ceasefires and dialogue is an indicator of the importance and elusiveness of the first steps of reconciliation.

Even given the recent land grabs, Nyo favorably viewed the changes in Burma's peace talks. In the peace talks of 2003-2004, all peace negotiators from the government were armed forces officials. Recently, one minister, U Aung Min, is the only former official on the table. The visible phase out of military officials begged to ask what role Burma's military would assume in reconciliation in the coming years. Nyo imagined that it would be ideal if these developments continue and the opposition takes bigger responsibilities.

Hon. Jose Luis Martin “Chito” Gascon

Member, Technical Working Group on Power Sharing
GRP-MILF Peace Negotiations
Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Office of the Political Advisor
Office of the President, The Philippines



Even while most countries in CALD are multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious, Gascon said such circumstances are not necessarily bad. A variegated country could develop a healthy and vibrant democratic system. He warned that the same circumstances could also be a precursor to deeply divided societies; thereby warranting different solutions for racial disharmony in every country. Unless problems of ethnic rebel groups can be resolved, there is no true democracy and progress. He said that Malaysia is a good example because they were able to pull back from violence.

In the Philippines, Gascon noted that there are two kinds of political violence. One stems from ideology i.e. the communist insurgency. The other is by religion. The

tension in the south of the Philippines comes from perceived and real instances of marginalization. No state can have democracy without minorities as well. There can be no imposition of the concept of democracy that a majority wants over a minority. They must be included in a way that makes democracy work for them.

Gascon said that the peace process must acknowledge historical wrongs and chronicle injustices to build good faith. Both parties must enter negotiations in a non-adversarial manner; and that trust and agreement may not always be present but it is better to lay everything on the table. Also, an attitude that establishes a parity of esteem between actors in negotiations is a must, recognizing and respecting that either side represents anywhere from five million people to a hundred million.

According to Gascon, cessation of violence comes in two forms: a ceasefire, which preceded the end of hostilities, or Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR or Normalization). He stressed that in all forms of reconciliation: there are two significant steps. First is to surface all issues and concerns of all parties, dealing with each point at a time in an organized agenda. Second is to set guidelines between parties in hostility to keep the situation from worsening. Third parties can be highly helpful in any step of a peace process. In the case of the Philippines, the government of Malaysia and several NGOs have been critical in keeping the peace between parties.

On who should come to the table, Gascon noted that there should never be just two parties. All affected by the conflict must be actively represented. Civilians who are not heavily sided to the government or the armed group usually get caught in the crossfire. Their and all other groups' input is key to successful adaptive DDR program.

Part of the process, Gascon said, is the establishment of a mode of self-governance. However, the newly self-governed should not be kept out of the affairs of a central government. They need to be represented at the national level and also have to be protected by affirmative action. Since government agencies will have a difficult time entering rebel group areas because they still lack the trust, NGOs are generally more accepted by rebel groups to administer aid.

Finally, after the formalization of peace agreements is the monitoring of implementation. Gascon recalled how the University of Notre Dame developed a matrix to monitor and compare peace agreements around the world. He reiterated that third party actors have an important role to play in ensuring that the programs promised are delivered.

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP

Leader, Liberal Party, Sri Lanka
Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation,
Office of the President, Sri Lanka

Wijesinha noted that currently many countries suffer from sectarian conflict. In Sri Lanka, the people are recovering from a thirty-year long civil war. His thesis is that sectarian violence comes from long periods of oppression particularly by a majority over a minority or minorities. He said this is true for Sri Lanka, where the majority Sinhalese sidelined Tamils. Wijesinha stressed that a liberal form of government is foundational for better representation of all sectors; thereby mitigating dominance by a majority. In the case where an entire sector like the Tamils was marginalized, local administration became more important.



Wijesinha in part blamed minority oppression on Sri Lanka's form of British majoritarian democracy. Since members of their parliament are elected by first-past-the post system, the largest sector of society classically obtains majority in parliament by sheer number of its voters. Consequently, the minority will always bow to majority in almost every matter at the national level. It was in this condition that Sinhalese was voted as the national language with its proficiency required of government officials. Following this, Sinhalese became the de facto language in schools (though Tamil was formally taught). Given that the government was the state's chief employer and that it monopolized the education system, many Tamils suffered.

