

The background features a stylized landscape of mountains rendered in a wireframe mesh. The color palette transitions from a warm orange and yellow at the top to a cool blue and purple at the bottom. A large, dark blue silhouette of a coronavirus particle is centered behind the title. The title itself is contained within a dark blue rectangular box.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

2020 CALD Annual Report

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

MESSAGES	2
PROJECTS	9
ANNOUNCEMENT	50
SPEECHES	53
IN FOCUS	72
RESOLUTION, STATEMENTS & LETTERS	86
BULLETIN	90
MEMBER PARTY HIGHLIGHTS	100
SPEAKERS & SESSION CHAIRS	105
MEMBER PARTY PROFILES	108
ABOUT CALD	117



CALD and the Year of Lockdowns and Clampdowns

by *Bi-Khim Hsiao*


TO DESCRIBE 2020 as “momentous” may still be an understatement.

COVID-19, which defined the year 2020, has changed the world in more ways than one. The impact on the economy has been devastating, and would most likely be felt even after the pandemic is over. The pandemic may also have significant political implications, with competing narratives of more authoritarian measures versus greater transparency to control the virus. More importantly, the human cost in terms of lives lost, long-term health effects on those exposed to the virus, as well as the mental and emotional anguish that go with these and prolonged isolation would be immeasurable.

For organizations like the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, the impact has also been enormous. Being a political network, CALD relies heavily on bringing together like-minded people to accomplish common goals and objectives through its programmes and activities. For this reason, when the pandemic struck and travel restrictions were imposed everywhere, CALD had to either cancel its events or adapt them into a virtual format in order to remain true to its goal of providing “a means of cooperation, exchange of ideas, and better networking amongst liberal individuals, political parties, and organizations in Asia and beyond”.

The cancellation of most scheduled CALD events in 2020 was most unfortunate, especially since the network started strong with a back-to-back election mission to Taiwan and executive visit to Hong Kong in January, when the coronavirus was still in its initial stages of spread. In Taiwan, the CALD delegation witnessed the landslide reelection of incumbent President Tsai Ing-wen, which was also accompanied by the Democratic Progressive Party’s retention of the majority of seats in parliament. The jubilation felt by the delegation’s members was replaced by a more somber mood when they arrived in Hong Kong and met with the pan-democratic camp. The Hong Kong democrats painted a gloomy picture of the territory’s autonomy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. They were right. Around five months after the CALD visit, Hong Kong was subjected to the notorious national security law.

Hong Kong and Taiwan have been on the “frontlines of freedom and democracy” in 2020, and they continue to be so. For this reason, the international liberal community has been most vocal in calling for global support to protect and safeguard them from authoritarian intrusions. In April, after the arrests of key democrats in Hong Kong, Liberal International (LI), Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) Party



and CALD released a joint statement saying that “Hong Kong’s clampdown on the opposition is its other pandemic”. A month after, the LI Bureau released a statement condemning the decision of the World Health Assembly to deprive Taiwan of retaking its seat as observer, especially given the fact that the country is a recognized “world leader in fighting the coronavirus”, particularly with its #TaiwanCanHelp programmes.

Prior to this, a Special Session of the CALD Executive Committee Meeting, called to share experiences and best practices on how Asian countries are addressing the threat of COVID-19, also hailed Taiwan’s effective pandemic response. Described as “Fast, Fun, Fair”, the country’s successful formula for curbing the virus even became a subject of a number of webinars that CALD co-organized in cooperation with ALDE Party, the Africa Liberal Network, and the Philippine liberal think tank, Centre for Liberalism and Democracy.

Another key aspect of this formula is the fight against disinformation, which also became more pernicious during the pandemic. In her keynote address to the 13th CALD General Assembly in November, Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen noted: “The Taiwan model in combating disinformation is that a strong, confident democracy combined with

a fully informed citizenry is the best defence. The Taiwan experience is also a demonstration that democratic values are critical in this important fight against authoritarian forces. Taiwan is an example that a country can develop strategies and ways to combat disinformation without damaging its democratic procedures, system, and values.”

Taiwan’s twin successes in combating the pandemic and the infodemic resulted in some diplomatic successes in 2020. But like many countries in Asia, a number of challenges to our freedom and democracy still remain. It was for this reason that when I was asked to serve as Taiwan’s Representative to United States, I had to turn over the CALD Chairmanship to the next party in line: the Liberal Party (LP) of the Philippines. I am very pleased that LP nominated Senator Francis ‘Kiko’ Pangilinan and Congressman Francis ‘Blue’ Abaya as CALD Chair and CALD Secretary General, respectively. With them at the helm, I am confident that CALD is in capable hands.

While I am currently thousands of miles away, it is not an understatement to say that I am, and will always be, part of the liberal family.



Keeping Strong in the Time of COVID-19

by Francis 'Kiko' Pangilinan

THE YEAR 2020 is a year we would like to forget. Everything was extreme. Aside from global warming-induced wildfires, storms, and droughts, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant upending of global life as we knew it dominated the fifth leap year of the 21st century.

Populists and authoritarians dug in, exploiting the crisis to keep a tighter hold of power while depriving the governed of universal rights, especially of rights to information and health, and shrinking the already-limited democratic space. Our colleagues in Hong Kong faced escalating persecution, while our allies in Cambodia were prevented from returning home to attend their trials.

When we in the Liberal Party of the Philippines took over ahead of time the chairmanship from MP Bi-Khim Hsiao and the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan in July, the pandemic still had to reach its peak, tallying at the time about 10.3 million confirmed cases and over half a million COVID-19 deaths. (Now, as of April 2021, it's over 138 million confirmed cases and over 2.97 million COVID deaths.)

Given travel restrictions, we at CALD made the most out of the democratizing power of the Internet by holding webinars on various topics such as the Future of Democracy in Asia, the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election, and youth and mental health matters. Taiwan, in an online sharing of best practices in containing the pandemic, lived up to its "fast, fun, and fair" strategy.

The end of 2020 did not end the uncertainty and fear. But there are pockets of hope in the election of liberal and democratic U.S. President Joe Biden and in the various formulations of anti-COVID-19 vaccines.

The biggest hope, however, lies in all of us who are surviving this unprecedented global crisis, striving to help each other fight the COVID infection and the diseases of disinformation and disempowerment, and remembering and living "the Law of the Jungle — as old and as true as the sky...[that] the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack".



The Year of Extraordinary Thinking

by *Francis Gerald 'Blue' Abaya*

THE YEAR 2020 will be remembered in the annals of our history as an extraordinary milestone, where the world literally stopped to confront a pandemic, and in the process re-evaluated itself and all its interrelated, intricate components.

At the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, we have been forced to continue our fight for a free and just world in the context of social distancing. Fortunately, technology is on our side. We are able to keep old, and forge new, connections online. We are also able to expand our knowledge and pursue our causes, even as we navigate our personal and collective way into the new normal.

CALD was able to organize numerous webinars on key issues concerning our society, launch a liberal handbook, and promote liberal values across the region.

I trust that CALD will continue to be a visionary organization even in the digital world. We will continue to uphold the liberal values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, even as we face new forms of challenges that undermine these.

I am excited to be a part of CALD's transition into a world post-COVID. There is much to be done and I look forward to join the continuing fight for democracy and freedom.



How to Come Back Stronger from a Crisis

By *Jayanthi Devi Balaguru*

THE IMPACTS of crises are never gender-neutral, and COVID-19 is no exception.

Women are already taking over a heavier burden in household work – juggling schooling and caring for their children while working fulltime from home. We have also learned in previous epidemics that it takes much longer for women's income to return to the amount they made pre-outbreak compared to men's, and that girls are less likely to return to school. Furthermore, the chances of women and their children being exposed to violence has dramatically increased. Household stress and risks grow even greater when families also have to cope with potential economic or job losses.

We must reveal these vulnerabilities and make it an opportunity to determine the next steps on how to improve our women's conditions. We need to raise more awareness on key issues that are prevalent in our society today. Which is why CALD turned to virtual solutions to continue to further promote the values of liberalism, democracy, equality and freedom across the region this 2020.

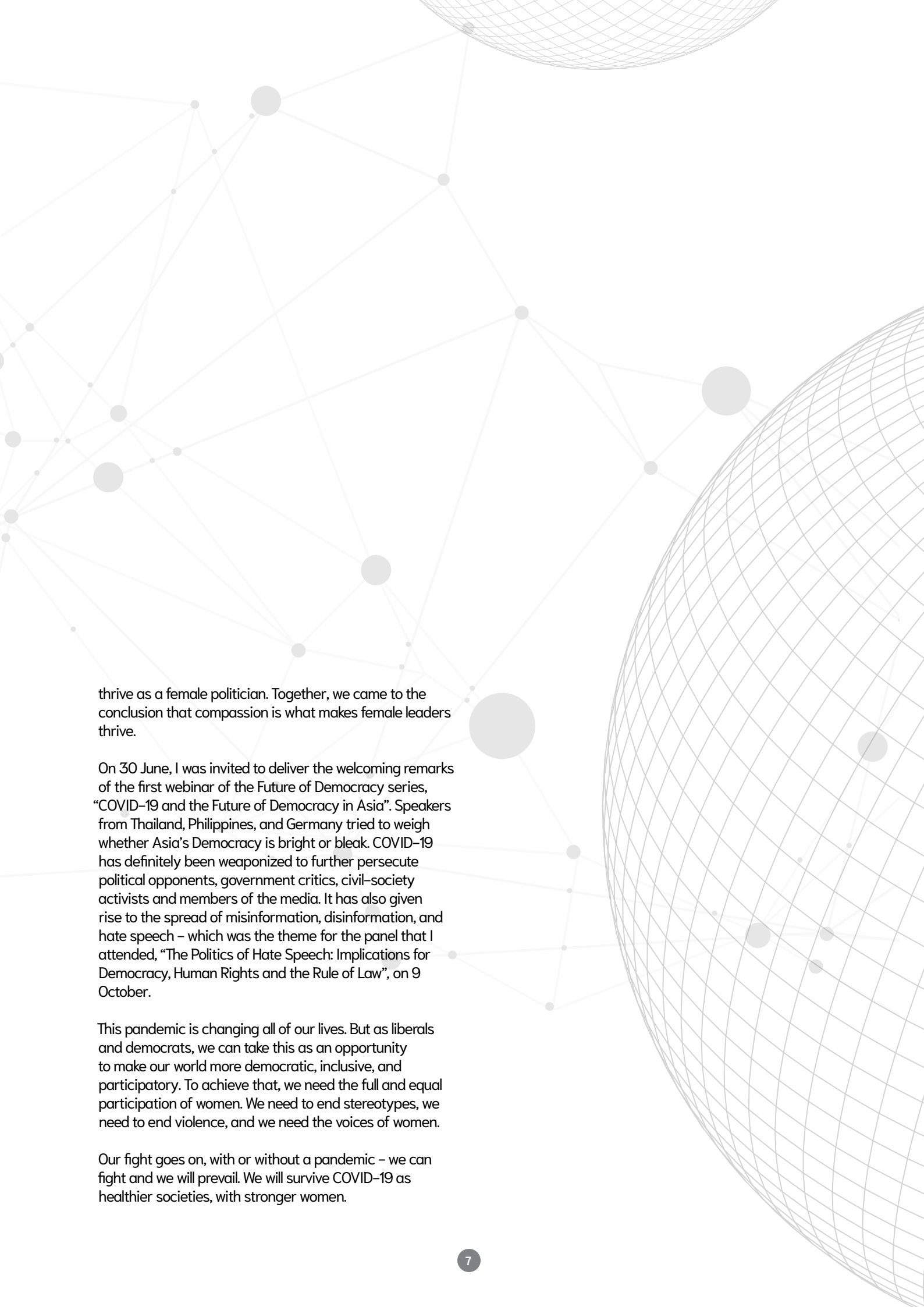
But before the pandemic started and the lockdowns and travel bans imposed, I was given an opportunity to represent CALD in the "International Forum on Lawfare: Weaponizing the Law Vs. Democratic Dissent" on 21 February in Manila, Philippines to share the experiences on how the law can be weaponized against oppositionists

and dissidents in Singapore, China, and Saudi Arabia. I also participated in a press briefing for Philippine Senator Leila de Lima, who has now been detained for three years (and counting) on fabricated drug-related charges. We have been fighting for her release for years now, and we won't stop until justice and truth prevail.

When the pandemic came, CALD held numerous web talks. I was part of several online discussions on women's issues, Asia's democracy, and hate speech.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, have intensified. This was the main topic of my talk during the Friedrich Naumann Foundation-organized event *#FemaleForward* on 29 May. It also allowed me to raise awareness on the continuing gender gap and possible steps the international community can take to move forward.

Women leaders are all over the Internet, and for the right reasons — they are breaking boundaries and glass ceilings. Organized by Liberal International, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, Africa Liberal Network, International Federation of the Liberal Youth, and CALD, "Women, Power and the Pandemic: A Liberal Roundtable" on 4 June gathered women leaders to exchange views and share experiences on how to



thrive as a female politician. Together, we came to the conclusion that compassion is what makes female leaders thrive.

On 30 June, I was invited to deliver the welcoming remarks of the first webinar of the Future of Democracy series, “COVID-19 and the Future of Democracy in Asia”. Speakers from Thailand, Philippines, and Germany tried to weigh whether Asia’s Democracy is bright or bleak. COVID-19 has definitely been weaponized to further persecute political opponents, government critics, civil-society activists and members of the media. It has also given rise to the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech – which was the theme for the panel that I attended, “The Politics of Hate Speech: Implications for Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law”, on 9 October.

This pandemic is changing all of our lives. But as liberals and democrats, we can take this as an opportunity to make our world more democratic, inclusive, and participatory. To achieve that, we need the full and equal participation of women. We need to end stereotypes, we need to end violence, and we need the voices of women.

Our fight goes on, with or without a pandemic – we can fight and we will prevail. We will survive COVID-19 as healthier societies, with stronger women.



Our Better Tomorrow

By *Siripa Intavichein*

FIRSTLY, our congratulations to the U.S. Democratic Party and Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party for their presidential poll victories this year. Their success is a ray of hope for believers of liberal democracies. We firmly believe their triumph will give renewed strength to the United States and Taiwan, while providing a lesson in perseverance for other countries.

The year 2020 has been challenging for all of us. We saw various countermeasures to the COVID-19 pandemic in each nation, consistent with their tradition and culture. For better or worse, our lives have been transformed.

I hope this transformation will prove a chance for a new, more sustainable beginning. A chance to improve the standard of our schooling and lifestyle. A chance to redistribute the fruits of various industries, such as technology, oil, and gas. A chance to ensure that innovations are nurtured, and their outcomes shared more evenly, equitably, and reliably.

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, we have neglected many long-standing concerns, among them environmental destruction and inequality leading

to social crises. These are but pieces of evidence of the lapses in the enforcement of our laws and in our common sense. But a better tomorrow is not out of reach. That is, if we do not let old rules and old playbooks steer the recovery into the pockets of the few, the monopolists, the rich and the powerful. There is no sustainability down that path. There would only be more inequity and fragility — the symptoms of social, political, and economic collapse.

The virus has shown us that we are capable of adapting quickly and making compromises. A careful revival can in fact lead to a new beginning.

In this new year, in this new start, we are all hoping for improvements to the COVID-19 situation. Yes, there has been setback after setback. The virus continues to mutate and transform. Still, there is discernible light in the midst of the darkness. It is this light of opportunity that we focus on, an opportunity not just to restore things to how they were before, but to innovate and create a better, and more sustainable world. And while the path before us feels uncertain, there is no better guide to move us forward than our own hearts.

CALD PROJECTS



CALD TAIWAN ELECTION MISSION

8-12 January | Taipei and Hualien, Taiwan

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats, in cooperation with the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and with the support of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, organized an Election Mission to Taiwan. The visit was aimed at showing support for CALD member party DPP, which contested in the presidential and parliamentary elections. The polls were deemed important not only to Taiwan, but also to democratic prospects in Asia.

12



CALD EXECUTIVE MISSION TO HONG KONG

12-14 January | Hong Kong

An Executive Mission to Hong Kong followed right after the CALD Taiwan election mission, with the trip's participants looking to better understand the political crisis that had been gripping the territory in the past months. The visit also gave the participants an opportunity to discuss with their Hong Kong counterparts the implications of the Taiwan elections.

15

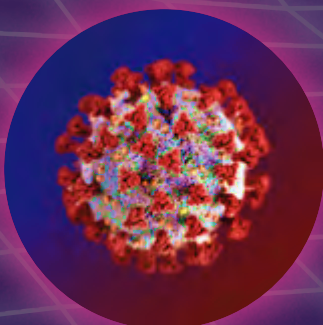


WHEN JUSTICE BECOMES OUT OF LEAGUE: ASIA IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

21 May | Webinar, 16:00-17:00 Manila, Taipei, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur

Representatives of CALD member-parties convened online to discuss the troubling political and legal situation confronting political party leaders and members, human-rights lawyers, and political activists, among others, in a number of Asian countries and jurisdictions.

18



THE PANDEMIC DILEMMA: RECESSION OR CONTAGION?

2 June | Webinar, 18:00-19:15 Seoul / 17:00-18:15 Hong Kong / 16:00-17:15 Bangkok / 11:00-12:15 Amsterdam, Berlin, Stockholm

Organized by CALD in close cooperation with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party and FNF Korea Office, the webinar featured speakers from South Korea, Sweden, and Germany, who discussed their respective COVID-19 experiences. They also tackled the question: "When is the right time to ease off pandemic restrictions and reopen the economy?"

21



THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN ASIA

30 June | Webinar, 15:00-16:00 Manila /
14:00-15:00 Bangkok / 08:00-09:00 Berlin

A panel of thought leaders had a closer look at the Future of Democracy in Asia. Organized by the CALD and FNF Southeast and East Asia (FNF SEEA), the event set the tone for the 41st CALD Executive Committee Meeting, which took place immediately after the webinar.

24



IS HONG KONG'S PRESENT ASIA'S FUTURE?

28 July | Webinar, 09:30-11:00 Hong Kong, Taipei, Manila /
27 July, 21:30-23:00 Washington, D.C., Ottawa

The second in CALD's "The Future of Democracy in Asia" series, this webinar had leading democrats in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States discussing the possible impact of recent political developments in Hong Kong on the future of democracy in the Southeast and East Asian region.

26



THE 2020 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: WILL IT MATTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA?

11 September | Webinar, 09:30-11:00 Singapore, Manila /
10 September, 21:30-23:00 Washington, D.C.

With the support of FNF and Asia Centre, the last installment of CALD's "Future of Democracy in Asia" webinar series brought together key political leaders and analysts in Asia and the United States to talk about the impact of the 2020 U.S. elections on democracy and human rights in Asia.

29



WHY YOUTH MATTER

6 October | Webinar, 15:00-16:00 Bangkok /
16:00-17:00 Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur

This webinar organized by CALD Youth, in cooperation with the Liberal Youth (LY) of the Philippines gathered young leaders in Asia to discuss the current state and future of liberal values and democratic institutions in the age of COVID-19 and how the crisis affects the future of the region's youth.

32

35

MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR

23 October | Webinar, 16:00-17:40 Manila, Singapore /
15:00-16:40 Bangkok

Hosted by LY, in cooperation with CALD Youth and the support of FNF SEEA, “Mind Matters: The Strongman Response to COVID-19 and Its Impact on Mental Health” highlighted the importance of democracy as a determinant of mental health, and especially in the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

38

SMART CITY WEBINAR

30 October | Webinar, 13:00 Manila, Taiwan /
12:00 Jakarta / 14:00 Seoul

The “Reimagining Smart Cities: Current Challenges and New Opportunities” webinar convened local government leaders and experts from Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines to discuss how smart cities can be reimagined and to look at the opportunities in the midst of the pandemic. The webinar was part of CALD’s Smart City Assessment Project, which aims to assess the smart status of the select local government units and present expert recommendations in planning for the next steps forward. CALD also launched its Smart City video during the webinar.

43

13TH CALD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23-27 November | Webinars

With the theme, “Hope Among Us: A Virtual Gathering for the Future of Democracy”, this series of events assembled liberals and democrats from Asia and elsewhere to analyze the main challenges for democracies after the COVID-19 pandemic, and to come up with policy recommendations on the way forward.

47

KAYA PALA (IT CAN BE DONE)

11 December | Webinar, 10:00-11:30 Manila, Taipei

With no clear end in sight to the pandemic gripping the world, CALD, in cooperation with Centre for Liberalism and Democracy (CLD) and with the support of FNF, organized an online forum for a chance for the Filipino public to learn lessons from Taiwan’s success in combating not only COVID-19, but also disinformation campaigns.

