



Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 11/23/2020

Tsai Ing-Wen, Leni Robredo Lead Regional Gathering for Future of Democracy in Asia

Manila, Philippines: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-Wen and Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo unite for a series of virtual events to defend democracy in Asia. The two women leaders spearhead the set of speakers addressing the 13th CALD General Assembly, which starts today.

With the theme, "Hope Among Us: A Virtual Gathering for the Future of Democracy", the series assembles Liberals and Democrats from Asia and from around the world on 23-27 November to analyze the main challenges for democracies after the COVID-19 pandemic, and to come up with policy recommendations on the way forward.

Citing the research done by US-based Brookings Institution, CALD identified five main challenges for democracies after the coronavirus: 1) protecting the safety and integrity of elections; 2) finding the right place for expertise; 3) coping with resurgent populism and nationalism; 4) countering homegrown and foreign disinformation; and 5) defending the democratic model.

"In Taiwan, we call our cooperative efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic the 'Taiwan Model', says President Tsai in her keynote address. "We also have a Taiwan Model in combating disinformation. That is -- a strong, confident democracy, combined with informed citizenry, is its best defense. The Taiwan experience is also a demonstration that democratic values are critical in this important fight against authoritarian forces."

On Friday, 27 November, Vice President Robredo will address the challenge of how liberal democracy can be defended in light of new challenges brought about by the pandemic. Apart from Robredo, the other speakers in the week-long events include CALD Chairperson and Philippine Senator, Kiko Pangilinan; former Thailand Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva; Hong Kong democracy activist, Emily Lau; and former Philippine Secretary of Budget and Management, Butch Abad.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated democratic recession as many people in the world have lost jobs and reduced incomes, and are threatened by the health crisis", says Senator Pangilinan, CALD Chairperson. "It is for this reason that the virtual events marking the 13th CALD General Assembly come like a refreshing breeze of democracy at a time when breathing literally and figuratively has become difficult."

The schedule of the 13th CALD General Assembly virtual events is available on the CALD Facebook Page ([@asianliberals](https://www.facebook.com/asianliberals)).

About CALD: [CALD](http://www.cald.org) is a regional network of liberal and democratic political parties and individuals in Asia. It was founded in Bangkok, Thailand in 1993 with the support of then Thailand Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and South Korea's Kim Dae-Jung. It has nine full member-parties across East, Southeast and Central Asia, and is currently chaired by the Liberal Party of the Philippines.

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