In conclusion, Wijesinha's opined that a bicameral parliament with proportional representation better fits Sri Lanka. A lower house with professionals and technocrats would also be better suited to be appointed for the top executive positions.

Session III Open Forum

Justice: Restorative and Retributive

Bannach asked if the panelists think there is a dilemma between justice and reconciliation and if there is, how to deal with the dilemma in a specific context.



Gascon replied that justice could mean reconciliation. Those historic wrongs that are not rectified may mean that justice will not be delivered, families cannot find closure and societies will ultimately suffer. Those who committed atrocities and war crimes should be held accountable. Truth and reconciliation commissions are made to document and report those atrocities. The results may or may not be followed by prosecution; but the fact-finding in itself is already a form of resolution. In place of or complementary to prosecution, compensation for those who were wronged is recommended. Again, Gascon emphasized that third party monitors help with this step of reconciliation.

Wijesinha said that the best cases of reconciliation were done without the prosecution. He agreed to Gascon's idea of compensation and truth and reconciliation. He warned that the biggest problem with public opinion are witch-hunts or many people from either side or even outside negotiations becoming overly aggressive in prosecuting those they perceive to have committed wrongdoings. He said that this seems to be the problem now in Sri Lanka against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. He said that restorative justice is important but as much as possible, it must not be at the expense of other people.

Nyo echoes Wijesinha's idea that justice be sidelined for reconciliation. He cited

the case of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi where she decided not to prosecute military junta leaders for placing her under house arrest for fifteen years.

On Public Opinion

Since public opinion may hinder reconciliation, Mr. Lito Arlegue, executive director of CALD, asked how to shape public opinion before eventually reaching the end of hostilities.



Gascon recommended that the public know the general direction of the peace talks for the sake of transparency. For example he cited the Philippine framework agreement. After the agreement was drafted, President Aquino decided to share the agreement with the public. In retrospect, it was the right thing to do according to Gascon. The framework agreement was circulated, debated and people were informed. The agreement was signed a week after with 85% approval rating from the people. Although he warned that not every detail about the peace process should be revealed.

Burma's Working Parliament

Myo from the National League for Democracy asked whether it would be better for a parliamentarian to concentrate efforts on peace with the national union or to the state.



Nyo explained that the steps to peace and the will of the union parliament should not be taken as contradictory. He said that any efforts for peace are best done with the federal parliament. According to him, the parliament of Burma is no longer the rubber stamp former Prime Minister Than Shwe made it to be; and that is a positive factor that can contribute to the reconciliation in Burma.

SESSION IV
Encouraging “Democracy- and Human Rights-Friendly”
Investments and Environmental Protection



In Session IV, where Taiwan’s history with nuclear plants and naphtha crackers was reviewed, highlights the dynamic relationship between NGOs, political parties, government and the public and how these relationships affect environmental policy. The salient message in the discussion was that political parties should establish rapport with interest groups in order to make transitions successful.

Mr. Shih-Chung Liu, director of the Department of International Affairs of the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan, facilitated the session with Professor Kuang-Jung Hsu from the Department of Atmospheric Sciences of the National Taiwan University providing input on how environmental policies and participation of stakeholders played a role in consolidating democracy. Wijesinha gave a summary of the conference and recapped the highlights of the sessions.

Professor Kuang-Jung Hsu
Department of Atmospheric Sciences,
National Taiwan University

Drawing from Taiwan's experience with nuclear energy power plants, Hsu illustrated an example of how environmental movements complement democratic movements.

Hsu’s first case was a fertilizer factory in 1982 that had to close down because nearby inhabitants suffered from highly toxic air. Unnecessarily burdened by the

pollution, a group of those inhabitants who took the initiative was able to have the factory closed. Hsu recalled that many of those protesting were supported by DPP.

Nuclear power has also always been a major contentious topic in Taiwan. Currently, there are three active plants and a fourth one is being constructed. The existing three plants house two reactors each. All three plants, Hsu explained, are within 75km to half of Taiwan's population. According to her, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recommends evacuations be extended to a safe distance of at least 85km in the case of nuclear plant malfunction.