CALD PROJECTS



CALD TAIWAN ELECTION MISSION

8-12 January | Taipei and Hualien, Taiwan

FOR MORE than two decades, the world has known the so-called ‘one country, two systems’ policy as referring to Hong Kong and Macau having different political and economic systems from the mainland, while remaining part of the People’s Republic of China. In January 2019, however, Chinese President Xi Jinping also endorsed it as a model for China-Taiwan relations – unwittingly unifying the Taiwanese in defence of their national identity. Six months after, in Hong Kong, the implications of an extradition bill on the observance of the policy and the rule of law sparked popular protests that continue to this day.

And so CALD began 2020 with visits first to Taiwan and then Hong Kong. The trip to Taiwan was actually an election observation mission, with close to 20 million registered voters expected to take part in the 11 January presidential and parliamentary polls there. For sure, CALD wanted to show liberal solidarity with one of its founding member-parties, the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan, which was also its chair party. But the visit's importance was also due to the fact that more than just seats of power, at stake at Taiwan's elections seemed to be no less than its democratic existence and way of life.

In Taipei, the delegation was welcomed by Chih-wei Chen, FRGS, DPP Deputy Director of Department of International Affairs. The delegates also visited campaign offices and listened to the election briefing provided by J. Michael Cole (Senior Fellow, Global Taiwan Institute), Yen-jong Lee (DPP Spokesperson), Ahai Lua (Tzu Chi Buddhist University, Hualien), and Andrea Yang (Director, DPP Department of Press and Information).



“The results of these elections are sending a very powerful message to the world,” said Yang. “That Taiwan will never be part of China, and that ‘one country, two systems’ is not acceptable in any form, especially after seeing what’s happening in Hong Kong.”

“This is not a very easy time because the rise of China is posing a lot of challenges in the region,” she added. “But we can be very confident that democracy will win in the end.”

Indeed, the Taiwanese people stood firm on the side of democracy and freedom; they delivered a landslide victory for re-electionist President Tsai Ing-wen. DPP’s Tsai received 57.1 percent of the total votes cast, while her main opponent, Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu of the Koumintang (KMT), garnered 38.6 percent. DPP also retained its majority in parliament with 61 seats, although it lost some constituencies. These included Hualien, which the CALD delegates also visited, and where they received a warm reception from CALD Chairperson Bi-khim Hsiao.



In her post-election speech, President Tsai emphasized Taiwan’s commitment to democratic values and the preservation of its national identity. She said, “The results of this election carry an added significance, because they have shown that when our sovereignty and democracy are threatened, the Taiwanese people will shout our determination even more loudly back.”



CALD EXECUTIVE MISSION TO HONG KONG

12-14 January | Hong Kong

STILL GIDDY from the results of Taiwan's elections and DPP's victory, CALD next headed for Hong Kong, flying direct from Taipei on 12 January. In Hong Kong, however, the shadow cast by a belligerent Beijing was unmistakable.

By then, the people of Hong Kong had already spent several months butting heads with the Carrie Lam administration and Beijing over civil liberties and the rule of law. What was the territory's most serious political crisis yet emanated from the Lam administration's attempt to pass an extradition bill that the Hong Kong people consider as a death knell for the 'one country, two systems' policy. For the people of Hong Kong, that policy had guaranteed the territory's high degree of autonomy based on the rule of law and on freedoms associated with an open society.

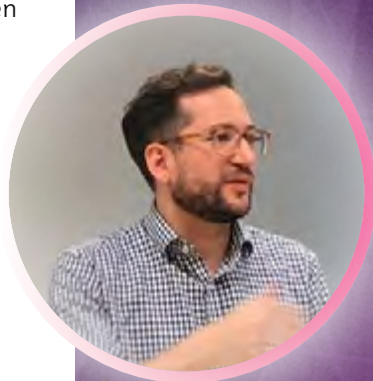
CALD's visit was an attempt for its delegates to understand the worsening political conflict and demonstrate support for Hong Kong's pan-democratic camp. In a series of meetings held at the city's Legislative Council, the CALD delegation was able to meet with democracy advocates and the student leaders at the forefront of the protests.

Briefings on the political situation were provided by Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung (Legislative Council Member, Labour Party), Cyd Ho Sau-lan (former Legislative Council Member, Labour Party), Sin Chung-kai (CALD Individual Member and District Council Chair, Democratic Party), Eric Lai Yan-ho (Civil and Human Rights Front), and Dennis Kwok Wing-hang (Legislative Council Member, Civic Party).

Other Hong Kong attendees included Civic Party Legislator Alan Leong Kah-kit, Democratic Party Legislator Hui Chi-fung, District Council Member Ramon Yuen Hoi-man, barrister Senia Ng Sze-nok, District Council Member Jordan Pang Ka-ho, District Council Member Hung Chun-hin, and student leaders Owan Li and Gordan Wong.

Addressing the delegates, Emily Lau, CALD Individual Member and Democratic Party's Chairperson of International Affairs Committee, pointed out, "What we need to do is to tell China: 'You are a member of the international community. You should be a responsible member. You should abide by the civilized code of behaviour of the international community.' And what democracies should demand from China is reciprocity... If everybody expects China to behave like that, it will be pressured — urged — to behave in a more civilized manner."

Fellow CALD Individual Member and Democratic Party Chair Martin Lee also said, "The outside world should know China's intentions for Hong Kong. And if China can break this international treaty (on Hong Kong), so blatantly, we just cannot trust China in any other international treaty."







WHEN JUSTICE
BECOMES OUT OF LEAGUE:

ASIA IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

21 May | Webinar, 16:00-17:00 Manila, Taipei,
Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur

HEROES EMERGE in times of need. Yet as frontliners bravely sacrifice themselves to save scores from COVID-19, another pandemic is calling for another league of heroes to stop it.

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, there had already been a widespread contagion ravaging many political and legal systems across the globe. This has been dubbed by Philippine Senator Leila de Lima as “the pandemic of lawfare” or the weaponization of the law against political dissenters, critics, and activists. COVID-19, though, seems to have given lawfare more leeway to spread, with crackdowns on civil and political rights escalating in the midst of the uncertainties created by the health crisis.

On 21 May, thus, representatives of CALD member parties and legal experts convened via Zoom to discuss the challenges confronting political parties and leaders, as well as human-rights defenders and activists in Asia. The meeting also aimed to let participants share best practices in defending political prisoners in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian contexts, among other things.

CALD Individual Member Martin Lee, who is also the founding chairperson of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong, delivered the keynote address and recounted the challenges faces by the people of Hong Kong.

“Beijing wants to rule Hong Kong with an iron fist,” said Lee. “(It) must trust the Hong Kong people, give the people democracy as promised, and not interfere in Hong Kong’s internal affairs to allow Hong Kong to remain prosperous and stable.”

Mu Sochua, vice president of Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and former chairperson of CALD Women’s Caucus, meanwhile said that her party was very concerned about the safety and lives of party members and supporters, independent journalists, and activists whose voices were being silenced through trumped-up charges in her country.

She noted that Cambodia’s justice system was under the total control of Prime Minister Hun Sen. The newly appointed Justice Minister of Cambodia was even the legal expert who had provided Hun Sen advice on political cases in particular amendments to the Political Parties Law that led to CNRP’s dissolution in 2017.

**JAYANHTI
DEVI
BALAGURU**



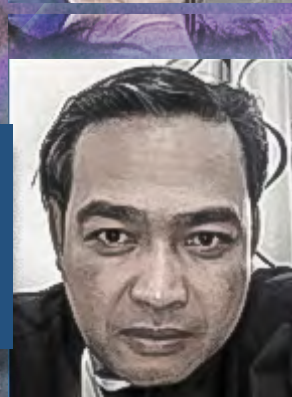
**MARTIN
LEE**



**MU
SOCHUA**



**SAM
SOKONG**



**PHILIP
SAWALI**





MODERATED BY
EMILY LAU

A Cambodian lawyer representing CNRP also said that a number of the party's members had been arrested by the authorities without warrants. As legal representatives, the lawyer said, they were facing difficulties because the cases are political in nature.

Political crackdowns in Cambodia are nothing new. In the same year that CNRP was dissolved, its president, Kem Sokha, was unlawfully arrested and charged. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, though, his trial had been put on hold.

Senator de Lima's chief of staff, Peter Sawali, stressed the importance of alliance-building, the timely exploration and use of regional and global political currents, high-impact initiatives, and the crucial interventions of media teams and legal defence panels, to elevate the awareness on political cases like those of de Lima and Kem Sokha. De Lima, a staunch critic of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's bloody campaign against illegal drugs, has been in detention since February 2017, supposedly on drug charges.

In his keynote address, Hong Kong's Lee had also warned that if human rights go undefended and are ignored in one country, leaders with authoritarian leanings in other parts of the world can easily be inspired by it.

In the end, the participants agreed to set up a regional alliance of lawyers and activists to provide a regional voice for those illegally prosecuted and persecuted by unfair justice and political systems in Asia. An online public forum was also suggested as a possible follow-up initiative.





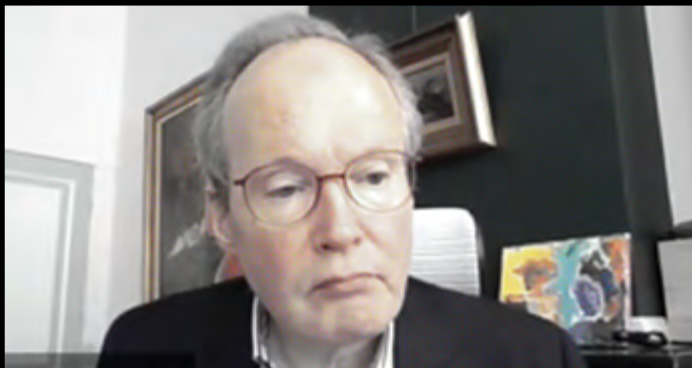
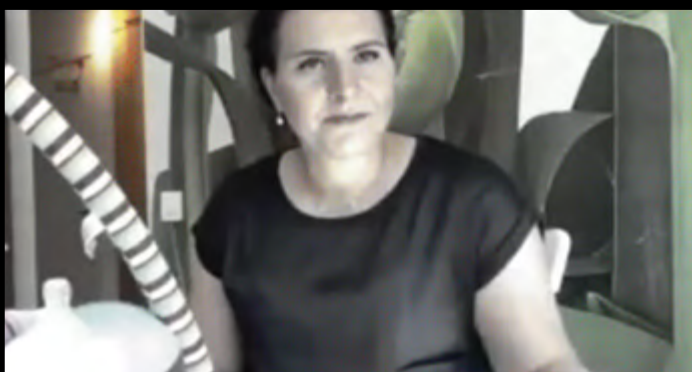
THE PANDEMIC DILEMMA: RECESSION OR CONTAGION?

2 June / Webinar, 18:00 to 19:15 Seoul /
17:00 to 18:15 Hong Kong / 16:00 to 17:15 Bangkok /
11:00 to 12:15 Amsterdam, Berlin, Stockholm

WHEN IS the right time to ease off pandemic restrictions and reopen the economy?

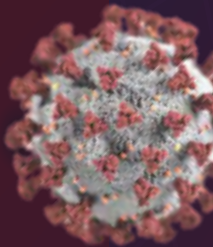
In a webinar held on 2 June, liberal and democratic political leaders from Asia and Europe pointed out that there is no easy answer to this question because countries are at different stages of containing COVID-19.

“We need to have the right strategy in terms of balancing,” Abhisit Vejjajiva, former Thai prime minister and former CALD chairperson, said. “I think there is only one objective: to manage the situation in our countries to make sure that there is sustainable well-being for all of our people. And to do that, we have to make sure that we get on top of the contagion. We can never restart the economy if the contagion continues.”



The webinar “The Pandemic Dilemma: Recession or Contagion?” had been organized by CALD in close cooperation with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party and the FNF Korea Office. Ably moderated by CALD Individual Member Emily Lau of Hong Kong, the event was livestreamed in Asia and Europe via the Facebook pages of the organizers.

The webinar examined in particular the experiences of South Korea, Sweden, and Germany in balancing the need to restart economies severely devastated by various forms of lockdowns, with the necessity of containing the virus and protecting public health.



MODERATED BY
EMILY LAU

South Korea had been among the first countries to experience a major COVID-19 outbreak. It was able to limit further spread of the virus, but as it started to reopen its economy in early May after six weeks of strict measures, a new cluster of COVID-19 cases emerged. Germany experienced the same rollercoaster situation as well with its number of COVID-19 cases, tasting success first in controlling the spread and then seeing infections multiply again soon after it cautiously tried reopening its economy.

Sweden, meanwhile, had opted not to impose lockdowns at all, instead relying on its people's willingness to heed recommendations to practice social distancing, wear masks, and wash hands frequently. Sweden was nevertheless experiencing an economic contraction due to the pandemic, having been dependent on open markets and international trade. Among Scandinavian countries, Sweden was also looking at the highest COVID-19 death rate per capita.

Swedish Member of European Parliament, Abir al-Sahlani, who presented her country's pandemic response at the webinar, stressed that Sweden's strategy was not based on achieving "herd immunity" as reported, but on reliance to "the people's own sense of duty and responsibility".

Describing the current situation as a marathon rather than a sprint, she observed: "It is difficult and exhausting for people to give up their freedoms for a long period of time... I do think it is wiser to save the very harsh measures for peak periods, and to allow people to maintain most of their civil liberties for as long as possible, provided it is safe to do so."

Cho Jung-hoon, a newly-elected member of the South Korean National Assembly, for his part summarized his country's experience in dealing with COVID-19 into three principles: resilience; openness; and comprehensiveness. On the key question of the webinar, he responded, "We are now trying to adjust the balance between a complete lockdown — which will have a great cost in terms of the economy — and public health. Although (here), there is no magic bullet, there is no magic ratio. It depends on each country's situation."

Cho then shared his reflections on the possible impact of the pandemic on the role of government, on globalization, and on society in general. He noted that just as what was happening in the United States, "...a pandemic like coronavirus

can trigger not only a public-health crisis but also a social and economic crisis".

As for Germany, Germany's response to the coronavirus was described by FNF Chairman Karl-Heinz Paqué as being divided into three phases: Disaster (January-mid March); Lockdown (mid March-early May); and "Smart Safety" (early May to June). "Smart Safety", he said, was a highly regulated reopening characterized by strict minimal distance requirements and obligatory social practices such as wearing of masks. According to Paqué, the success of Germany's third phase was not yet certain, and a second wave of cases could still come. But he said that so far, the situation looked promising from a medical standpoint.

Paqué said that at the global and regional level, liberals and democrats should state clearly that they would like to go back to a globalized world economically, but that it should be "safe globalization", characterized by appropriate flexibility to react to unusual and dangerous circumstances such as a pandemic.

To be sure, it also only makes sense for liberals and democrats to continue to work together in the spirit of international cooperation and exchange. As FNF Korea head, Christian Taaks remarked, "Most of the keys to the solution for the multiple, existing, and upcoming challenges of the COVID-19 context is exchange, cooperation, and the preparedness for mutual learning and support. There won't be a single-country solution anywhere."

Similarly, ALDE Party President Hans van Baalen proposed: "We as a liberal family need to provide ideas, suggestions and we have to work together, and I am proud that we are doing so... We liberals have to fight because we are all in this together — for surviving as a world economy, for surviving as a world community."



CHO JUNG HOON



ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA



ABIR AL-SAHLANI



HANS VAN BAALen



KARL HEINZ-PAQUE



CHRISTIAN TAAKS



THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN ASIA

30 June | Webinar, 15:00-16:00 Manila /
14:00 to 15:00 Bangkok; 08:00 Berlin

AS THE world struggled to address a worsening pandemic, not a few noticed how fundamental freedoms were being put at risk of being stifled by measures supposedly aimed to control the spread of COVID-19. Indeed, in Asia, democratic space seemed to shrink just a little more as government powers expanded in countries across the region.

This situation became the focus of discussion of what was to become the first in a series of webinars by CALD on the future of democracy in Asia. Held on 30 June, the webinar was moderated by Marites Danguilan-Vitug, editor at large of the Philippine online media outfit Rappler, and had as main speakers former Philippine Budget Secretary Florencio ‘Butch’ Abad and former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. Serving as reactor was FNF Chairman and Liberal International Vice President Karl-Heinz Paqué.

In trying to address the question of whether democracy has a future in Asia, Abad observed that the region already “seems to have curved steeply towards authoritarianism”.

“(O)f the eleven countries that constitute Southeast Asia, majority can be classified as enduring authoritarian regimes, while the rest may be described as democracies,” he said. “Put together, the political diagnosis for the region is of democratic fragility—a pre-existing political malaise that a pandemic may aggravate.”

Khun Abhisit could not agree more with Abad on the negative implications of the health crisis for liberal democracy, pointing out as well that democratic recession had already been happening even before the onslaught of the pandemic.

Abhisit though argued that liberals and democrats could still take actions to reverse the trend. He specifically recommended the following:

- Ensure that as restrictions are eased, there is balance. People should not have this impression that liberalism or democracy means inefficiency or inability to deal with the pandemic, and to deny whatever power or authority that governments may need;
- Foster multilateral cooperation to guarantee that not all the countries slip into protectionism and nationalism;
- Make sure that liberal and democratic governments respond to the economic and social needs that follow from this pandemic; and
- Clarify what kind of rules should apply, as far as technology is concerned, in handling data and in dealing with fake news.

LI’s Paqué meanwhile reiterated his conviction that liberal democracy would survive and thrive despite the pandemic. “(The) task of global liberalism is as full as ever,” he said. “But I can finish with my usual call: You know, genetically, (in) our DNA, we liberals are optimists. So why should we not be optimists after a crisis like COVID-19, which has a lot of downsides but may also open up some windows of opportunity?”



ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA



BUTCH ABAD



KARL HEINZ-PAQUE



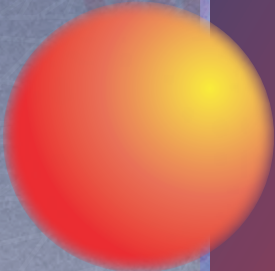
MARITES VITUG

“We liberals and democrats know very well that every crisis can also be an opportunity,” CALD Women’s Caucus Chairperson Jayanthi Devi Balaguru also said. “In the past, we learned from numerous disasters and tragedies to make our societies better from what they used to be. We can also view COVID-19 in this light – as an opportunity to make our world more democratic, inclusive, and participatory. After all, this pandemic cannot discredit the liberal and democratic values that we all hold dear.”

The 41st CALD Executive Committee Meeting took place immediately after the webinar.



IS HONG KONG'S PRESENT ASIA'S FUTURE?



28 July | Webinar, 09:30 to 11:00 Hong Kong, Taipei, Manila / 27 July, 21:30 to 23:00 Washington, D.C., Ottawa

ON 30 June, a couple of hours before the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China from British rule, the Beijing-drafted national security law was imposed on the territory. Immediately after, the first arrests of peaceful protesters were made, in clear violation of civil and political rights guaranteed under the autonomous region's Basic Law.



EMILY LAU



KETTY CHEN



MANPREET SINGH ANAND



MARITES VITUG

Taiwan, which China considers a “renegade province”, was understandably the most concerned about developments in Hong Kong. But China had also been busy flexing its muscles elsewhere in Asia, particularly in the South China Sea, even as it made more diplomatic overtures through trade and development initiatives. This prompted CALD to ask: Will the dark clouds over Hong Kong soon engulf the rest of Asia?

The second in CALD’s webinar series on the future of democracy in Asia sought to explore precisely that issue. Co-organized by CALD with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), “Is Hong Kong’s Present Going to Be Asia’s Future?” took place online on 28 July and brought together leading democrats from Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, and the United States. Using the platform StreamYard, it was streamed live on the Facebook pages of CALD and NDI.

The consensus, in the end, was that the collective pushback against China’s aggression was strengthening. Still, the speakers took care to note important steps that needed to be taken and issues to address to stand up against one of Asia’s superpowers.

CALD Individual Member and former Hong Kong Democratic Party Chairperson Emily Lau,

for one, emphasized the need to “get China to behave according to the code of behaviour of the civilized world”. She encouraged the international community to continue to speak up not only for the Hong Kong people, but for people everywhere whose freedom is under threat. And while Lau conceded that for some people, including herself, speaking up may entail huge sacrifices, she said that “we only live once, and we want to make it worth living”.