DPP has been adamant about the phasing out of nuclear energy and has even included it in its by-laws. However, Hsu said that the DPP had little to no discourse on the nuclear issue between 2001 and 2011. After the Fukushima nuclear disaster however, debate on nuclear energy was renewed. The DPP has since been contesting to halt of the construction of the fourth power plant. For this reason, anti-nuclear and environmental groups have sided with DPP in the debate against KMT. To aggravate the problem, Hsu said that the fourth nuclear power plant in Lungmen is poorly constructed, posing a critical threat to those within an 85km radius.

Hsu believed that if enough pressure is applied to the government, the construction and operation of plants that emit excessive pollution could be halted. In 1998, Formosa Plastic was forced to discontinue its planned construction of a naphtha cracker plant in Yilan County. The ban was by the efforts of the people of the county as well as their Magistrate Chen whose environmental impact assessment gave the plant a failing mark. The plant was forced to resettle. Formosa Plastic relocated the plant to Yunlin County where students in a nearby school had to wear gas masks because of the pollution.

In a similar case, a naphtha cracker plant in Changhua County was withdrawn due to grassroots-organized pressure groups.

When DPP was elected into power in 2000, their original anti-nuclear stance softened and gave way to concessions. Hsu stated that parties in power are responsible for balancing opposing stances. Although the phasing out of nuclear power is included in DPP's constitution, it wasn't exempted from the rule. Even with such restraints, Hsu recommended keeping good relationships with NGOs when a party gains power in the government.

Despite planned commitments and proposals by local leaders to phase out nuclear energy and promote renewable energy, Taiwan's central KMT-led government continues to export power and build plants with no clear plan to decrease. Hsu blamed the government for always prioritizing the wrong concept of "development". She said that people have a predetermined notion that advances in economic development will always be to the detriment of environment and vice versa.

She noted that the concept of market economy entails the "efficient" use of resources, which should mean a sustainable consumption of the environment. The reason she thought as to why government and people prefer economic development and tend to disregard environment is because its benefits are not as clear and easily observable.



Hsu believed that there should be collaboration between experts and the public. Experts can determine what levels of consumption are sustainable for particular resources or for how much and how long an environment can absorb a certain pollutant. She ended by saying that economic development and environmental protection can be balanced, or can bring mutual benefits.

Session IV Open Forum

On Political Party and NGOs

Liu stated that although it is not an excuse, when a party attains power in government, some advocacies have to give way for compromise. And although former President Chen Shui-bian of the DPP did try to hinder further construction of nuclear power plants, a KMT-majority parliament overruled presidential orders on the subject. He was thankful that after the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, people took the initiative of protesting en masse against a government that has been lax on nuclear energy restrictions. He recommended that when parties come into power, they should always take environmental groups into consideration.



Gascon asked if parties in Taiwan have an active mechanism to hear policy recommendations from interest groups like Hsu's. Liu replied by saying that experts like Hsu are repeatedly invited to DPP for consultations on policy for the past two or three years. He said that because of these consultations, the DPP has once again been able to spearhead efforts against the fourth nuclear power plant that gained local bipartisan support. Hsu added that collaboration between DPP and experts are formed into groups of which she is a leader of.

On Monitoring Operations and Limiting Construction



Gascon also asked if there are restrictions imposed on factories to keep their emissions in check (as he wondered why over-polluting naphtha crackers weren't immediately suspended). Hsu said that there are restrictions in place but loopholes also exist. Plants sometimes discharge pollutants beyond restriction when there is no monitoring. In the process of cracking crude oil, naphtha plants also discharge flares that have limited monitoring at best.

In response to a question on completely banning petrochemical plants by Mr. Lau Chin Hoon from PRGM, Hsu answered that handing less subsidies to these companies should be in order. Since Taiwan's energy is mostly exported, she believed that if these companies are truly competitive, they should rely on less support from the government.

CLOSING SESSION

Synthesis prepared and delivered by:

Hon. Rajiva Wijesinha, MP

Leader, Liberal Party, Sri Lanka
Presidential Adviser on Reconciliation,
Office of the President, Sri Lanka



Producing a synthesis of the various interesting and instructive papers we heard today is not an easy task. Understandably, almost all speakers looked at the issue under discussion through the prism of their own experiences, but unfortunately very few made any clear connection between the problems they discussed and those of Burma, which is supposed to be our primary concern.