Preserving the democratic way of life is also the main reason why Taiwan is pushing back against Chinese aggression. “Democracy and freedom for Taiwan is like breathing air,” said Ketty Chen, vice president of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. And so the country was doing its best to counter the pressure from China by passing new legislation, or amending existing ones, to beef up its national security. Members of Taiwan’s vibrant civil society were also busy working with the country’s digital minister, Audrey Tang, to safeguard the cyberspace by addressing disinformation or information operations. In truth, remarked Manpreet Singh Anand, NDI regional director for Asia-Pacific, “China is now expanding its digital footprint as a way to shift

and change narratives and spread disinformation.”

Anand said that the regional superpower’s actions - from Tibet to Nepal - were lending credence to the perception of “an increasingly assertive Beijing”. He said that NDI was addressing this trend by providing support and assistance to established and transitioning democracies alike. In the latter, he said, NDI was also finding ways of expressing “solidarity to those who are fighting for democracy and looking to amplify their voices to the international community”.

Cherie Wong, executive director of the Alliance Canada Hong Kong, meanwhile argued that middle powers like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, along with France, Germany, and the rest of the European Union, should expand their soft power to “influence the democratization of developing countries, as well as of China, Hong Kong, and [other] associated territories”. Wong said that beyond sanctions and divestments, there should be an “Indo-Pacific strategy” that would see collaboration and cooperation among multiple countries, with the middle powers taking the lead, to reduce Chinese influence in the developing world.



CHERIE WONG



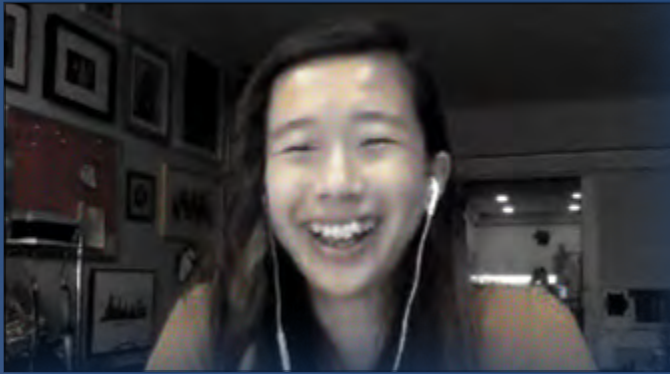
RICHARD HEYDARIAN



FRANCIS PANGILINAN



FRANCIS ABAYA



All the speakers at the webinar, however, stressed that they were not promoting an anti-China stance. As Filipino political analyst Richard Heydarian put it, “The endgame here is to constrain the worst instance of China by realism and by collective pushback.”

He also said, “As much as China may look like they’re having the upper hand, the pushback is gaining so much strength.”

Philippine Senator and CALD Chairperson Francis Pangilinan, for his part, said, “Civil libertarians around the world must continue to put up a united stand against tyranny in order to push for a democratic, rule-based order. We must unite and cooperate online and offline and address the long-felt need to rebalance power dynamics in our region.”



THE 2020
U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION:

WILL IT MATTER FOR DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA?

11 September | Webinar, 09:30 to 11:00 Singapore,
Manila / 10 September 21:30 to 23:00 Washington, D.C.

AMERICANS WERE about to pick the next occupant of the White House, and their decision on who that would be was awaited by the rest of the world. After all, democracy and the global leadership of the United States among democratic countries were at stake in the U.S. presidential election in November, making its results widely anticipated. Even in Asia, it was a given that the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential polls would have far-reaching impact.



LENI ROBREDO



MU SOCHUA



DAVID TIMBERMAN



MANPREET SINGH ANAND



FRANCIS ABAYA



MORTIZ KLEINE-BROCKHOFF



MARITES VITUG



JAMES GOMEZ



FRANCIS PANGILINAN

For the third in CALD's series of webinars on the future of democracy in the region, the question that took front and centre was "The 2020 US Presidential Election: Will it Matter for Democracy and Human Rights in Asia?" Held on 11 September, the event used the platform Zoom and was streamed live on the Facebook pages of CALD, FNF for Southeast and East Asia, and Asia Centre, which had all jointly organized the webinar.

It didn't take long to become evident that the panelists shared the view that the United States had lost its standing in the world and had, as Philippine Senator and Liberal Party President Francis 'Kiko' Pangilinan said in his opening remarks, slid "into authoritarianism". Philippine Vice President and Liberal Party Chair Leonor 'Leni' Robredo also noted that what had used to be seen as "the brightest beacon of democracy" was now a place where "lies are spoken from pulpits of power, children seeking refuge are caged, knees are pressed unto the necks of innocents, and those in power respond by stoking further fear and division".

All these, said Robredo in her keynote speech, were sending an ominous message: "It can certainly happen in places where democracy is much more fragile."

This was why the outcome of the 2020 U.S. elections was important, everyone agreed.

"We want to see the White House as we have known it in history: the great defender of the core pillars and institutions of democratic values," said Mu Sochua, vice president of the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party. "The U.S. is needed to reinforce its commitment in fighting corruption, defending against authoritarianism, and advancing human rights across the world."

In exile in the United States since 2017, Mu Sochua also said that the 2020 U.S. polls had special significance for Cambodia since the United States is one of the key signatories of the Paris Peace Accords. As such, she said, it will play a role in advocating for liberal democracy in Cambodia.

Emphasizing that he was speaking in his personal capacity, former U.S. State Department official Manpreet Singh Anand said, "The choices [in the 2020 election] are between democratic values or authoritarianism, between rule of law or rule by dictator."

He said that under President Donald Trump, U.S. leadership around the world had been damaged. This, said Anand, was the result of the "dismantling of critical institutions, both domestically and multilaterally, and the

loss of its championship of democratic values”.

“Democracy is in the ballot in November,” stressed Anand. He said that the next administration has a full to-do list that would include restoring U.S. leadership for democratic values; revitalizing strategic relationships with treaty allies and partners; rebuilding the foreign-policy foundation of the United States, particularly the diplomatic corps; recreating economic opportunities; and creating a more balanced space with China.

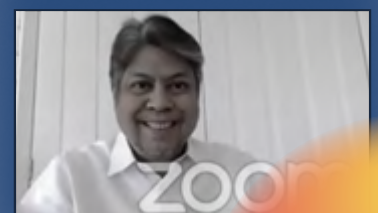
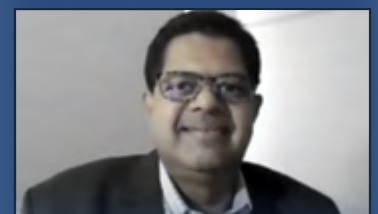
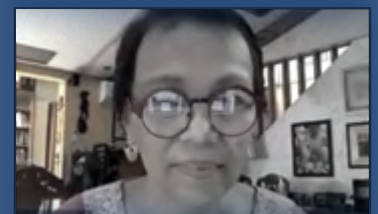
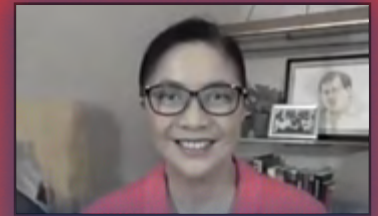
David Timberman, director for Asia Programmes of Freedom House, meanwhile said that should the Democratic Party’s standard bearer, Joe Biden, win, there would be “stronger and more genuine presidential rhetoric in support of democracy and human rights; a return to a concern for a broader range of human rights, including labour rights and LGBTQ, different approaches to address issues of religious freedom, and a return to multilateral approaches to foreign policy and promoting democracy and human rights”.

But Timberman said that the geopolitical perspective was unlikely to fundamentally change under Biden. It would

still be the desire of the U.S. government to maintain good relations with semi-authoritarian governments “if that’s considered a national security issue”, he pointed out. Timberman predicted as well a “continued reluctance to push too hard on democracy and human rights in countries where the U.S. government doesn’t want the other government to become much closer to China”.

Commenting on the decline of U.S. leadership, Timberman said, “One silver lining is we’re now more inclined to recognize and reflect on our national shortcomings, a potentially positive development for Americans and for U.S. policy: to realize that we’re just another country trying to address the imperfections of its democracy.” This, he said, opened up possibilities for equal partnerships and more cooperation with other countries and civil society as well.

As for what the rest of the world should do, FNF Southeast and East Asia Regional Director Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff had this to say: “Regardless of what’s going to happen in the U.S. next year, we have to carry on. No matter what kind of adversity we face, we have to strengthen our resolve.”





WHY YOU-TH MATTER

6 October | Webinar, 15:00 to 16:00 Bangkok /
16:00 to 17:00 Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur

THE POLITICAL participation of the youth across the globe has been consistently expanding since mid-2019 and has continued to grow even during the pandemic. But as the situation continues to evolve and key democratic institutions and processes are set aside ostensibly to better address the health crisis, the importance of the youth's political participation has become more acute.



ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA



OOI ZHI YI



ELROY RENDOR



NARESH SUBRAMANIAM



ISSARA SEREEWATHANAWUT



SIRIPA NAN INTAVICHEIN



JEREMIAH TOMAS



JOBELLE DOMINGO

To discuss the current state and the future of liberal values and democratic institutions in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly in Asia, CALD Youth, in cooperation with the Liberal Youth of the Philippines, held the webinar “Liberalism in the Age of COVID-19: A Youth Perspective” on 6 October. The event, livestreamed on the CALD Facebook page, brought together youth leaders from the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia.

While some have said that young people seem to have been disengaging from society and politics, those at the webinar made it clear that the observation did not apply to them. Asserted CALD Youth Chair Siripa Intavichain in her opening remarks: “Now more than ever, we need to participate and exercise our civil rights.”

Elroy Rendor, Executive Director of the Centre of Liberalism and Democracy in the Philippines, even pointed out as the world goes more digital, the youth have an advantage, since that is pretty much their territory.

“So what can we do when COVID-19 hampers our means for political participation and representation?” asked Rendor. “We challenge the rules of the game...So as more people are locked in their houses, the politicians have no choice but to resort to listening, turning their ears into the digital landscape.”

Naresh Subramaniam of the Singapore Democratic Party’s youth arm also said that social media is the biggest advantage and medium of the youth for their voices to be heard even in the post-pandemic world. “This online-scape empowers people,” he explained. “You can do things and reach out to a number of people that you can’t do in real life. Embracing this empowerment through social media, you realize that your voice counts and that it can reach out to more than you think, if it’s presented properly and accurately.”

Thai Member of Parliament Issara Sereewatthanawut echoed this, adding, “Media pedagogy helps our youth to matter more, and potentially drives our liberalisms to become unconventional. Social media encourages the exchanges of information, as well as opinions in the amount that is unprecedented and unexpected.”

SEDAR Malaysia Director Zhi Yi Ooi agreed as well that young people are finding new and innovative ways to be involved. He cited as example an organization in Malaysia that put together a digital parliament for young people interested in government issues so that they could voice out their opinions and debate on government policies maturely and constructively.



Jobelle Domingo



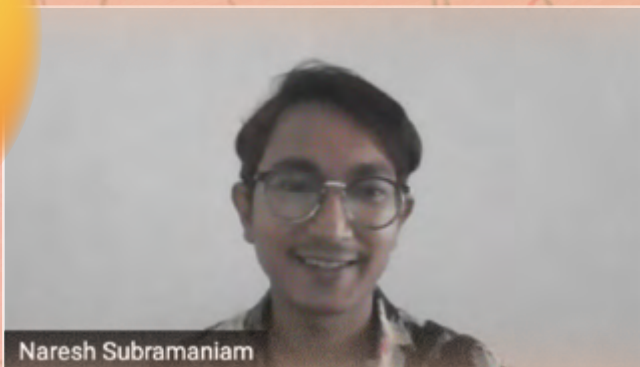
Abhisit Vejjajiva



Siripa Intavichein



Elroy Rendor



Naresh Subramaniam



Issara Sereewatthanawut



Ooi Zhi Yi



Jeremiah Tomas

The webinar also featured a TED-style talk by former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva. He told the young liberals: “I’m sure that each youth movement in various countries in the region will face their own specific challenges and problems in dealing with the authorities, but don’t lose heart. So long as you are adopting an agenda that will benefit the majority of people, so long as you’re fighting a good fight for a better future, I am confident that...you’ll be setting society on a path towards a better system that you are aspiring to, and that your fight will inevitably be picked up and carried on by the next generations that also come along.”

CALD Youth Secretary General Jeremiah Tomas closed the event by posing a challenge to the youth: “We are facing an unprecedented moment in history and it is up to us to continue that movement, just like Khun Abhisit’s generation back then. All of those regional leaders have done their part to fight for democracy and uphold liberalism in Asia. Now, it is up to us, the youth, to move forward in this fight for liberalism and democracy.”



MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR

23 October | Webinar, 16:00 to 17:40 Manila,
Singapore / 15:00-16:40 Bangkok

THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) has said that people may be facing a mental health fallout caused by the pandemic's cumulative impact of stress, grief, and anxiety among others. Among young people, the challenges of lockdowns, online classes, lack of physical contact with other family members and friends, have only compounded the stress of worrying about contracting the virus as well as the increasing prospects of a bleak future. And yet according to a survey done by WHO in June-August 2020 across 130 countries, more than 60 percent of the world's mental health services have been disrupted, including those catering to vulnerable sectors such as children and adolescents.



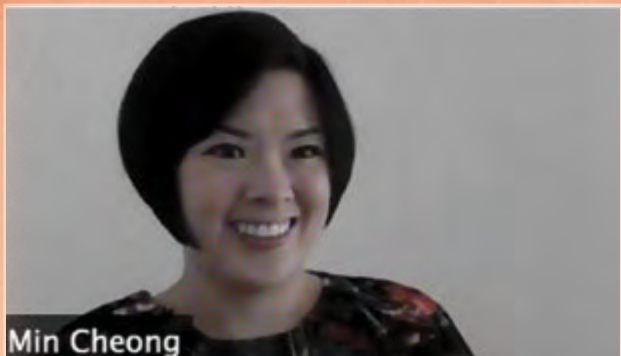
Jeremiah Tomas



Dr. Joeffrey Cruzada



Gang Badoy Capati



Min Cheong

A mental health webinar was thus organized by CALD Youth together with the Liberal Youth of the Philippines to tackle the prevailing mental health issues and the way forward. Held on 23 October, it aimed to open discussions on how the current political system influences or inhibits the public's psychological well-being. It also sought to highlight the importance of democracy as a determinant of mental health. Conducted via Zoom, "Mind Matters: The Strongman Response to COVID-19 and Its Impact on Mental Health" was livestreamed on CALD Youth's Facebook page.

"Millions have already lost their jobs, and our demographic is one of the hardest hit by the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic," said CALD Youth Secretary General Jeremiah Tomas in his welcome remarks. "This greatly affects our living standards, which directly impacts our wellbeing."

Dr. Joeffrey Cruzada, head of the Mental Health Information System of National Centre for Mental Health, meantime noted that the

pandemic had brought confusion and insecurities to the youth. To keep their mental health in check, he said, they should stay focused and mind their emotions. Advised the doctor: "Identify the stress and do something with stressors. Do things one step at a time, engage and stay connected with friends and support networks."

Gang Badoy-Capati, Lead Trauma Therapist of Project: Steady, clarified that mental wellness is neither to resolve nor address mental health. She said that the goal is not to cartwheel with joy but to know how to regulate. Badoy-Capati explained, "Meaning, you can have days of really crying all day and not getting up, we can have really happy days, and you can bounce back, and hopefully the swings get a little smaller because you can regulate, you can now bounce back."

In terms of the big picture, Singapore Democratic Party's GE 2020 Candidate Min Cheong said that listening to one another is the first step towards a better society.

"To build a society that's compassionate, inclusive, and progressive,

we need to listen to each other, we need to build support, and encourage each other," she said. "Through that, we can understand that we do not need to be in the same situation as another to then voice out their plight."

Cheong also emphasized that democratic institutions have an effect on individual empowerment because it is "about creating the space, and allowing people to participate, to feel safe enough, in which it has a very strong bearing on the well-being of society, in terms of mental health, and stable progression".

Sati App CEO Amornthep Sachamuneewongse reiterated the need and power of listening, saying, "Listening is a great weapon, because it allows us to understand. It allows us to move forward, and it allows us to empathize and be compassionate with the other side as well."

According to Amornthep, who said that he has experienced depression and schizophrenia, democracy and mental health come hand in hand.

He pointed out, “Democracy allows you to check the balance and the power. It allows you to foolproof every transaction that’s happening within the government, it allows you to raise concern, whatever concerns you may have with mental health since it is at the epicentre of how we develop all of our policies.”

One piece of good news is that since Generation Z is the most prolific in terms of technology, the youth are using that skill to help with the issues of mental health.

National Secretary General of Youth for Mental Health Coalition (YMHC) Alyannah Lagasca also shared how her fellow youth leaders are helping young Filipinos during this pandemic through their projects, Buklod (Bond), Lingap (Care), Tulay (Bridge), and Hilom (Heal). “We empower not just the youth sector, not just our service users, or people with mental health conditions, but our very own society so that we can build communities who care for one another,” Lagasca said.

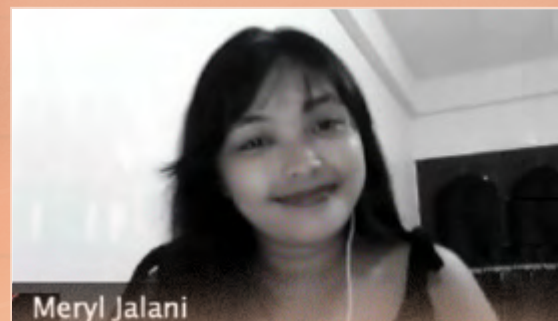
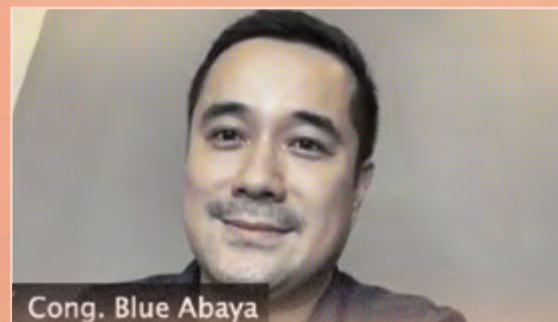
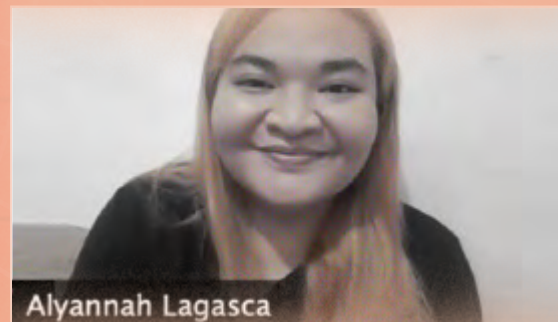
For sure, though, youth participation is vital in efforts towards promoting mental health; with their sheer number alone, their participation puts greater pressure and accountability on leaders and institutions.

“It is today’s youth who propagate the woke culture, and your [the youth’s] generation is described as being alert to racial or social discrimination and injustice, along with being aware of what’s going on in the community,” said CALD Secretary General Francis ‘Blue’ Abaya. He added that demanding the best from the government by participating in all the discourses that affect their lives and dreams is “one of the meaningful ways that the youth can manage their mental health, which also contributes to nation-building”.

Abaya’s statements were reflected in Millennials PH National President Meryl Jalani’s speech in which she said that her movement and organization will “continue being part of this struggle in the youth sector and beyond the youth sector, to the point that even the ‘unwoked’ people becomes awake”.

In his closing remarks, human-rights lawyer Jose Manuel ‘Chel’ Diokno expressed the need for the youth since they are the true movers and shakers of our country.

“With mental health, we can finally start empowering each other,” he said. “When we finally empower the youth, there’s no force in the country that can stop them.”






SMART CITY WEBINAR

30 October | Webinar, 13:00 Manila, Taiwan /
12:00 Jakarta / 14:00 Seoul

“NO PAIN, no gain,” said Dr. Yi-Chun Lo, a medical doctor who serves as the Deputy Director-General at the Taiwan Centres for Disease Control (CDC), about Taiwan’s hard lessons nearly two decades ago during the SARS outbreak. Now that the world is facing another pandemic, are cities ready to face the challenge?



Many cities across the world are currently deploying smart technologies to immediately track the spread of COVID-19 and boost medical response and strategies. Smart cities can open doors for more efficient data collection, urban technologies, infrastructures, systems for business, education, and governance to continue to connect and bring people to work together.



Just how much that is already happening and what else could be done were revealed in “Reimagining Smart Cities: Current Challenges and New Opportunities”, a webinar organized by CALD in cooperation with FNF Korea and Impact Hub Taiwan, and where Lo was among the experts invited. Held on 30 October, a day before the celebration of World Cities Day, the webinar was part of CALD’s Smart City Project that aims to assess the smart status of selected local government units and present expert recommendations for the future. CALD also officially launched its Smart Cities video during the event.

The webinar convened local government leaders and Smart City experts from Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines to present the lessons learned and best practices of cities in addressing the pandemic, in balancing safety measures and economic recovery, and in planning the next crucial steps for cities. Acting as moderator was Jean de Castro, CEO of ESCA Inc., a global engineering company.



Learning from SARS

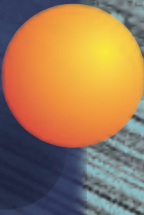
In relation to the ongoing global pandemic, Lo said Taiwan was focusing more on public-health approaches that also have significant impact on civil society’s daily life and human rights.

The lessons during the SARS outbreak in 2003 taught Taiwan to prepare, implement the crucial reforms, and seek the people’s participation in crafting solutions, he said. The key to success in Taiwan, Lo explained, includes “preparedness, infrastructure, political commitment, innovation, and most importantly public trust”.

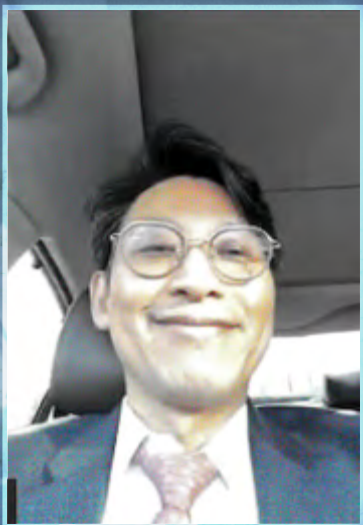
“Information System was strengthened to capture official and unofficial intelligence as quickly and early as possible,” he said. According to Lo, Taiwan also revised its laws to “enable a strong and a centralized command system in the case of public emergency”. In this manner, the central and local levels could work smoothly together, eliminating future miscommunication and conflicts in decision-making.

Taiwan also came up with smart solutions such as digital health-insurance card that provides a gateway for IT-based mask purchase and pick-up rationing system, as well as a Digital Fence, which Lo described as a “police-linked digital tracking system used to monitor quarantine compliance”.

Lo said that what has kept Taiwan in unison in its initiatives is the public’s constant encouragement of the frontline workers, removing altogether the stigma the latter experienced in 2003. But despite its success, Taiwan is not letting its guard down. Stressed Lo: “Complacency is our biggest enemy. The struggle is always happening on a daily basis in our public health agencies.”



Technology partnered with good governance



In South Korea, meanwhile, Dr. Daeyeon Cho, Chief Director/Advisor of the Smart City National Strategic Programme and the Smart Cities Special Committee of the Korea Agency for Infrastructure Technology Advancement (KAIA), said that an urban transformation had brought about a fourth Industrial Revolution level where information and communication technology work hand-in-hand with citizen engagement and public services to achieve better management systems and infrastructure.

Cho cited the experiences of two Korean cities that had been pilot sites for development transformation. In Sejong, he said, the concept of an AI-based city is creating a smart city based on seven innovative factors: mobility, healthcare, education, energy, governance, culture, and employment. Among other things, Sejong is using artificial intelligence (AI) traffic flow data analysis that provides services that reduce commute time and costs.

A sense of proactivity

In the Philippines, a city in Visayas has been using simpler but still effective measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Known as the country's seafood capital, Roxas City had 460 COVID-19 cases, with 51 active and 381 recoveries at the time of the webinar. But as a city slowly urbanizing into metropolitan living while preserving and promoting — as its mayor put it — “time-honoured traditions and rich history and culture”, Roxas City is showing that innovation, public support and good governance can produce results.

“We are just a city with a population of less than 200,000, [but] our COVID-19 strategies have always been guided by a sense of proactivity,” said Mayor Ronnie T. Dadivas. He added that the city used three major principles in response to the pandemic: prevention of transmission, adaptation, and management of active cases.

The city government introduced a digital QR Code-based Contact Tracing System that streamlines contact tracing. This system was then supplemented by a contactless consultation and prescription system called ‘E-Consulta’. In addition, an ultraviolet sanitation equipment was developed locally to further prevent the spread of the virus.

Roxas City partnered as well with local communities, private hospitals, organizations, and private institutions to increase quarantine facilities and information awareness. Being part of ‘Galing Pook’, a network promoting innovation and excellence in local governance, Roxas City was able to be in constant dialogue with other cities. This in turn has been a vital source of practical ideas, effective strategies, and innovative approaches to address the pandemic.

For Busan's Eco-Delta City (EDC) concept, data and augmented reality are among the tools the city is using to develop a Korean Water-Specialized City. In this unique model, smart water management technology is optimized to achieve full energy self-sufficiency by using renewable source from hydro and solar energy.

Cho, though, said that South Korea focuses on uplifting the lives of the people and solving urbanization problems not just through the use of the latest technology, but also

through better governance. When it comes to tackling COVID-19, he said, the country has continued to tap on the synergy of the state and private sector in using the Epidemic Investigation Support System (EISS) that features the Smart City Data Hub, which collects, processes, and analyzes data to enable automation of epidemiological investigation process. This cuts the analysis of confirmed cases from 24 hours (via manual analysis) to less than 10 minutes (via automation analysis).



Policies have been passed to strictly implement minimum health standards, reported Dadivas. Satellite and mobile markets have also been set up to decongest trade centres and guarantee safe access to goods and basic necessities.

But while smart governance is prepared to address the impact of the pandemic, it should not stop there, said Dadivas. "Building a holistic response that will temper impacts and empower our people", he said, can provide more inclusive initiatives in the city.

"I am nothing without our constituents and my partners in government," he added. "Ours may not be [a] success story just yet, but with proactivity and optimism fuelled by faith and a strong sense of community, we are getting there."



ABDULLAH AZWAR ANAS



DAE YEON CHO



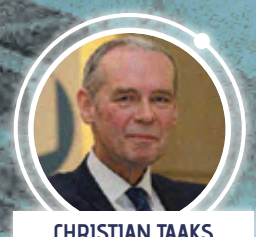
YI-CHUN LO



BLUE ABAYA



RONNIE DADIVAS



CHRISTIAN TAKS



JEAN DE CASTRO

Technology boosts village competitiveness

Farther south, in Indonesia, an integrated e-governance system that accelerates public service at the local level with the use of technology has been making things better for the people of Banyuwangi.

Located in the eastern part of Java, Banyuwangi had to face its own struggles even before the pandemic started. Having the largest area in Java consisting of 24 sub-districts and 198 villages (*kampung*), Banyuwangi also had a huge disparity in terms of economic growth, a high poverty rate, and low quality public service. But when Banyuwangi Regent Abdullah Azwar Anas introduced Smart Kampung, things began to pick up.

Smart Kampung focuses on the improvement of connectivity, innovation, and efficiency in seven dimensions: public service via ICT, health service, education service, economic empowerment, poverty reduction, public information, and village budgeting. Through ICT, Smart Kampung has been able to bring public service and information from the centre of government closer to the village.

The current Internet network infrastructure built by Banyuwangi links together 175 fibre-optic villages, 58 regional government units, 60 health services, and all 189 village offices, including 28 urban villages. With a reliable smart communication system and management foundation in place, data collection for social safety had already been integrated with Smart Kampung when the pandemic started. Today isolation accommodations can be reserved online; tourists, immigrants, and visitors easily monitored; media information and protocols observed by religious leaders in churches, mosques, and temples; and citizen inquiry and application for aid and social assistance accessed through mobile phones.

Moreover, technology is welcoming the 'new normal' in Banyuwangi's tourism industry - setting destination capacities online and issuing new normal certification for hotels and restaurants with strict safety measures and guidelines in place.

"For Banyuwangi, Smart Kampung is not only about technology but how to integrate the people so we can gather as one," Regent Anas said. Harnessing the power of technology and the people thus proved to be an effective measure, not just to prevent COVID-19, but also to improve the economy and daily lives of the people.



Earlier in the seminar, FNF Korea head Dr. Christian Taaks also had this to say while sharing how South Korea had managed to implement COVID-19 containment strategies while preserving its citizens' privacy and trust: "The utmost success will be based on mature democracy, rule of law, and the participation of the people. Only this will create the trust of citizens in responsible, people-oriented politics."

"This pandemic allows us to collaborate, to create new languages, and to communicate more effectively," remarked Paolo Zamora, CALD Programme Manager in charge of the CALD Smart City Project, at the webinar's close. "It allows us to forge new cooperation to generate better ideas, more collective intelligence, and more effective digital transitions and transformations to guarantee the progress and sustainability of our cities."



13TH CALD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23-27 November | *Webinars*

AS THE pandemic continued to bear down on countries across the globe, CALD was determined to remain optimistic and to believe that liberal democracy is stronger than COVID-19 and its impacts. In late November, it went on to hold its 13th CALD General Assembly that had the theme “Hope Among Us: A Virtual Gathering for the Future of Democracy”. Most of the main events were livestreamed using Stream Yard/Microsoft Teams on the CALD Facebook page.

Spread across five days, the CALD GA was made up of a series of webinars, each with their own focus. All, however, were aimed at taking up five main challenges for democracies post-pandemic, based on research done by U.S.-based Brookings Institution: protecting the safety and integrity of elections; finding the right place for expertise; coping with resurgent populism and nationalism; countering homegrown and foreign disinformation; and defending the democratic model.



TSAI ING-WEN



MU SOCHUA



KIKO PANGILINAN



EMILY LAU



PAUL ANANTH TAMBIAH



PEDRO URRUCHURTU



MORTIZ KLEINE-BROCKHOFF

The GA kicked off on **23 November (10:00-12:00 Manila time)** with the **Opening Panel** that had the theme “Protecting the Safety and Integrity of Elections and Political Processes from Creeping Authoritarianism and Disinformation”. It hoped to examine the experiences of countries that held ‘pandemic elections’ and to provide guideposts on how to prevent authoritarians and populists from using the health crisis, together with disinformation campaigns, to shape electoral outcomes to their advantage. Moderated by Cambodia National Rescue Party Vice President Mu Sochua, it had Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen giving the keynote address.

President Tsai was re-elected to a second term just when the pandemic was starting. She told her online audience: “In Taiwan, we call our cooperative efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic the ‘Taiwan Model’. We also have a Taiwan Model in combating disinformation. That is — a strong, confident democracy, combined with informed citizenry, is its best defence. The Taiwan experience is also a demonstration that democratic values are critical in this important fight against authoritarian forces.”



JOBELLE DOMINGO



MIN CHEONG

Next was a **CALD Youth webinar** that took place on **24 November (16:00-17:30 Manila time)**. Focusing on “Youth Crewmates Across Regions: Exposing the Populists and Radical Nationalists as Impostors”, the roundtable discussion was put together by CALD Youth in cooperation with the Liberal Youth of the Philippines and with FNF Southeast and East Asia support. It aimed to discuss how youth networks across regions could move forward and reinforce collaboration in the face of populism and radicalism.



PEIFEN HSIEH



SIRIPA INTAVICHAIN



OOI ZHI YI



GJIS HOUBEN



CHERIE WONG



YARA ASMAR



SAMADY OU



IVAN PICAZO



JEREMIAH TOMAS



MARITES VITUG



ABHISIT VEJJAJIVA



JAYANTHI BALAGURU



CRISELDA YABES

On **25 November (16:00-17:00 Manila time)**, the CALD publication *Breathing Democracy: A Playbook* was launched. Written by Filipino veteran journalists Marites Danguilan-Vitug and Criselda Yabes, the book summarizes the key lessons in fighting authoritarianism, illiberalism, and populism, drawn from the experiences of CALD members and other liberals and democrats. The book launch featured a fireside chat with former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and Danguilan-Vitug, as well as a brief Q and A.

The **42nd CALD Executive Committee Meeting**, meantime, was held on **26 November (16:00-19:00 Manila time)**. Closed to the public, the meeting was presided over by CALD Chairperson Francis 'Kiko' Pangilinan and had Dr. Andrew Ullman, German Member of Parliament, delivering the keynote address on the role of science in the post-COVID world.



LENI ROBREDO



GILBERT NOËL OUÉDRAO



HAKIMA EL HAITE



HANS VAN BAALEN



IRENE YUSIANA ROBA PUTRI



BUTCH ABAD



FRANCIS ABAYA



EMIL KIRJAS

The GA had its **Closing Panel** on **27 November (16:00-18:00 Manila time)**, with the theme “Defending Liberal Democracy: A Strategic Guide to the Future”. In her keynote address, Philippine Vice President Leonor ‘Leni’ Robredo remarked that to defend democracy, the key is “to engage as many people as deeply as possible”.

“If we are to prove wrong all the intellectual obituaries pronouncing the death of liberal democracy, we must begin by going to our communities,” Robredo also said. “By emphasizing and rebuilding the affinity that was broken not only by online lies, but also by offline disconnects. By resisting the impulse to promise salvation tomorrow, and instead offer solidarity in real time.”

She said that this is the only viable response to a world that has been perceived to have “allowed the powerful few to hoard vast riches while leaving everyone in the dust”. While such perception may not be entirely true, she argued that engaging in debates on what is true or not has become less and less productive. The more

productive discussion, according to Robredo, is to ask: “Why do the people believe the lies?”

Robredo, who is also the LP Chairperson, was joined in the panel by liberal and democratic leaders from the Middle East, Europe, Africa and Asia, including LI President and former Moroccan Environment Minister Hakima el Haite; ALDE Party President Hans van Baalen; Africa Liberal Network President Gilbert Noel Ouedraogo; former Philippine Budget Secretary Florencio ‘Butch’ Abad; and Indonesian Member of Parliament Irine Yusian Roba Putri.

“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,” said CALD Chairperson and Philippine Senator Francis Pangilinan. “It is for this reason that the virtual events marking the 13th CALD General Assembly felt like a refreshing breeze of democracy at a time when breathing literally and figuratively has become difficult.”

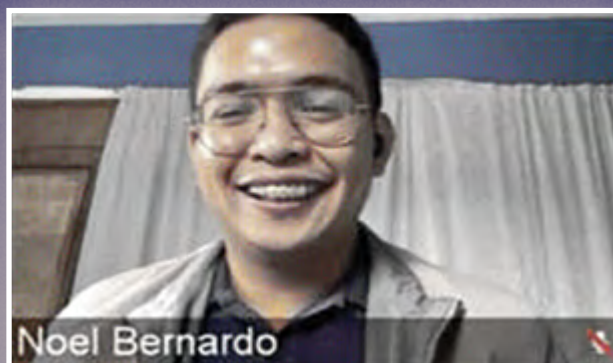


KAYA PALA

(IT CAN BE DONE)

11 December | Webinar, 10:00 to 11:30 Manila, Taipei

DECEMBER IS usually a month of endless festivities in the Philippines, but in 2020 few felt the usual joy of the season. At the time the country's number of COVID-19 cases had already breached 445,000 with nearly 9,000 fatalities. It only made sense for CALD to reach out to its friends in Taiwan, which had managed to contain not only the spread of the deadly virus, but even disinformation.



CALD held “Kaya Pala (It Can Be Done)”, an online forum featuring Taiwan’s Digital Minister Audrey Tang, on 11 December. Livestreamed on CALD’s Facebook page via Blue Jeans, CALD organized the forum in cooperation with the Centre for Liberalism and Democracy and with support from FNF. Joining Tang in the panel discussion were Philippine MP Stella Quimbo, journalist Camille Diola, and medical doctor Noel Bernardo. CLD Chairperson Gerry Bulatao was on hand to give the welcome remarks while Philippine journalist John Nery was the moderator.

The first COVID case in Taiwan was reported on 21 January. As of 11 December, Taiwan had only a total of 724 COVID-19 cases, with 590 recoveries and seven deaths.

According to Tang, the three pillars in social innovation helping Taiwan push back against the twin epidemics of COVID-19 and disinformation are: Fast, Fair, and Fun. She explained that in the Taiwan model, Fast pertains to quick use of collective intelligence.

Tang said that immediately after a Wuhan doctor posted about a “seven years SARS cases” on Chinese social media in December 2019, it was reposted on a Taiwanese forum run by national university students and was discussed extensively.

“And so many people just chimed in, not only up-voting the message, but triage-ing it so it would be

seen as a legit early warning,” she recounted. “We sent an email to the World Health Organization and the very next day, we started house inspections for flight passengers from Wuhan.”

Recognizing the importance of open communication, Taiwan that same month established the Central Epidemic Command Centre, (CECC) which started taking calls through a toll-free number where anyone can share their thoughts on epidemic prevention. The CECC is now also responsible for prevention measures. In addition, the Taiwan government was quick to introduce travel restrictions and protocols for high-risk travellers.

As for the second pillar, fairness, Tang said, “At the beginning, when we were rationing our masks, we deliberately chose the pharmacies already trusted by the community. We also decided that our mask rationing would exactly follow the procedure of getting refillable prescriptions.”

Taiwan provides its citizens with a national health card that allow them to dispense then weekly, now bi-weekly quota of masks. It also has an open-data app that enables citizens to report the number of masks being purchased, a prompt to government to ramp up production of masks based on need.

“Humour over Rumour” - representing Pillar No. 3, Fun — is also a key feature of Taiwan’s counter-disinformation strategy. Explained Tang: “In a bid to engage people instead of enraging them,

Taiwan's CECC has employed a spokesdog, a cartoon Shiba Inu. His name is Zongchai. The basic message that he shares is that wearing a mask protects you from your own unwashed hands. This is a very carefully designed message, appealing to rational self-interest. It doesn't attack anyone, it doesn't create, say, age differences, it doesn't emphasize occupation differences, it doesn't say that you have to respect the elderly or other people. It simply says, you know, there's virus on the surface, right? So if you're wearing masks, it's less likely that you will touch your face until you wash your hands properly with soap."

She also said, "Very importantly, we don't see democracy as a showdown between opposing ideas. Rather, we see it as a conversation between various ideas. The idea of administrative takedown is antithetical to democracy; it will only create more division between the people who have been taken down by the administration and the people who have not. My office, the Social Innovation Lab, is designed so that everybody — people who have different viewpoints — can join and then just enjoy a conversation based on what we call listening-skill technologies."



AUDREY TANG



STELLA QUIMBO



CAMILLE DIOLA



NOEL BERNARDO



JOHN NERY



Francis Pangilinan



John Nery



Gerry Bulatao



Wolfgang Humpal

A N N O U N C E M E N T

LIBERAL PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES IS THE NEW CHAIR OF CALD

AFTER TWO years of service, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan, hands over the chair party role of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) to the Liberal Party (LP) of the Philippines.

CALD, the only regional alliance of liberal and democratic political parties in Asia, announced the appointment LP-Philippines as the new chair of CALD during its online 41st CALD Executive Committee meeting on 30 June 2020.

Outgoing CALD chair and Taiwan Ambassador to the US, Bi-Khim Hsiao, facilitated the CALD 2020 leadership transition.

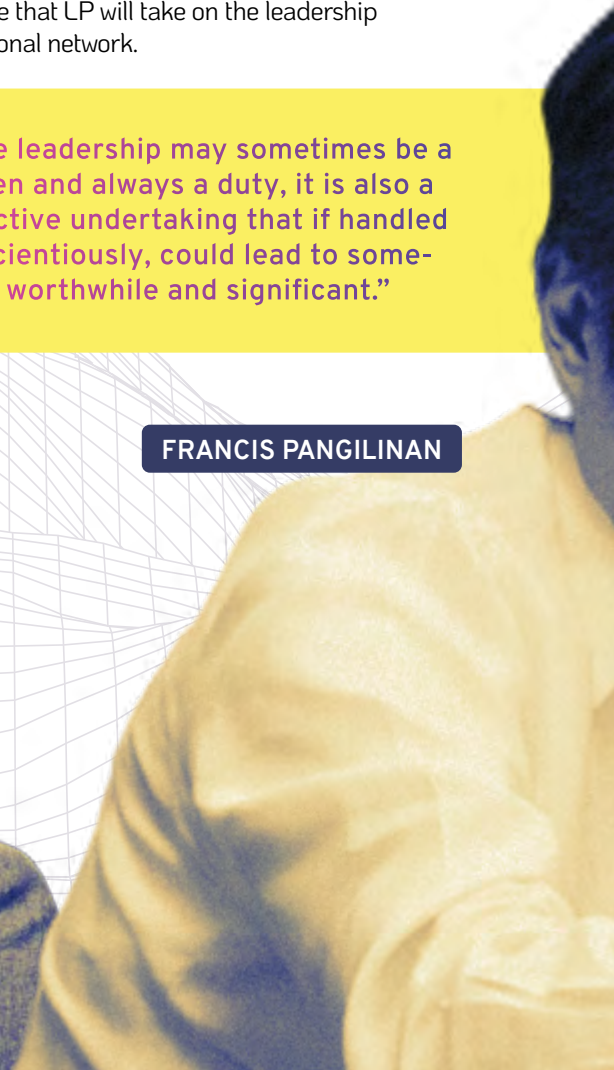
LP-Philippines is a founding member of CALD and an active member of Liberal International. Senator Pangilinan, LP's incumbent party president, welcomed his party's leadership role in CALD. This is the third time that LP will take on the leadership role in the regional network.