Nevertheless the issues they raised suggest what I hope will be productive lines of thought. I will look at these in terms of a formula suggested by a former President of Sri Lanka who had to deal with the aftermath, in the early nineties, of not only the ethnic conflict and the settlement brokered by India, but also a Sinhalese youth insurrection that used dissatisfaction with that settlement as a focus to rouse armed opposition to government. His argument was that we must have consultation, compromise and consensus, and I was reminded of this when Cambodia raised the question of the possibility of talking with the devil, and Hong Kong talked about dancing with wolves.

The answer to what might be a conundrum was outlined in the very first presentation we had on Burma, which fleshed out the position put to us by Aung San Suu Kyi when I was privileged to lead the CALD delegation that met her way back in

January 2011. Earlier we had been to the NLD headquarters where some of the party elders seemed to suggest that no compromise was possible. But her position was clear, that she was prepared to talk and to aim for consensus, but she would not compromise on basic principles. Compromise I believe is generally a good thing, when it is based on sensitivity to the positions of other individuals. It should not involve abandoning principles, but one should be prepared to be flexible with regard to other people in trying to reach a common understanding.

Myo this morning, in a moving description of the approach taken by his party now, mentioned that they engaged in talks with all parties based on mutual respect. Their aim was long lasting peace and reconciliation, and this clearly required understanding of what the different parties wanted, what they needed, and what they stood for.

In the discussion after that session, following on the description of the gradual increase in people participation in government in Hong Kong, some very significant points were made. One was the fact that, in developing a pact between competing forces, we need also to take into account competition within one or other party to the principal conflict. This is particularly true where ethnic groups are concerned, whether in Burma or Sri Lanka or the Philippines, where extreme views have evolved, whereas there are usually also more moderate forces.

It is understandable that minorities which feel they have been tricked and abused – and this applies to political groups too – feel they cannot trust those who have oppressed them. But experience shows us that even apparently intransigent regimes change, sometimes because of external pressures, sometimes because of changes of personnel. South Africa and Burma are obvious examples that come to mind, but of the eight countries in CALD that had obviously authoritarian regimes but experienced transitions to democracy, we can see some sort of softening in four others of the original oppressive government when new personalities emerged. In Taiwan and Indonesia and Mongolia and Pakistan a hardline leader presided over elections that led to a change of government, and I see no reason why the same thing should not happen in Burma. Indeed it could be argued that the same thing happened in Thailand, when General Prem was succeeded by Prime Minister Chatchai.

Prem, now revered it seems by Democrats in Thailand, is an example of the seminal power exercised by individuals. He was a general who became Prime Minister without being elected, but he understood the need to move towards democracy. And while I appreciate the view presented by the DPP, that the changes in Taiwan were triggered by bottom up opposition, I do not think we can ignore the opening up, after the total domination by General Chiang Kai Shek, by his son, who was President for a brief period. That again seems to be the model Burma is following, and I hope the other conditions that allowed peaceful transition in Taiwan obtain there.

Amongst these is the need to ensure confidence. The fact that President Chen appointed a military man as his first Prime Minister was a vital factor in ensuring that animosities did not develop. Animosity, we should remember, often arises from fear, and I believe the point made by the chair of the second session, about the confidence the Burmese military have because of the 2008 constitution, should be kept in view. Certainly that constitution must be changed, but this should be done in a manner that does not threaten. I myself believe that the hardliners in 1989 were able to get their way because of threats made by individuals after the NLD won that election, and that is why the very positive approach that was described today, involving mutual respect, is vital. We should never forget that respect should be as much for the weaknesses of competing forces as for their strengths – or perhaps even more so.

It is such an approach that I believe will be most fruitful with regard to relations with China, which were referred to frequently, though often obliquely except in the case of Hong Kong, where they are obviously of immediate significance. When we think of the support China has given to authoritarian regimes, we should not forget the policies of the United States until very recently – to give them the benefit of the doubt, despite the graphic descriptions of say the former British ambassador to Uzbekistan about support for torture and secret renditions fairly recently.

The fact is, all countries look after their own interests, and morality will not stand in the way of this, as the people of South America found to their cost for well over a century and a half after the promulgation of the Monroe doctrine. I would like to think that the United States has now realized that its own interests are better served by promoting democracy and human rights than by supporting authoritarian regimes, but we would be naïve to think that democracy and human rights are an end in themselves for any country with regard to any other.