"I think 2020 will mark a year in history of dramatic changes and challenges in Asia. I want to thank Senator Kiko [Pangilinan] and the Liberal Party of the Philippines for asserting this duty and the chairmanship of CALD and for carrying on the important battle to sustain liberalism and democracy in Asia."

BI-KHIM HSIAO

"While leadership may sometimes be a burden and always a duty, it is also a collective undertaking that if handled conscientiously, could lead to something worthwhile and significant."

FRANCIS PANGILINAN



LP's history in CALD

In the 27-year history of CALD, LP had served as CALD chair-party for two terms: 1997-1999 and 2005-2007. The recently assumed term of LP will end in 2022.



Former LP president and then Deputy Speaker **Raul Daza** of the 1st District of Northern Samar served as CALD chairperson 1997-1998. In 1999, he was succeeded by former Batanes Rep.

Florencio "Butch" Abad, who was formerly CALD secretary general during Daza's incumbency.



Former LP President and then Philippine Senate President **Franklin Drilon** assumed CALD chairmanship 2005-2007.

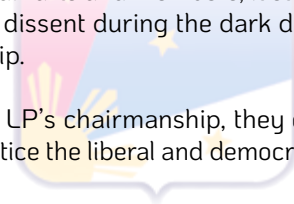


LP officials who served as CALD secretaries general include former Philippine President **Benigno Simeon "Noynoy" Aquino III** (1999), who was then Tarlac province's 2nd District Representative, and former Bukidnon Rep. **Neric Acosta**, who served the longest as CALD's secretary general from 2005 to 2014.



Since its founding in 1946, LP has championed freedom, justice, and the dignity and rights of the individual. At great cost to its stalwarts and members, it stood among the few voices of dissent during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship.

CALD believes that with LP's chairmanship, they can further promote and practice the liberal and democratic values they hold dear.



Senator Pangilinan accepted the hand-over on behalf of the LP-Philippines.

"A healthy community of people and nations require a vibrant democracy – a living and life-giving democracy that is relevant in our people's everyday lives, a democracy that brings hope, a meaningful democracy that empowers people to chart their own destinies and tell their own stories,"

"This relevant, hopeful, and empowering democracy is what our people need, and so, what the Liberal Party-Philippines will endeavor to provide as it chairs the CALD in two years," he added.

For a term of two years, Pangilinan will serve as CALD chairperson, and Francis Gerald "Blue" Abaya, LP vice president for international affairs, as CALD secretary general.



FRANCIS ABAYA

Early Assumption

Aside from LP, CALD member-parties include the Democrat Party of Thailand, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of Taiwan, Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, Singapore Democratic Party, Sam Rainsy Party / Cambodia National Rescue Party, Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, Civil Will-Green Party of Mongolia, and the Nation Awakening Party of Indonesia.

DPP of Taiwan, the outgoing CALD chair-party, was set to end its term on November 2020. But then CALD chairperson Bi – Khim Hsiao was appointed Taiwan envoy to the United States. As such, she needed to step down no later than end of June 2020, prior to her departure to assume her post in the US.

At the online CALD Executive Committee meeting, Senator Pangilinan congratulated outgoing CALD chair Hsiao on her new designation as Taiwan envoy to the United States.

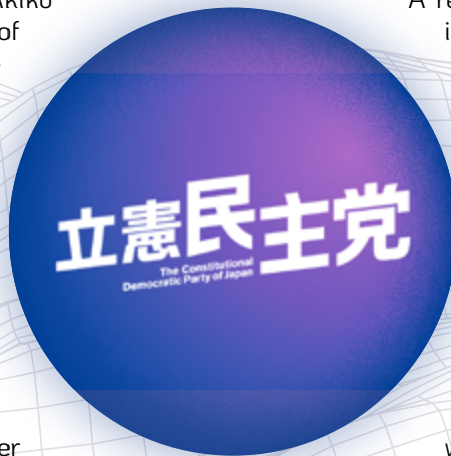
Japan's CDP Joins CALD as Observer

CALD'S LATEST observer party is no less than Japan's main opposition force, the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP).

In a 30 June letter to CALD, Akiko Kamei, member of Japan's House of Representatives and director general of CDP's international bureau, conveyed the party's acceptance of CALD's membership invitation on behalf of Yukio Edano, CDP leader.

"The promotion of the basic values of liberal democracy is increasingly important when the freedom in Hong Kong is threatened more than ever," said MP Kamei. She recalled in her letter a December 2019 visit to Hong Kong to convey CDP's message to the Carrie Lam administration and the Hong Kong people. Kamei said that she had also met CALD Individual Member, Emily Lau during that trip.

Months before, at the height of violent clashes between the police and the protesters in a number of Hong Kong universities, CDP Leader Edano had released a statement calling for the Hong Kong police and authorities to "immediately cease using excessive power over the citizens". He also said in the statement dated 21 November 2019 that "efforts must be made to establish a framework for peaceful dialogue with citizens".



A relatively young party but with politically seasoned members, CDP was founded in 2017. It aims to "build a genuine grassroots democracy" in Japan and champions politics "rooted in the real voices of real people". In mid-2020 it had 89 members, 56 of whom were in the 465-seat Lower House, while the remaining 33 were in the 242-seat Upper House.

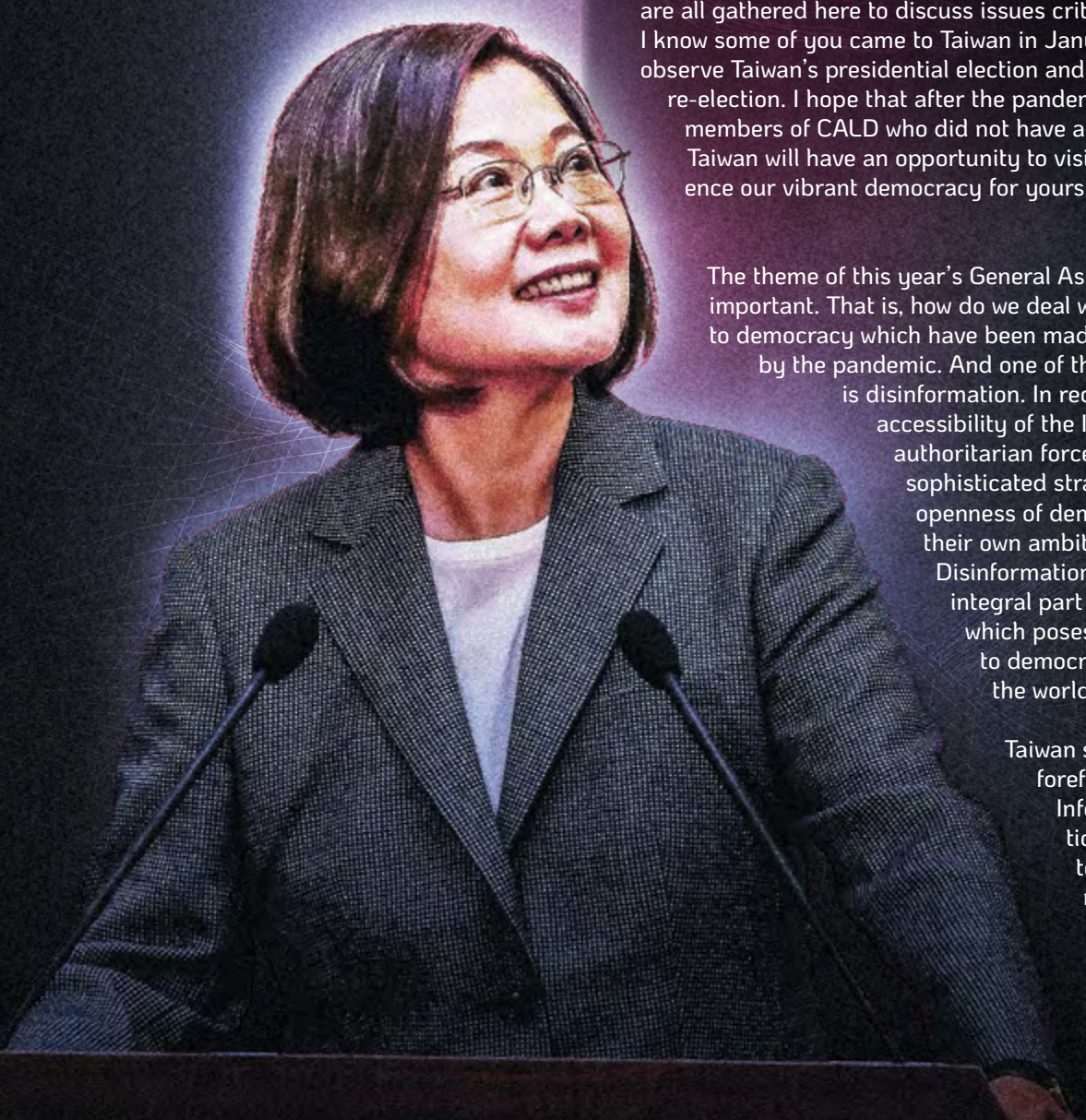
CALD leaders Francis 'Kiko' Pangilinan and Bi-Khim Hsiao welcomed the CDP's decision to join the Asian liberal and democratic family. In a letter they wrote on behalf of CALD, Pangilinan and Hsiao said, "This is the time when liberal democrats have to come together and collectively engage to advance liberal policies and practical solutions that address the most pressing problems of our time, including this pandemic."

"We are confident," they continued, "that together with the CDP, CALD would be able to elevate further the level of discussion among member-parties concerning the most pressing global issues. The CDP's political experience, together with Japan's democratic credential, will be valuable to CALD's continued pursuit of peace and cooperation in the region."

The Best Defense Against Disinformation

Tsai Ing-Wen
President of Taiwan

Keynote Speech given on 20 November at the Opening Panel of the 13th CALD General Assembly held online



I'M HAPPY to see that the pandemic did not deter us, and that through modern technology, and video conferencing, we are all gathered here to discuss issues critical to our region. I know some of you came to Taiwan in January this year to observe Taiwan's presidential election and bear witness to my re-election. I hope that after the pandemic has receded, the members of CALD who did not have a chance to come to Taiwan will have an opportunity to visit Taiwan and experience our vibrant democracy for yourselves.

The theme of this year's General Assembly is very important. That is, how do we deal with the challenges to democracy which have been made more daunting by the pandemic. And one of the challenges is disinformation. In recent years, the accessibility of the Internet has allowed authoritarian forces to develop more sophisticated strategies to exploit the openness of democratic systems for their own ambition and interests. Disinformation has become an integral part of such an endeavor, which poses a significant threat to democratic countries around the world.

Taiwan stands at the forefront of such distort. Information manipulation has always been a tool of authoritarian regimes to tarnish democracies. Over the past few years, this disturbing trend has become a very persistent threat for Taiwan,

affecting politics, polarizing society, creating wedges in inter-person and family relationships. Operators of information manipulation tried hard to use the openness of our democracy to influence the outcome of our elections while our freedom of expression to propose authoritarian alternatives to our democratic systems. According to the research by the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) at the University of Gothenburg in 2019, Taiwan was exposed to misleading new points of false information disseminated by foreign governments and their agents more frequently than any of the 179 countries the project surveyed. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, we observed an increase of disinformation in an all-encompassing attempt to create doubts in our citizens' minds and discredit our government's effort to combat the coronavirus.

Facing the daunting challenge of disinformation, Taiwan and Taiwanese are not only undeterred, we persevered. In the last few years, my government and members of civil society have been cooperating and working collectively to mitigate the scope of this 'Infodemic'. On the legislative front, Taiwan's legislature passed several pieces of legislation last year which prohibited the spread of disinformation and news, particularly under the commission from the hostile foreign powers. And since timeliness and transparency are key to effective defense against disinformation, our government agencies held regular news briefings and released real-time official clarifications to the public. Under the leadership of our Digital Minister Audrey Tan, government agencies formulate their official responses under the principles of three F's: fast, fair, and fun.

Pictures with simple messages were published to first capture the attention of the citizens, and then introduce facts to them. More importantly, Taiwan's vibrant civil society and civic-tech community contributed tremendously in the effort to combat disinformation and while safeguarding democratic values of free speech and expression. Organizations such as the Taiwan fact-check centre, Cofacts, g0v, MyGoPen, Doublethink Lab, and

information-operation research groups are just a few examples. They publish thoughtfully researched and detailed reports on checked facts, as well as books on authoritarian information manipulation. Organizations such as Fake News Cleaner and the Open Cultural Foundation also developed media-literacy lesson plans and travelled around our country to places like senior centres and schools to educate our citizens on the negative effects of disinformation. Civil-tech organizations also developed chatbots for popular chat applications in Taiwan, so Taiwanese users can fact-check as they receive links from their friends.

After the joint efforts of the government and civil-society organizations, the majority of the Taiwanese now have the understanding that disinformation affects democratic development very negatively, and that it should be effectively dealt with by the government. Furthermore, our government also works with social-media and technology companies, such as Facebook, Google, Yahoo, and PTT board on transparency and the implementation of self-check and fact-check mechanisms to recognize and manage disinformation in Taiwan, as well as on cooperative efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

"...a strong, confident democracy combined with informed citizenry is its best defense."

In Taiwan, we call our cooperative efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic the "Taiwan Model." 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. Taiwan is an example that a country can develop strategies and ways to combat disinformation without damaging its democratic procedures, system, and values.

Taiwan is open and willing to share its experience with our friends from the region, and certainly with our friends in CALD. It is through joining forces and working together that the pandemic of disinformation can be effectively dealt with in our region.



A Time to Listen

Ma. Leonor 'Leni' Robredo
Vice President of the Philippines

*Speech given on 27 November at the Closing Panel
of the 13th CALD General Assembly held online*

THE TIMES are challenging for everyone, not least for liberals and democrats the world over. In the past few years, we have seen ideas we hold dear under attack, with populist-authoritarians the world over tapping into long-simmering frustrations, capturing office through the same participative mechanisms that form the bedrock of our beliefs. We see the rise of right-wing parties and characters not only in the Philippines and the Global South, but curiously, even for other, more advanced democracies in the West.

The main message, it seems, has to do with a world order that has failed to deliver its promises. The diagnoses and prescriptions may be different, but the main thesis is that this world order—liberal and democratic in its processes—has given rise to new dangers, bred widespread inequality, and allowed the powerful few to hoard vast riches while leaving everyone in the dust. This powerful few, this elite—educated, technocratic, politically correct; a lot of times, liberal, and a lot of times, out of touch—is to blame for much that is wrong in the world. Or so the assertion goes.

We, of course, armed with our good intentions and long think pieces about how liberal democracy has been the key to human progress over the past couple of centuries, dismiss these assertions as untrue.

It has become evident, however, that engaging in debates over what is true or not has become less and less productive. Such debates have only served to further polarize societies, yielding little in terms of pushback against the ongoing illiberal wave. The task has become much greater than merely proving what is true. To more productively address the challenges to liberal democracy, we need to engage the question: Why do people believe the lies?

Online technologies, and the regimes of disinformation that these have enabled, for certain, have become among our biggest problems. Is it then merely a matter of volume, a matter of communications strategy? One of our foremost liberal stalwarts, Mar Roxas, had this to say back in 2016: “To restrict the lessons of (the elections)



to the superficial levels of advertising or projection is to avoid what is a harsher, perhaps truer judgement.”

Look deeper and we come face to face with the very real frustrations that have fuelled the illiberal phenomenon. We come face to face with the farmer who has tilled his land for decades, only to be swallowed by a mega corporation. We see those same corporations co-opting our own liberal rhetoric about freedom from regulation, stockpiling wealth while their workers barely get by. We see the young professional, the college student, the new parents losing sleep over whether their sons and daughters would still have a planet to live in.

These faces, these stories, are much more than mere samples from a data set that we use to come up with our technocratic solutions. They are the lifeblood that runs through those very solutions: Without listening to their stories, being there as they tell it, looping them in, and getting their buy-in, our projects, smart as they often are, will never get off the ground. Conversely: The more that the people are looped in—the more they recognize that we are all in this together— then the more galvanized they become. This is, perhaps, the entire point of participative democracy, and it can only happen when we build the necessary affinity with the people.

Beyond this: Listening to our people, spending time with them, and valuing their perspectives are not simply tools to refine our policies and to make them more effective. These are a recognition of their identity and their place in society, affirmations of their worth, and acknowledgements of the common humanity that binds us all. These are not simply more instruments, but worthy ends in themselves.

The process requires shedding the idea that, armed with our position papers and PhDs, we always know what is best. This gap in humility is in fact what demagogues are so skilled at weaponizing: They make their crass pronouncements and sleep under mosquito nets to signal a same-ness with the frustrated. But while populism dresses itself up

in cosmetic affinity, the liberal response must be to pursue authentic human engagement. To lean towards the ground and share in the struggle of the people.

I remember what attracted me towards liberal philosophy in the first place. Many of the people whose politics I admire—my late husband among them—were liberals. But on top of this, I saw at the heart of liberalism the enlightenment idea that has birthed free societies from France to the Philippines and beyond: The idea that every individual has dignity. With this dignity comes rights, and with rights upheld, then individual agency and freedom can be responsibly exercised.

“These faces, these stories, are much more than mere samples from a data set that we use to come up with our technocratic solutions.”

Recognizing the dignity of the individual means that every death due to COVID-19, every parent who lost a child, every family burdened with hospital bills, every coastal community ravaged by storm—everyone has a story worth listening to. These stories—these frustrations, anxieties, and fears — have been simmering even before the time of the pandemic. Socio-economic structures have for a long time been hardening into limits on social mobility. Job creation has struggled to keep up with shifts in technology. The climate has been warming since the first steam engine released fumes into the air. All of these, compounded, have set the stage for the rise of charismatic demagogues.

If we are to prove wrong all the intellectual obituaries pronouncing the death of liberal democracy, we must begin by going to our communities. By empathizing and rebuilding the affinity that was broken not only by online lies, but also by offline disconnects.

By resisting the impulse to promise salvation tomorrow, and to instead offer solidarity in real-time.

This is the necessary pivot that is at the heart of today’s discussions in the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats. It is in fact the only truly liberal response to the times: To engage as many people as deeply as possible, with as much warmth as we can muster. To hold real conversations, to hear real stories, to build real connections. To recognize the worth of every individual. To listen first, and listen for real.




The Importance of Science in Politics

Andrew Ullman

German MP, Free Democratic Party

Keynote Address given at the 42nd CALD Executive Committee Meeting held online on 26 November

A portrait of Andrew Ullman, a middle-aged man with short grey hair and glasses, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. The background is dark with a faint grid pattern.

WITH COVID-19 generating extreme uncertainty, there is a lot we have to do as politicians across the world. There's obvious need for robust evidence-based policies. However, it is not clear how to bring those evidence-based policies into life. Not since the Second World War have we seen such uncertainty and fear in our societies on a global scale. Today almost 60 million people were infected or are infected with SARS-COV2; 1.4 million people have succumbed to this disease.

Leaders around the world need to answer pressing questions. How can the coronavirus be contained? And which measures really work? We have some interventions in certain countries that were more successful than those in other nations. How did this happen? And what information can we trust in this day and age of fake news?

The answers are difficult. There is no black and white — what we like as policymakers. We have to respect that biology and medicine have some shades of grey. So as politicians, we face two major challenges. One is that we have an overload of data, we have an oversupply of scientific evidence, and sometimes also competing voices. Another is that we have a rapid global spread of misinformation and fake news.

There is no lack of scientific evidence, but there are uncertainties, especially for decision-makers, to understand what really works against SARS-

COV2. There are competing opinions, which are unfortunately common in scientific debates, but are unusual for policymakers. Policymakers — they need to sift through evidence and formulate policies that really work.

For example, let's look at climate change. In a scientific community, there is a near consensus of the real evidence of climate change. But denials of causes and impacts receive disproportional attention in the Internet, as well as in the newspapers or in the press. This harms the access to steps we need to take to combat climate change.

I've been a scientist for almost 30 years. I'm a physician by training, and a full professor of infectious diseases at the University of Würzburg in Northern Bavaria. I'm the primary author of numerous evidence-based medicine guidelines in the European and international context. So it has been very obvious for me as a politician to have a look at evidence-based policies. But it's difficult for all my friends and colleagues to navigate through the different scientific opinions and translate them into evidence-based policies.

Failure to act on correct information in the context of COVID-19 costs lives. We see this now, in the second wave running through Europe. We feel the desperation as European politicians facing this crisis. Yet, again, there's a rapid spread of misinformation and fake news. As politicians, we must be mindful of the information we're telling our citizens. Inconsistent messaging or sharing misleading information to the public will devastate an already overwhelmed medical force. As politicians, we need to resist the temptation to share hopeful messages of possible treatments that are simply not supported by robust data.

At this moment, without any prevention tools to fight the spread of a virus, the only thing that could work and should work and hopefully will work are vaccinations.

We have to communicate and keep our citizens informed. The first very promising results from BioNTech/Pfizer, Dana-Farber, or AstraZeneca are helpful. However, let me give you a word of warning. So far there have been only press releases. The scientific community itself is waiting urgently for the primary data to really assess the success of those vaccines.



We also have to look at effective therapy. We have new cases that are actually overwhelming our health systems capacities. And those new therapies are helpful. But just as a reminder, remdesivir shortens the stay in the hospital, but it doesn't really save lives. Or how about the use of methadone, which is really approved medication in the ICU and patients who are ventilated because of this SARS-COV2 infection? But, again, we have need to look out for misinformation and fake news. Our efforts that we're taking as policymakers are undermined if we follow those fake news. World Health Organization Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus even says that the rapid global spread of misinformation about COVID-19 through social media could also be called an "infodemic". This is a concern for a lot of us. Fake news are dangerous, and sometimes even more dangerous as the virus itself. There's harm done to the health in our democracies, and also to the health of our citizens.

Especially worrying is the information and misinformation about the vaccine, and the many questions concerning their efficacy. While countries worldwide are currently preparing to roll out vaccines against COVID-19, their populations are confronted with stories ranging from suggestions that the vaccines have serious side effects or haven't been properly tested, to allegations that they're part of some plot. Some of those stories might be correct, since the primary data remain missing.

But then press releases are again promising safety; the profiles look good, as do efficacy rates, and the published results of Phase One trials. I think there's a reason to be optimistic.

Still, it's very clear to us in the European setting that we have to complete the trials prior to have a drug approved for use by the population. Personally, as a physician, as an expert in infectious diseases, I actually condemn what Russia is doing: vaccinating its population with a drug that had yet to complete trials.

At the same time, we have fake news like that one about about Bill Gates, who does a lot to fight infectious diseases worldwide. There's a persistent rumour that he is part of a plot to implant micro-chips during COVID-19 vaccinations. The story is just unbelievable but there are people who fall for it. If we don't fight the infodemic that circulates stories like this, we will hamper the effort to end this

pandemic worldwide. Because fighting a pandemic is a worldwide effort that has to be done by all of us, and cannot just be made in Europe, Asia, or in North America.

As politicians we have to tackle fake news with interventions. We need to empower our citizens to evaluate fake news by strengthening digital competence from the beginning and to differentiate information they need from the wrong news that are spread on the Internet. We need to work together also with social-media platforms to develop strong strategies to tackle misinformation.

My country, Germany, has responded well to the pandemic. This has been possible thanks to the scientific leaders that we have here, such as virologist Christian Drosten who is just a half a kilometre away from my office here in Berlin Central. We have had the luck of getting this virus spread under control. Right now, we're still in a debate about how to tackle the second wave. We have no appropriate answers so far since the number of infected people is still rising. In the meantime, the scientific debates in Germany have led to misinformation to the public, and this hampers our efforts to contain the virus.

Politicians must listen to scientists and translate scientific evidence into evidence-based policies. Let me remind you that the threat of a pandemic is not new. We have known this for decades, actually for millennia, because that has been a concern of mankind for thousands of years. This is just new to us in the 21st century. Outbreak on a global scale is new to us. We know this only from history books. But we always have to be prepared to fight a pandemic when it arrives. This pandemic has shown us we need to be better prepared.

We as liberals here in Germany need to increase the significance of debate; as an opposition party, we have been pointing out that there is not enough open debate in the parliament. We also need to invest more into research. And we need to have better exchange of scientists worldwide.

Following this crisis, we'll need to rebuild our world from the social and economical collapse that now seems inevitable to drag on for the years to come. Some countries will do well or better than others. This, however, is going to be yet another global challenge.

"Politicians must listen to scientists and translate scientific evidence into evidence-based policies."

A Liberal Roadmap in the Midst of a Pandemic

Abhisit Vejjajiva

Former Prime Minister of Thailand

Speech given on 30 June at the COVID-19 and the Future of Democracy in Asia webinar

IT'S BEEN mentioned that even before the pandemic, the state of liberal democracy was already in recession, perhaps not just in this region, but also globally. And of course — as Butch (Abad) very much focused on — a security threat, in one form or another, in this case the pandemic, always provides an excuse for power grab. And we've seen much of that, not just in this region, and therefore it's something we have to be alert about. But I will mention four basic factors that I think are very important as we move ahead.

The first - and this is just sticking to the issue of power grab - is that it is important to learn the right lessons from the first half of this year. There's always a temptation to say that an authoritarian regime has had more success at dealing with the pandemic, which is not exactly the case. I have to say that this is not being helped by the contrasting optics we see from China and the United States. You can look at individual countries and pick out examples, but the whole world, including people in this region, will see the United States and China most of all. When China goes through very severe lockdown and seems to be succeeding, while the United States appears to be in almost a chaotic state without ever getting on top of this pandemic, our course is not helped. And while there is concern and focus on this issue of the pandemic, not just in national terms where governments increase their power, we also see movements in places like Hong Kong, where there is now a lot of concern about the future of democracy there.



So my first point is that we have to be alert and should monitor the management of the pandemic in relation to the use of state power and impact on rights, freedom, and democracy. We have to be very careful in drawing conclusions about the successes and failures of dealing with the pandemic. And yes, the issue is not about authoritarianism or democracy, it's about trust. It's about leadership. It's about good management.

The second factor that I think we need to be aware of is the global environment, global trends, and what I call multilateralism. If we look back at what we may say was the heyday of democracy in this region, which is probably around the turn of the century, we had a very favourable global environment helping us. There was clear leadership from the United States and the free world, and the West. The conclusion everybody drew in those days was that you can only succeed with a liberal democratic regime and a market economy. Well, that was no longer the case even before the pandemic. But unfortunately, the pandemic will now reinforce some of the threats to liberal democracy in the form of nationalism and extremism. People are going to be more wary of globalization with the fear of imported cases. People will also see that there has been a failure of multilateral cooperation to deal with this pandemic.

Imagine if we had a coordinated effort in terms of taking the right measures, and coordinating between countries and regions. We might very well be on top of the infection spreading by now. The challenge ahead is when we deal with the issue of vaccines and treatment. Again, if there is a failure of cooperation at the international level, you will very much be feeding into the nationalist agenda. And again, this will not serve a liberal democracy at all. I already mentioned the contrast between the United States and China. I think the United States has lost so much moral high ground, and it can no longer play that role of leader of the free world. And again this is something we have to be aware of as we move ahead.

The third factor is that the second half of this year, and maybe well into next year, we will all be suffering economically from the pandemic and also from the lockdown measures. Now, whenever there is widespread economic suffering and hardship, if there is not a good and swift response to deal with this, again, that provides fertile ground for populist and extremist leaders that will play into the disillusionment and disappointment of the population.

I will cite an example from the past. One of the main factors that had liberal democracy in Thailand receding was very much the disillusionment or disappointment,

or even anchoring frustration with the IMF programme that was used to deal with the financial crisis of 1997, which laid the ground for a more populist and authoritarian style of politics that followed. So we need to be aware of that. A lot has been said about the increase of state power and government power after the pandemic, but I have to say we need to be careful. I don't think that we should be concerned with the increasing role of the state itself, but with how the state actually uses that power and what kind of role it plays. Because I don't think there can be any denial that we need a stronger social protection and welfare system to deal with the current economic predicament, and also to deal with an already structural problem of inequality. We as liberals and democrats must be careful not to be seen to be opposing the role of the state if it confined itself only to providing economic and social security to the population.

The final and the fourth factor that I think we have to be aware of is, of course, the role of technology. During this pandemic, during the lockdowns, and as restrictions are being eased, the issue of tracing and therefore the collection of big data, how we continue to deal with the issue of fake news, hate speech, and the lack of deliberation — all these will again compound problems for those of us who would like to see a more liberal and democratic state of affairs.

So those are four factors we have to be aware of: the power grab; opportunities that have emerged, the global trends; economic hardship; and the role of technology. Conversely, I think it's important that we do four things.

Number one: we have to make sure that as restrictions are eased, there is balance. We do not want people to have this impression that liberalism or democracy means inefficiency or inability to deal with the pandemic and to deny whatever power or authority that governments may need.

Secondly, we have to do our best to try to foster a multilateral cooperation to make sure that not all the countries will slip into protectionism and nationalism.

Thirdly, we have to make sure that democratic governments, liberal governments, respond to the economic and social needs that follow from this pandemic.

And finally, it is time that we be clear about what kind of rules should apply, as far as technology is concerned with data, and also dealing with fake news.

"Imagine if we had a coordinated effort in terms of taking the right measures, and coordinating between countries and regions."

Building a Better Normal

Hakima el Haite

Liberal International President

Speech given on 27 November at the Closing Panel of the 13th CALD General Assembly held online

LET ME first tell you my thoughts about the challenges we were facing well before COVID - 19. Well before the pandemic our world was hostile to many groups of societies. We lived in a world full of inequalities.

Our education, the foundation of our civilization, was and remains inaccessible — with more than 72 million children of primary-education age not in school and 759 million adults illiterate and without the awareness necessary to improve both their living conditions and those of their children. Four hundred million people do not have access to essential health services. Eight hundred million people are facing hunger and two billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food, including eight percent of the population in North America and Europe.

Although the world has never been so rich, collectively the world is three times richer than what it was in 1990, but with 75 percent of people in the developing world still living in countries where income is more unequally distributed than in the 1990s. And yet, we are all aware by now that the rise of income and GDP do not necessarily translate to improved standards of living.

Inequities have led to intolerance and hate, which has given birth to more discrimination, more division, to the demonization of migrants and refugees. It has led populists to power, and Donald Trump to the White House. Walls were built, international treaties were questioned — populists undermined our multilateral order and created a climate of suspicion and fear in the world.

In other words, we already lived in a world that threatened democracies in favour of dictatorships, a world that preferred simple solutions to complex problems.



Ladies and gentlemen, well before COVID-19, we all knew that climate change was eroding our earth and threatening our humanity.

Climate disasters had already claimed many lives, made millions homeless and cost our economies billions of dollars. We all knew that 80 percent of our biodiversity was at the risk of extinction, threatening the equilibrium of the whole earth ecosystem. We all knew that the disruption of the ecosystem's equilibrium could lead to new diseases and pandemics.

Today the challenges have further shifted towards access to the digital world, which has created lots of opportunities where they have not existed before. At the same time, it has exacerbated inequities and the rise of a new kind of illiteracy: digital illiteracy.

Today dear friends, it feels like we are living a nightmare.

The pandemic came like a cyclone sweeping everything in its path, economies collapsed one after another like dominoes, the rich became poor, and the poor even more so. And now the populists are leading the way and the authoritarians are taking more and more power. Billions of people are in lockdown, unable to go to work, unable to attend school, unable to meet one another in public places.

People around the world are suffering desperate conditions, struggling at home, in care homes and intensive care units, dying of the same cause, separated from their loved ones in their hours of need.

Today every expression of physical loving-kindness and compassion could bring illness and death.

This pandemic has shown us how vulnerable we are, how dependent we are in our independence, how borderless our world is. It proved how wrong we were with our priorities and choices. Dear friends, it seemed that before the pandemic we were blind to the weaknesses of the world we lived in. It's only now that we realize the deep meaning of freedom, rule of law, and democracy.

We realize that healthy nations facilitate healthy economies, that education and innovation are not alternatives but the only way to progress and sustain, and that solidarity is more important in a time of crisis than any time before. It's exactly during times like these when we realize how precious free and fair trade is and how much it has done to uplift our societies. In times like these we acknowledge how much we have achieved by simply cooperating with each other, and how difficult that is to do so today.

Now we know that without a real international cooperation and strong multilateral institutions, we are losing time, lives, and money. In other words, we now realize that our only priority must be humanity and how vital our social fabric is for our psychological and spiritual life.

Dear friends, we are placed in a historic moment, where we have a chance to rethink and reinvent our shared future. Business as usual will not work. Business as usual will not allow humanity to correct its mistakes especially by the critical time of COVID-19.

When slavery was abolished, everyone was concerned that the world would stop because it would lose its workforce — but what happened? Political will, new policies, and innovation took the lead, and the first machines that eased human life were created.

This is how we see life in Liberal International. We believe that in every shock change, there is always an opportunity to recover stronger and wiser than we were.

I will now outline three strategic goals that I think may make a difference.

First, implementing the global transformation called for by the Paris agreement.

It means creating a new social fabric, a new culture, a new relationship with Mother Earth and natural resources, a new civilization where innovation can flourish towards radical solutions. We need a revolution in our energy transition, with a circular economy, green growth and green investment as the heart of our recovery plans. This is how we can create millions of jobs and not leave anyone behind while reducing inequalities.

Second, education: before the pandemic we fought so everyone could exercise their right to education. While we must continue, now we also need to innovate in the field of digital education and ensure that digital technologies are designed with human rights and values as the lead principles. We have a unique chance to stop the digital divide from its roots, and not allow it to become the new basis for marginalizing communities further.

And of course, last but certainly not least: we need everyone onboard! Let us all with our actions, serve as a testimony to the world that through political movements and engagement, we can disrupt the regular modus operandi and make this world a better place to live in. We must rebuild the liberal commitments that will not only hold populism off across the world, but defeat it.

Let's innovate together. Let's transform the world, like only liberals can.

“This pandemic has shown us how vulnerable we are, how dependent we are in our independence, how borderless our world is.”

Make Sense, Not Hate Speech

Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan

CALD Chairperson and Philippine Senator

Talk given on 9 October at the “Hate Speech in Asia: Challenges and Solutions” webinar

THERE WERE three questions that we were asked to answer.

First: “Do you have experiences in recent times, as a politician, when you and/or your political party were subjected to hate speech, and how did you deal with it?”

I’ve been subjected to hate speech since Facebook was created. I’ve been called many names — the verbal jabs that range from amusing and ridiculous to offensive, outrageous, nasty.

Bashers, as many are probably familiar with, are unforgiving. They will notice everything about you, from your head to your toes, and find something to insult. They will not spare your family and friends. A number of times my family has been at the receiving end. This includes my wife, and my daughter. My daughter, who’s been very vocal on social media, has faced online harassment and rape threats for speaking out and speaking her mind, including against rape culture.

In 2018, through the other powerful propaganda tool, fake news, the Liberal Party of the Philippines was repeatedly accused of conspiring with the Communist Party of the Philippines to overthrow President Duterte in a poorly named “Red October” ouster plot.



During the election season last year, Philippine Vice President and Liberal Party Chairperson Leni Robredo, together with the two Catholic priests and an opposition senator, faced sedition charges over videos that linked President Rodrigo Duterte and members of his family to the drug trade.

In the last election, a University of the Philippines College of Mass Communication research paper identified the two most trolled candidates in the Senate Elections of May 2019, and they were candidates of the Liberal Party: Senators Mar Roxas and Bam Aquino. Both failed to make it to the top 12 and get re-elected.

We have, in these many instances involving the party, raised issues with the Secretary of Justice, the Secretary of National Defense, as well as with the Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff during budget debates in the Senate. They have repeatedly denied our involvement in any of these alleged ouster plots, and the Department of Justice itself had dismissed cases that were filed against Vice President Leni Robredo.

Part of the realization of those experiences is that while our response was able to officially clarify the matter, the stain remains on the Vice President and the political party we lead. And that has been the target of democracy's enemy: to stain the image of critics, of opposition forces, of dissent, so badly as to render critics or opposition figures irrelevant.

For insults to myself and my family, we have learned to take them in stride, as a politician and as public figures.

My personal rules for dealing with hate speech: simply block and delete obviously paid trolls, and if you have to deal with them, behave online as you would offline. Recognize that the people behind these fake accounts are mostly paid trolls or influenced largely by paid trolls.

Question Two: *"Do you or your political parties adopt specific measures in order to address hate speech? How effective are these measures? And are there other solutions or remedies you think could have been implemented to curb hate speech?"*

Well, we [have] suffered the plague of hate speech and fake news. Hate speech has been used many times before, particularly to rationalize wars or genocide. It has been used to make "others" of people of different race, religion, gender, health condition, and yes, socio-economic class.

The Philippines' hate speech seems to have found legitimacy with no less than the President of the Philippines as the font, delivering them like they are a natural part of his public vocabulary, with insults and swearing as typical expressions, rather than exceptions. I have been repeatedly insulted publicly in the last four years by no less than the President; he even challenged me to a fistfight.

Echoed by the powerful, hate speech can be weaponized against the subject of the remarks. It can incite violence and chaos. Mouthed by government officials, these utterances could be — and have been — interpreted as official policies.

The three-year incarceration of Liberal Party Senator Leila de Lima had started as misogyny, a particularly spiteful kind of hate speech.

In his many speeches, the President has repeatedly threatened to kill drug lords, drug pushers, and drug users. He has ordered police forces to kill anyone they believe are involved in the illegal-drug trade.

The result since the President launched his anti-drug crackdown in 2016: tens of thousands killed. While the official tally is 800 drug-related killings, human-rights groups put the number closer to over 30,000. Even as the Philippine National Police changes the numbers in its accomplishment report, in 2017 it classified over 16,000 homicide cases as under investigation in relation to its anti-narcotics operation from 1 July 2016 to 13 September 2017.

What is particular to this time now is that social media has become the main avenue by which hate speech and fake news are spread.

It has been said that with social-media technology and digital technology come speed, scope, and scale. It's sad that — and I quote — "a lie can travel halfway around the world when the truth is putting on its shoes". Now a lie can travel at the speed of thought around the world and brainwash tens of millions along the way. Backed by a well-oiled machinery of paid social-media users, the lie can come off as truth.

"Let's continue to create safe spaces online and offline, especially given the limitations of the pandemic."



Third question: *“What specific areas of intervention should Liberal and Democratic leaders focus on to address the impact of hate speech on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law?”*

This is a sticky question. Traditional media and social media will play key roles in ensuring that reporting will not focus on the hate, but on underlying issues that engender it like poverty, inequality, and discrimination. Rather than simply centering on juicy soundbites, let’s have reportage that puts the correct context on issues. That would be victory against destructive spins or narratives.

Let’s continue to create safe spaces online and offline, especially given the limitations of the pandemic. For free, honest, and critical conversations, there’s listening sincerely, and sharing intently.

Let us continue to engage social-media users politely by pointing out facts from opinion, sharing not only proof but also mindset of openness and tolerance.

We must encourage victims and witnesses to report hate speech-related crimes. Hate speech remains a largely invisible entity because many victims do not report the cases or do not even understand that they are victims of hate speech.

When we counter hate speech, we are not only protecting the civil peace, we are also protecting our dignity and rights as a people.

Hate speech may be a sharp weapon, but overuse can blunt its edge. We can counter hate messages with our collective vigilance, and by standing for truth.

Later on, we can probably discuss within [the pack,] the open forum and discussion, some of the thoughts in terms of how do we come together as a community to provide precisely parameters within which we can regulate or we can put a check on hate speech.

In the end, ultimately, it will be a concerted effort in the community that would put hate speech out of commission. We need a common effort to address this — by the community stakeholders themselves, the media, nongovernment organizations, public leaders, private-sector leadership, the owners of these social-media platforms. We should all come together and move towards a common direction to address and put a check on hate speech.