It is the people of a country who provide the best defense of their own rights, and that is why we must not only promote democracy, but also institutional mechanisms that preserve and protect rights. Cambodia, having experienced the hollowness of what passes for democracy because of regular voting, noted the vital importance of the police, the Courts and the Election Commission being independent institutions. Let me add that Singapore too, if not so obviously, would also fail this test of a fully functioning democracy, that such institutions should be independent of the government in power.

To that Hong Kong added the need for an independent institution to prevent corruption, and I should note that that element in Hong Kong is some compensation for its lack of democracy in other respects. But I think we also need to stress the importance of the media, while also realizing that an independent media is impossible. All media, we must recognize, will fall in line with the predilections of those who fund it, but diversity in the media is vital, and we need a situation in which different political perspectives should have outlets that represent their views. I am delighted that the Democrat Party of Thailand has taken positive steps in this regard,

and am only surprised, given what outsiders knew about the influence exercised by the media opposed to them, that remedial measures have come so late.

This point about the media, or rather about the need for a free flow of information, is relevant to the last paper we had today, which discussed environmental problems. The theme of the speaker was the need for synergy between political parties and those concerned with environmental protection, and the failure in this regard of the DPP in Taiwan after it took power was highlighted. This sort of criticism, encouraged by the party itself, is heartening, for it suggests understanding of one of the cardinal principles of democracy, namely that it requires constant consultation of the people, for otherwise they would not be empowered.

In this regard I was deeply impressed by the point made by the speaker, that the path to democracy is made up of challenges to authority. Even the most idealistic political parties can forget this when they assume power, for they begin to think that those in charge know best, and they privilege elites, whether they be political or administrative or financial elites. But we must not forget that the authority such elites exercise only has legitimacy in terms of benefits to the people amongst whom they function.

At the first session this morning, in talking primarily about the economic crisis and its implications for democracy, the Thai speaker noted three areas with which government should be concerned. The first was job creation, which is of course something that political parties of all persuasions pursue. The second point he mentioned was social concern, and this is something Liberals should stress. Unfortunately there is a strand in liberal thinking, which concentrates on free markets, and believes that market forces will solve all problems. But the great tradition of liberalism, that which distinguishes it from right wing parties that believe capitalism is a panacea for everything, and left wing parties which believe state controls are essential, emphasizes the importance of equity (fairness, justice, impartiality). Therefore, while accepting the central position in economic policy of market forces, liberals believe in welfare measures that will increase opportunities for all, and thereby promote the level playing field on which alone market forces can operate to the benefit of all. Thus, as Count Otto von Lambsdorff so graphically put it once, while Liberals believe in a small state, they also believe in a strong state, and this was the message that came through clearly even yesterday, when our Secretary General introduced the Seminar on Climate Change.

Nowhere perhaps in the modern world is the need for state intervention to regulate market forces greater than with regard to the environment. I recall that, twenty years ago, when I used to conduct workshops for the FNF, the obvious areas in which even Liberals recognized the need for state authority were defense and law and financial security. In those days the environment did not figure high on the list. But with every year that has passed since then, we realize how important it is for the state to provide security for its people with regard also to nature and its resources.

We must then make sure that there is concerted attention to environmental needs, and this requires constant consultation of local communities. As countries move towards greater democracy, we must also make sure that the people who should exercise power are aware of issues that could affect them adversely. Information that is relevant must be collated and disseminated, so that decisions are made on the basis of full awareness of possible consequences. For this purpose media involvement is essential, but given the predilections and priorities of most media outlets, we need also to promote new concepts of media and information dissemination.

Democracy after all is not about governments; it is rather about the governed. Political parties therefore must, in promoting transitions to greater and greater democracy, also enhance the power of individuals to make decisions. Better understanding of the needs of others is vital, as we discussed in the session on forging ethnic harmony, but so too is awareness of the consequences of the decisions we make.

A large, stylized illustration of a landscape. The background is a bright yellow sky. In the middle ground, there are green hills and a large, green, conical structure resembling a pagoda or a mountain peak. In the foreground, there are green trees and a green field. The entire illustration is framed by a green border with decorative corner ornaments.

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