‘F’ Words with Real Impact

Audrey Tang

Digital Minister of Taiwan

Talk given on 11 December at “Kaya Pala (It Can Be Done)” webinar

THE TAIWAN model against COVID-19 comprises three key pillars in social innovation: Fast, Fair, and Fun.

The Fast part pertains to collective intelligence. Here’s an example of how it works: Last December, Dr. Li Wenliang from Wuhan posted on their social media that there were — and I quote — “seven new SARS cases”. The message did not reach the people in Wuhan, unfortunately. But it did end up saving the Taiwanese people; a young doctor with the name ‘Nomorepipe’ re-posted this on the Taiwanese equivalent of the Reddit forum. It’s called PTT here, with the difference being PTT is run by the social sector, literally National Taiwan University students. And so many people just chimed in, not only upvoting the message, but triage-ing it so it would be seen as a legit early warning. We sent an email to the World Health Organization and the very next day, we started house inspections for flight passengers from Wuhan.

Now communication is also very important. As soon as we set up the Central Epidemic Command Centre or CECC, we started taking calls through this toll free number, +1922. So again, young doctors like Nomorepipe or really anyone could just share their ideas and thoughts about effective epidemic prevention. And every two p.m.,



five medical officers held a live press conference, answering all the journalists' questions for more than 100 days.

Sometime in mid April, a young boy called +1922, saying, "You're rationing out the medical masks and all my classmates have blue ones. But my household only has pink medical masks, and I'm a boy, I don't want to wear it to school." What to do? Very interestingly, the very next day at two p.m., all the medical officers in the CECC's press conference, including Minister Chen Shih-chung, wore pink medical masks. Minister Chen even said that Pink Panther was his childhood hero. And so the boy suddenly became the hip boy in class because only he had the colour that the heroes wear and the heroes' heroes, too. That's an example of fast innovation through collective intelligence. Of course, masks are now fashion items, and they come in many colours to choose from. Personally, though, I really like pink.

Another pillar is fairness. At the beginning, when we were rationing our masks, we deliberately chose the pharmacies already trusted by the community. We also decided that our mask rationing would exactly follow the procedure of getting refillable prescriptions. That is to say, you take your national health card, whether you're a resident, or whether you're a citizen is all fine because it covers 99.99 percent of people in Taiwan, and the nearby pharmacy would be able to dispense the correct number allotted to you, according to the weekly or bi-weekly quota of masks.

A civic technologist in Tainan, Howard Wu, also developed this visualization that helps keep track of how many masks are being purchased where, in real time. In a queue for masks, those still in line would be able to check how many were bought by those ahead of them, using this map. This app relies on us trusting the citizens with open data. In particular, data is updated every 30 seconds, or open API (application programming interface). If we update only every one day, then it's not a participatory accountability mechanism. But because we update every 30 seconds, the map becomes an essential distribution ledger. When we're ramping up production from two million masks a day to 20 million day, for example, everybody could now hold us to account as to whether the masks are distributed equally across rural and urban areas.

But there's a Member of Parliament who used to be the VP of data analytics in the Foxconn group. Obviously, she knows something about data understatement. And she looked at this and worked with the OpenStreetMap community and then interpolated, and then searched. And she said, "You know, it looks fair on the map if you look only at the distance. However, in the rural areas, people have to spend hours to get into the nearby pharmacy. So it's

not true equity when it comes to the time spent." So at the public hearing we zoomed out the map to that interpolation, and Minister Chen didn't try to defend the policy at all. Instead, the very next day we started co-creation, so now everybody can pick up their medical masks from nearby convenience stores 24 hours a day. That led the MP to say that yesterday's interpolation became tomorrow's innovation. And I think this is a beautiful testament to social innovation.

Finally, our counter-infodemic strategy called "Humour over Rumour" is also quite notable. You see, information that propagates outrage banks on the idea that on the more antisocial corners of social media, people who get enraged do not check the facts and will go on to share the disinformation, on average, to more than one person, which means our R value will be above one. So how do we combat this virus of the mind? Well, with vaccine of the mind. And it turns out joy — humour — is a very effective vaccine.

In a bid to engage people instead of enraging them, Taiwan's CECC has employed a spokesdog, a cartoon Shiba Inu. His name is Zongchai.

The basic message that he shares is that wearing a mask protects you from your own unwashed hands.

This is a very carefully designed message, appealing to rational self-interest. It doesn't attack anyone, it doesn't create, say, age differences, it doesn't emphasize occupation differences, it doesn't say that you have to respect the elderly or other people. It simply says, you know, there's virus on the surface, right? So if you're wearing masks, it's less likely that you will touch your face until you wash your hands properly with soap. And this is the message that had

the highest R0 value. Plus, it's kind of fun looking at the dog. Also, when we introduce physical distancing, we say, "Indoor: please keep three Shiba Inus away from one another — that's 1.5 metres — or wear a mask. Outdoor: keep two Shiba Inus away." And these are free of copyright. Anyone can remix them, translate them into all sorts of different languages. But everything points towards the same direction, which is humour over rumour.

Very importantly, we don't see democracy as a showdown between opposing ideas. Rather, we see it as a conversation between various ideas. The idea of administrative takedown is antithetical to democracy; it will only create more division between the people who have been taken down by the administration and the people who have not. My office, the Social Innovation Lab, is designed so that everybody — people who have different viewpoints - can join and then just enjoy a conversation based on what we call listening-skill technologies. By focusing our energy on this AI-moderated conversation, we make sure that

"Very importantly, we don't see democracy as a showdown between opposing ideas. Rather, we see it as a conversation between various ideas."

the pro-social part of social media gets more of the people's energy rather than the antisocial part.

We start them young. In the K-to-12 education curriculum, we teach not media literacy, but media competence. Many primary schoolers actually have more Instagram followers than I do or enjoy broadband as a human right. So they are media, too. Media literacy is about consuming media. Media competence is about producing facts using journalistic standards.

We use this tool called Polis, which is a free software programme, to conduct dialogues with the American Institute of Technology, the de facto U.S. Embassy in Taiwan, and to counter coronavirus without harming human rights. We have used it to deliberate this conversation about UberX, about how to balance the rights for the professional taxi drivers and those of the innovators in the platform. Through this we can get what people think and feel to guide our policymaking. The best idea that takes care of people's feelings as well becomes what we call 'rough consensus'. In the UberX case, there was a sharing success, and the consensus was that passenger liability insurance is the most important thing.

The way it works is: you may agree, which brings you closer to me. Or you may disagree, which brings you farther away from me. Or you may pass. But there is no reply button. Without the reply button, there is no room for trolls to grow. This is how we get a rough consensus after, say, three weeks of online deliberation. We always find a topic, and have maybe five ideological divisive statements. If you only look at the antisocial corners of social media, that's all you see, because these would be just clickbait. In the pro-social environment, however, we do see that most people agree with most of each other, and almost on most of the things, most of the time.

That becomes the counter-disinformation vaccine. And once we share it in a truly humorous way, people do understand that there are common values, despite our different positions, that can bring the society forward. Instead of a showdown between opposing values, this is how we bring together a conversation of diversity of values.

Actually, four years ago, when I became the digital minister, the HR department said, "Taiwan has never had a Digital Ministry. So what's the digital minister's job?" And I'm like, okay, last year, in 2015, the UN Global Goals had just been ratified. Of the 17 goals, my focus is on 17-18, reliable data; 17-17, effective partnerships, and 17-6, open innovation. And they said, "You know, this is so new, we don't have it memorized." The Taiwanese citizens don't have the Sustainable Development Goals memorized. You have to write in plain text that translates these three goals to my job description. And that's the poem-prayer, which I would conclude my talk with. It goes like this: When we see "Internet of things", let's make it an Internet of beings. When we see "virtual reality", let's make it a shared reality. When we see "machine learning", let's make it collaborative learning. When we see "user experience", let's make it about human experience. When we hear "the singularity is near", let us remember: the plurality is here.



Weathering Through a Democracy Recession

Ma. Leonor 'Leni' Robredo
Vice President of the Philippines

Speech given on 11 September at the Future of Democracy in Asia Webinar Series, focusing on the impact of the U.S. Elections on Asia

TODAY'S EVENT poses a very straightforward question: Will the 2020 U.S. Presidential Elections matter for democracy and human rights in Asia? The short answer is, yes, and very much so.

COVID-19 has affirmed: We are all interconnected; our destinies are intertwined. When a person becomes infected, his entire community is put at risk. As more people get sick, entire healthcare systems experience the strain. Businesses are forced to fold, jobs are lost, people grow hungry; the national economy plummets, and governments are left with few resources to address problems that begin to stack one on top of the other.

And while this reality has only become starker due to the global health crisis, its philosophical underpinnings hold true for so many other aspects of our lives. Nowhere is this more evident than in the discourse on rights and freedoms.

When rights and dignities are violated somewhere, we inch closer to rights and dignities being violated elsewhere. Tyrants become even more emboldened; voices of dissent become a little shakier, a bit less resolved. When lies are spoken from pulpits of power; when children seeking refuge are caged; when knees are pressed unto the necks of innocents, and those in power respond by stoking further fear and



division—when all of these happen in what was long considered the brightest beacon of democracy and the mightiest nation on earth, then an ominous message is sent: It can happen there; it has happened there. It can certainly happen in places where democracy is much more fragile.

There is no doubt that the right-wing rise to power is a global phenomenon. Fueled by disinformation, populists tap into long-simmering fears and anxieties, and paint the spectre of the malevolent other—immigrants, for example, or so-called oligarchs, or drug addicts. They maintain the architecture of disinformation, further normalize aggression, and dismantle structures for truth-telling and civic discourse. They harass, jail, or even kill dissenters to stoke fear in the ranks of the opposition. They surround themselves with sycophants and weaken public institutions, further entrenching themselves in power.

Populist leaders are winning elections, paving the way for others like them to rise elsewhere. Scholars have a name for it: We are going through a democracy recession as developing countries lean towards authoritarian rule. According to the 2019 Democracy Index, the average global score for democracy has been on a downward trend in the last few years, with 2019 being the worst on record since the index was first produced in 2006. Democracy has lost its footing in different parts of the globe—in some countries, the gap and distrust between government and its people continues to widen, and civil liberties, such as media freedom and freedom of speech, are on a steep decline.

Liberals and democrats the world over, evidently, face an uphill battle. And so, when rights-based democracy triumphs over populist authoritarians somewhere, then the pathways become clearer for everyone else. Whenever an effort to push back against populist authoritarianism is mounted, whenever one gains success, a pocket of hope is formed.

The task now is to go beyond mere hoping, beyond mere rhetoric. We must look for such instances and parse them into concrete steps and strategies. What are

the best practices? How did they campaign? How did they engage the people? What messages were articulated, in which tone, through which channels, and by whom? When they fell short, what went wrong, and how can we avoid making the same mistakes?

In Turkey, for example, the democratic opposition had a better than expected showing in their 2019 local elections, winning important mayoral and gubernatorial races. How did they achieve this? By aligning along a “Radical Love” strategy: eschewing high-minded politics for local concerns, avoiding the trap of angry and divisive discourse, and always speaking from a space of commonality, with humour and humility. In the United States, the

Democrats have avoided fragmentation and factionalism, and have spoken directly to sensible moderates who understand what is at stake. The verdict is still out, but the momentum seems very real.

Our own party, the Liberal Party, and those allied with us, know that we have reoriented ourselves towards the grass-roots—opening up membership to more people from all walks of life, listening to their anxieties, aligning with their dreams, and empowering them so they can empower others as well. The process is still ongoing, but we continue to move forward. The results from the elections in May 2019 and the challenges we continue to face only deepens our resolve to strive harder, engage deeper, and aim higher in doing the work that we do: To go beyond merely seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, and actually taking steps to get there—listening, learning, organizing, putting on our slippers and our sneakers and rolling up our sleeves to be with our communities. Much work remains, and more of us are needed to do this work. But like it is elsewhere, the momentum is real. And we are determined to sustain it.

CALD, along with its sister organization FNF, have been among our staunchest allies in our efforts. Even in the time of the pandemic, I know that our partnership has become even stronger.

You have been helping us reach out to and build communities, devise modules for online media literacy, and create spaces for truth-telling and civic discourse. This webinar is just one such space, and once again, I thank CALD and FNF for putting it up, and for being among our most trusted allies. May we remain bound by the same courage and resolve as we move ever forward in the coming years.

“There is no doubt that the right-wing rise to power is a global phenomenon.”



A Timely Liberal Guide

“IT COMES like a refreshing breeze of democracy at a time when breathing literally and figuratively has become difficult. It tells of how people have fought against the fog of uncertainty and the noxious smoke of authoritarianism. It reminds us, especially public servants ‘guided by the common good, attuned to the people’s needs...to come together, unite with like-minded forces so we are stronger’.”

So writes CALD Chair and Philippine Senator Francis ‘Kiko’ Pangilinan in his foreword for ***Breathing Democracy: A Playbook***, noting the timely release of the CALD publication in the midst of a pandemic and while many people around the world come under the ever-tightening grip of the state. Launched on 25 November, the book is actually a collection of stories and insights on the challenges faced by liberals in Southeast and East Asia democracies, and what they have tried, tested, and applied to overcome these.

CALD had wanted a book that would be like a roadmap to the main streets of liberal democracy, something that would show readers how to navigate even the mean, pockmarked streets of authoritarianism and the deceptively smooth pathways to populism. And so it turned to veteran Filipino journalists Marites Danguilan-Vitug and Criselda Yabes, who came up with ***Breathing Democracy***.

The book poses three basic questions: What’s the problem? Why should we care? What can we do? The answers, fittingly enough, do not come from far away; they are provided by all those who spoke and shared their thoughts and experiences at CALD gatherings, whether from the podium or on the sidelines, in meetings or in missives. Those who lost and won elections. Those who are hopeful about the decline of authoritarian rule. Those who are fighting external powers that want to clamp down on democracies and want to influence public opinion away from democracy. The young leaders who want to make a difference. Those in exile who are struggling painfully, from thousands of miles away, to return democracy to a country they love.

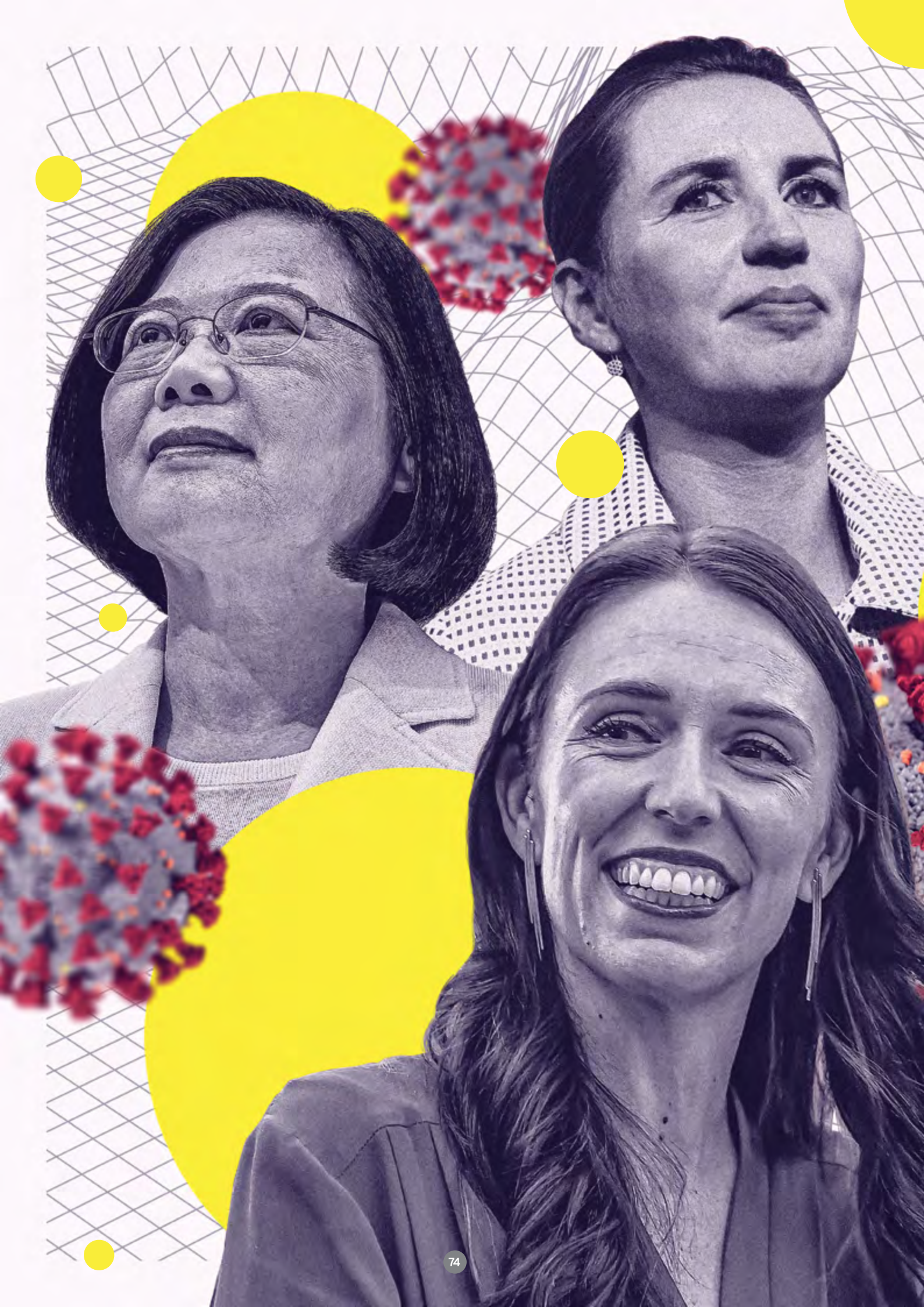
The book tells stories, too, of the victories and defeats of political parties; of women who are winning seats in government—but still not enough of them; of the highs and lows of democracies across countries; and the challenging information landscape and how to fight fake news, a weapon of mass distraction.

“This playbook is something that will offer a solution for everybody or even be any kind of guarantee of success,” said Abhisit Vejjajiva, former Prime Minister of Thailand and former CALD Chairperson, during the November online book launch. “I’m sure that this book would be valuable for liberals and democrats in the region to continue the fight.”



Scan the QR code for the interactive e-book





Women Leaders Face Up to the COVID-19 Challenge

AS THIS went to press in April 2021, COVID-19 was still spreading worldwide, with more than 138 million confirmed cases and 2.97 million deaths. Studies have shown, however, that countries led by women seem to have had fewer COVID-related deaths, a smaller number of days with confirmed deaths, and a lower peak in daily deaths. In the United States, research has further shown that states with female governors have had fewer COVID-related deaths than states with male governors.

Compared to those headed by men, it seems that the approaches of female-led governments to the crisis have been more effective in containing the spread of COVID-19. These approaches include not underestimating risks, focusing on preventative measures, prioritizing long-term social wellbeing over short-term economic considerations, and showing compassion and empathy to citizens.

Taiwan: From tragedy to triumph

"Leadership means inspiring unity, which was the real key to our success in combating COVID-19," Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen said during her Cornell Law Forum interview that was published in December 2020. But tragedy had preceded Taiwan's success. In 2003, Taiwan had ended up with the highest mortality rate in the world during the SARS outbreak; some 17 years later, Tsai was determined that her government would not "let that happen again".

Taiwan was the first nation to implement proactive measures against the novel coronavirus. President Tsai, with the help of Health Minister Chen Shih-Chung and Taiwan's public-health care professionals, started to deal with the virus early by closely monitoring passengers coming from Wuhan in December 2019. By January 2020, Taiwan had set up the Central Epidemic Command Centre (CECC) to handle prevention measures, such as travel restrictions and the establishment of quarantine protocols for high-risk travelers.

In her Cornell Law Forum interview, Tsai had noted that upon the confirmation of Taiwan's first COVID-19 case, her government had made it a point to have every patient's travel and contact history investigated properly. This was to help in the isolation and containment of

infected individuals to prevent mass community outbreaks. Private businesses and residential buildings were also required to initiate body-temperature monitoring and disinfecting steps. It helped as well that Taiwan's mask industry immediately responded to the call of 24-hour mass production and enhancement of the production line. With government support in the procurement of machines, the daily mask production increased from two million in January 2020 to 13 million just four months later.

As of mid-February 2021, Taiwan had recorded less than 1,000 COVID-19 cases and only nine deaths from the disease, in a country of 23 million. In an April 2020 *TIME* magazine essay, Tsai had said, *"Taiwan is no stranger to hardship, and our resilience stems from our willingness to unite to surmount even the toughest obstacles. This, above all else, is what I hope Taiwan can share with the world: the human capacity to overcome challenges together is limitless. Taiwan can help."*



New Zealand: 'Go hard, and go early'

Motivation experts Jacqueline and Milton Mayfield say there are three key things leaders must address to get their followers to give their best: direction-giving, meaning-making, and empathy. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's response to COVID-19 uses all three.

Aside from announcing the lockdown early, Ardern also quickly imposed self-isolation on people entering New Zealand and banned foreigners entirely. Her clarity and decisiveness saved New Zealand from being overrun by COVID-19 infections. As a result, New Zealand has had only 2,337 recorded COVID-19 cases as of mid-February 2021, with 26 deaths from the disease.

Ardern's government had taken an 'elimination strategy' to address COVID-19. In explaining the strategy, the New Zealand government said that it was not seeking to eradicate the disease, but only to have the confidence that it had "eliminated the chains of transmission in our community...and can effectively contain any future imported cases...." It translated this into what became an unofficial motto for New Zealand's fight against COVID-19: "Go hard, and go early."



Denmark: Public good over popularity

Considered to have waged one of Europe's most successful battles against the first wave of COVID-19 infections, Denmark is now fighting tooth and nail against a more vicious third wave of the virus. But even though there have been protests against her government's latest lockdown, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is holding steadfast on her decision to extend restrictions even beyond February 2021.

Denmark had already started vaccinating people in December 2020. But a faster-spreading variant of the virus was proving tougher to handle for the Scandinavian country of 5.8 million. Frederiksen told Parliament in January 2021: "The infection (rate) is decreasing, but the threat is clear. If we don't contain the pressure, we may risk an exponential increase in infections."

As the pandemic began spreading worldwide in early 2020, Denmark had been among the first countries to impose restrictions in an effort to contain the virus. By March 2020, all the schools and universities across the country were closed, large public gatherings banned, and air travel severely restricted. Frederiksen also established social-distancing measures to limit the spread of the virus. She balanced these by regularly holding short but to-the-point press conferences to reassure her citizens and organizing Web talks with children to assure them and help ease their fears. A month later, when the restrictions began to be eased, the move was matched quickly with ramped-up testing.

For sure, the ability of the country's free healthcare system to adapt readily to the demands of the crisis helped Denmark get through the first wave of infections. So has a massive virus-sequencing effort that is once again being marshalled to assess what ways would work best to address the latest wave. But it is also because of the nation's youngest ever prime minister, who has consistently chosen public good over her personal popularity.

The strict lockdown measures were not easy to bear. But when Ardern directed New Zealanders to "stay home to save lives", she simultaneously offered meaning and purpose to what they were being asked to do. And as the lockdown began to hurt the pockets of New Zealanders, Ardern, along with government ministers and public-service chief executives - save for those in healthcare — took 20-percent pay cuts.

"The cut in itself won't shift the government's overall fiscal position," Ardern said. "It is an acknowledgement that every person and organization have a part to play as we stamp out COVID-19 and save lives." In addition, the New Zealand government offered US\$23 billion economic packages that included wage subsidy, froze rents, boosted the winter energy payment and benefits, and mobilized the Student Volunteer Army into delivering groceries to citizens over 65 years of age.

Said Ardern: "I want to look back on this period and say that there are things that could have gotten worse because of COVID that we managed to actually make better: Our housing crisis, child poverty and equality, and environmental issues."

CALD Women's Caucus Chair Jayanthi Devi Balaguru once remarked that she dreams of a world where there is more women participation. "I believe that the way forward is for women to be in the decision-making position," she said. "They should be confident enough to face the challenges that are thrown in front of them."

The likes of Tsai, Ardern, and Fredricksen have already shown us that confidence - and the good that it can lead to.

Siripa Intavichain
DEMOCRAT PARTY OF THAILAND

We need to generate more opportunities and force undemocratic values out of the core current political landscape. Now more than ever, we need to participate and exercise our civil rights. We need to stand together and create regional solidarity for our generation and the next to come.

Jeremiah Tomas
LIBERAL PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES

As part of the new generation of Asian leaders, we believe that the youth of today have both the great honour and great responsibility to be the torch bearers of Liberalism and Democracy in the region. Challenging times are amongst us, and in order to succeed we must learn from the past, fight in the present, and plan for tomorrow — as one.

Mengbunrong Seng
CAMBODIA NATIONAL RESCUE PARTY

Society really needs the participation of young people and they must be active. Young people are the driving force for rapid social change. Wherever there is injustice, young people must dare to stand up. And one of the sectors that need the most youth participation is politics. Politics needs the voices of the youth. Most of our society now is being led by dictators; they are oppressing the people, destroying natural resources, indulging in corruption, disrespecting human rights, and threatening those in the youth movement. This is the time for the young people to continue to push back by embracing non-violence means for positive change. We need to make space for youth to lead in politics.

YOUTH ACTIVISM

Voices from CALD Youth

Naresh Subramaniam

SINGAPORE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Back when technology, automation, and travel were making massive advances, we would say, "The world has become a lot smaller." Right now, I think we are seeing a different kind of change. The advent of modern communication methods, news-gathering, and information-sharing has placed a very important responsibility in the hands of the youth: the power to affect your future the way you want it to. Youth voices and youth-led initiatives are louder than ever and have bigger impact. Topics supposedly more interesting to older people — such as governance, quality of life, and human rights — are being digested by much younger audiences. I feel that this knowledge is power and by responsibly using it there is a very strong opportunity for youths to improve the state of affairs in their own microcosm. Wield it right and make your fervent voice count.

Zhi Yi Ooi

PARTI GERAKAN RAKYAT MALAYSIA

The pandemic has forced us to make hard changes in our lives. But while some may need some time to adapt to democracy, I believe young people find it easier to adapt and that is where we need to take this opportunity. Since we will need to reset a major part of our lives, let's also do it with democracy. Let the power of the youth prevail.

More Than Ever, The State's Watching You

By James Gomez and Celito Arlegue

THE DIGITAL surveillance methods introduced to monitor, trace, and track populations in 2020 will deepen post-COVID-19. If privacy rights are not protected, state surveillance stands to regress democracy in Southeast Asia.

This was a key concern raised in Asia Centre's baseline study "COVID-19 and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Building Resilience, Fighting Authoritarianism" released on 9 December 2020, a day before the United Nations International Human Rights Day. The 54-page report, compiled from July to November 2020, examines the state of democracy and human rights in the region from 1 January to 30 November 2020.

This concern over surveillance stems from governments monitoring populations over four key crises, through two decades. Collectively, these crises — the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and followed by the 2001 September 11 U.S. Terrorist Attacks, 2002-2004 SARS Outbreak, and 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami — set in place a framework of state surveillance that is expected to be more intrusive and have a deep impact on privacy.

There is emerging evidence that youths, as they lead the charge for political reform around the region,


are being surveilled and later arrested to neutralize them politically. Digital surveillance introduced by the COVID-19 crisis contact tracing is expected to become a long-term practice in the region post-pandemic. Youths are also expected to be the political targets of surveillance moving forward.

Since the introduction of contact tracing in Singapore and Vietnam during the SARS outbreak of 2002-2004, governments in the region, using new and more efficient technologies, have been able to design and implement mass surveillance that pinpoint and track individuals. These days, in the midst of a global pandemic, contact- and movement-tracing mobile applications risk being used as a facade to track the movement of individuals and record private conversations, a set-up that may persist even as the COVID-19 scourge subsides. As the longitudinal study cautions, the lack of clearly defined terms and conditions for these digital surveillance applications risk the long-term surveillance of citizens and residents in Southeast Asia becoming the latest authoritarian residue.

Individuals are already feeling more and more distressed to voice their concerns and opinions in private spaces as the threat of being identified and prosecuted rises.

The government of Singapore, for instance, has become more reliant on its state surveillance and policing, which have encroached on the privacy rights of those in its border. Indeed, despite having the highest per-capita COVID-19 infection rate in Southeast Asia, Singapore has newfound success in repressing the rights of its citizens and residents under the guise of COVID-19 *preventative* measures. Its POFMA 'fake news' legislation, for one, has deterred the general public from speaking out, or risk fines up to US\$14,000 and/or a year in prison. Meantime, the amalgamation of its TraceTogether and SafeEntry applications, and wearable tracking devices for foreign workers, have left little room for anonymity.

Similarly, in Myanmar, the late introduction of the Saw Saw Shar application in September only expanded the reach of the government during a mass lockdown. The agencies in charge, COVID-19 Control and Emergency Response ICT, Ministry of Transport and Communication, and Ministry of Health and Sports, manage the data collected by the vague software. The application requires users to grant access to their GPS location, photos, media, files, and camera - even as users have noted the lack of updates on COVID-19 infections in the country. The absence of clearly

The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract illustration. It features several large, stylized eyes with orange and yellow irises and black pupils, set against a purple and blue background with concentric circles. Two beams of light from the eyes focus on a small black silhouette of a person walking. Another beam from a larger eye on the right focuses on a small black silhouette of a person standing. The overall theme is surveillance and digital tracking.

outlining how the data are managed or stored is an additional concern.

Indonesia's PeduliLindungi, the Philippines' StaySafe, Thailand's Thai Chana and Mor Chana, and Vietnam's BlueZone are amongst those applications that require the GPS location of users. Brunei's BruHealth and Laos's LaoKYC applications, despite not accessing GPS, or clearly stating their respective abilities, collect data on the location, proximity, and movement of users.

These apps often track the users' movement and note contact points between individuals to the minute. Moreover, they do not clearly outline how data are collected from users. Neither do they provide adequate information on the intervals in which data are captured. Yet to date, concerns regarding the possibility of these applications remaining active in the background have not been adequately addressed.

Less Vietnam, data of all applications are stored on government servers. Irrespective of the data stored on the users' device or government servers, users have yet to be informed of the use of their data as COVID-19 infections subside and vaccines are introduced.

Will the data be deleted, anonymized, or stored after COVID-19?

The odds are not in favour of what individuals may hope for, in the case of Thailand and Malaysia. The Thai government in June verified leaked documents, and even noted that contact-tracing data had been shared, without consent of the user, between various ministries including the Ministry of Defence. In Malaysia, after the Gerak Malaysia application was terminated, the data at hand were not deleted but rather transferred to the Ministry of Health. In these instances, it is a reality that governments may store or transfer the information of individuals, especially those politically exposed and persecuted, to access permanently.

These movement- and contact-tracing measures as the authoritarian residue following the pandemic risk becoming permanent as Southeast Asia enters 2021. Without abolishing these practices, politically active youth in particular risk becoming the most surveilled and curtailed generation of all time.

Dr. James Gomez is Regional Director of Asia Centre, a not-for-profit organization working to create human-rights impact in the region. Celito Arlegue is Executive Director of CALD. This opinion piece is adapted from Asia Centre's report "COVID-19 and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Building Resilience, Fighting Authoritarianism", released to mark the United Nations International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2020.

OPENING PANEL



YOUTH CREWMATES ACROSS REGIONS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER



VIRTUAL X AVATAR

CLOSING PANEL

BOOK LAUNCH



CHOOSE YOUR OUTFIT



13th CALD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ALDE
ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS AND
DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE

**'We Among Us' - ALDE
President concludes CALD
General Assembly**

Party President Hans van Baalen participated in the closing session of the
General Assembly of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD).

**Condemn the shutdown of
the systemic persecution of**

11/05/2020

RAPPLER

**[ANALYSIS] Surveillance to
deepen in Southeast Asia
post-COVID-19**

Panay

**Roxas City r
COVID-19 r**

ROXAS City - The Roxas City
international community

INQUIRER.NET

**Robredo quells claim liberals' unkept
promises gave rise to populist leaders**

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President Leni Robredo has refuted assertions
that it is the liberal and democratic worldview's unfulfilled promises that
gave rise to populist and even hardline right-wing leaderships today.

**Youth vote will b
2022 election**

風傳媒
THE STORM MEDIA

是民主價值在面對極權
in this important fight

受邀亞洲自由民主聯盟演說 蔡英文：台灣對抗假

ABS-CBN

**Robredo says leaders must 'listen
Pinoy's' struggles amid
and typhoon aftermath**

Report Launch

ASIA CENTRE

**2019 & Democracy in
East Asia:
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CALD
in the news

Recognized for
response
government in the province of Capiz was cited by the
for its coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response efforts.

LITIKO
e 'game-changer' in
ons - Pangilinan

MANILA BULLETIN
LATEST
National News
Pangilinan welcomes LP's leadership role in regional alliance
Opposition Senator Pangilinan, the incumbent president of the Liberal Party (LP), on Wednesday welcomed his party's leadership role in the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD).

SENATE
18th Cong
Pangilinan highlights faith in 'critical' youth at Asian Lib
assembly
With 4 million estimated new youth voters in 2022, Senator Francis "Isko" Pangilinan highlighted their game-changing role in the upcoming national elections.
At the 13th General Assembly of the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), the big chunk of our efforts is focused on encouraging the youth to vote. Four million more allies in the Senate so we can do something about alarming pieces of legislation like the Terrorism Law and the media franchise renewal.

GMA NEWS ONLINE
YOUR NEWS AUTHORITY
Robredo: Human rights violations in US even as democracy impact the

WIPPI INDEX
WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES
Webinar
**Women, Power & the Pandemic:
A Liberal Roundtable**



- Victoria Alonzo
- Angela Balaguer
- Emily Lau
- Janet Lim
- Janet Lim
- Janet Lim

資訊經驗，是民主對抗威權的最佳
權力之戰的最佳示範
against authoritarian forces

RAPPLER
DEMOCRACY & DISINFORMATION
What the world can learn from the 'Taiwan model' of disinformation

MANILA BULLETIN
Remain steadfast for democracy, human rights, freedom advocates told

POLITIKO
Liberal Party takes help
of Asian political

Power, Protests, and a Pandemic

IT WOULD turn out to be a year fraught with turmoil and tragedy, but for CALD and at least one of its member-parties, 2020 began on a positive note. Although a virus that would later be known as COVID-19 was then starting to spread in some countries, the government led by the Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan had acted fast and early on managed to put the virus under control there.

JAN
17

Not surprisingly, a CALD delegation witnessed firsthand the victory of DPP standard bearer Dr. Tsai Ing-wen at the 11 January Presidential elections and of many DPP candidates in the simultaneous legislative polls. **In a letter dated 17 January**, CALD congratulated President Tsai on her re-election, while also noting that the polls had been “a historic moment for the people of Taiwan as they showed the world that democracy is alive and that the power of the people can unify a nation and set it to greater heights”.

The CALD letter to Tsai also said, “Your landslide victory, which was marked by the most number of votes garnered by a presidential candidate in the history of Taiwan, inspired us in CALD to continue to promote freedom and to uphold the rule of law and human rights amidst threats to democracy.”

APR
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A **letter dated 1 April** meanwhile made its way to then CALD Chairperson Bi-Khim Hsiao, congratulating her on her appointment as Senior National Security Advisor to President Tsai. CALD also seized the chance to highlight in the letter that Taiwan had “a lot to offer to the international community” considering its continuing success in the fight against COVID-19. Said CALD: “(As) leaders around the world focus on how Taiwan handles the COVID-19 crisis, there would definitely be new and far-reaching spaces to explore international cooperation and mutual exchange of ideas and support.”

JUN
18

More than two months later, CALD would send another congratulatory message to Hsiao, this time for her appointment as Taiwan’s ambassador to the United States. “We are truly proud that a true liberal leader, who has effectively served and represented CALD over the years, is now Taiwan’s first woman representative to the U.S.,” said CALD in its **18 June letter**.

“The world is still reeling from the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and risks and uncertainties abound,” CALD also wrote. “We are comforted, however, that you will be assuming the ambassadorial post at a time when Taiwan is effectively containing the pandemic, and is moving forward to reach out and help the world do the same.”

AUG
18

Yet another DPP stalwart would be a recipient of a CALD missive. In a **letter dated 18 August**, CALD congratulated Chen Chi-mai and the DPP for “the landslide victory in the recently concluded Kaohsiung Mayoral By-election last 15 August”. Added CALD: “Indeed, it is uplifting to know that the legacy of good governance that the DPP started in Kaohsiung will carry on....We believe that Kaohsiung, with you at the helm, will set a good example for other local governments, not just in Taiwan, but also in the region, far beyond the next 2022 elections.”

Elsewhere, however, COVID-19 had been busy wreaking havoc. Cities and even entire countries were having lockdowns as infection and death rates kept climbing, causing economies to tumble down. Worse, it became apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic was being used either as an excuse or a shield by some governments to clamp down on their critics.

Just a little more than a month after a CALD delegation met with democracy and rights advocates and leaders in Hong Kong, for example, Hong Kong authorities arrested pro-democracy activists and supporters there, among them Next Media founder Jimmy Lai, Labour Party Vice Chairman Lee Cheuk-yan, and former Democratic Party Chairman Yeung Sum. By 1 March at least 7,419 people involved in the anti-Extradition Bill movement had been arrested.



In its **first statement of 2020**, CALD strongly condemned the spate of pro-democracy activists and supporters in Hong Kong. Dated **2 March**, the statement said in part: “These recent arrests are a further blow to Hong Kong administration’s deteriorating international reputation, especially since they came at a time when the government’s effectiveness in handling the COVID-19 epidemic is being put into serious question.” It also urged the Hong Kong government “to stop the arrests of pro-democracy activists and supporters, free the political detainees, and start functioning as the government of the people that respects the basic human rights to free speech, expression, and assembly”.



But the Hong Kong government had apparently barely begun its clamp-down on dissent. On **18 April**, CALD joined Liberal International, FNF and the ALDE Party in issuing a statement calling out Hong Kong authorities on the continuing siege on the opposition.

This was soon after the arrest of LI and CALD Individual Member Martin Lee and CALD Individual Member Chung-kai Sin on charges that they had participated in organizing at least three unlawful assemblies in 2019.

“All over the world, the pandemic is increasingly used by authoritarians and populists to further centralise political power, and in the process, attack the political opposition,” said the **joint statement**. “The Hong Kong administration appears to follow this authoritarian playbook, which further taints its already questionable reputation, both domestically and internationally, as a society governed by the rule of law.”

It continued, “In the wake of the ongoing health and political crises, LI, FNF, CALD, and ALDE Party implore the Hong Kong administration to be proactive and constructive in its approach, resist authoritarian influence, and start listening to the five demands of Hong Kong’s democracy movement.”

The joint statement also said, “The Hong Kong administration must, without delay, stop political persecution by dropping all the charges against those arrested in relation to the recent protests, immediately releasing those who are still in detention, and cease from committing further acts that intimidate, harass and threaten the political opposition.”



By **26 May**, CALD was issuing yet another **statement** on Hong Kong. In it, CALD expressed “extreme” alarm by China’s announcement to “unilaterally and arbitrarily enact national security legislation on Hong Kong”. It said it would be “the end of Hong Kong as we know it” should the proposal push through. On 30 June, however, the National Security Law took effect in Hong Kong, prompting a CALD statement condemning it “in strongest terms”. The **2 July statement** said, “The drafting and passage of the law, without the Hong Kong people’s participation, clearly undermines the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ and presents an alarming precedence on future state of affairs of the autonomous region.” It

also took note of the arrest of peaceful protesters just a few hours after the law came into effect; among those arrested was Legislative Councilor Andrew Wan of the Democratic Party.



But there would be more bad news from Hong Kong. A **CALD statement** dated **4 August** condemned the postponement of the Hong Kong legislative polls scheduled on 6 September 2020. The reason given by the Carrie Lam administration was because of a spike in COVID-19 cases. CALD pointed out, however, that other countries such as South Korea and Singapore had successfully conducted peaceful polls even amidst the pandemic. It also said that under Hong Kong law, an election can be delayed for only 14 days; the Lam administration had postponed the polls for a year.

CALD would issue three more statements on Hong Kong before 2020 ended. Two expressed alarm over more arrests involving democracy advocates, including opposition members in the Legislative Council. The 26 August round of arrests included those of Legco Members Lam Cheuk-ting and Ted Hui Chi-fung, both from the Democratic Party. Hui was also an active member of CALD Youth. On 1 November, Hong Kong authorities arrested more opposition activists and four legislators from the pan-democratic camp.



Said the **27 August CALD statement**: “We in CALD view these arrests as nothing but political harassment and intimidation...The questionable arrests reinforce claims that China has been reneging on its two-systems promise, undermining Hong Kong’s autonomy guaranteed under its Basic Law.”



CALD reiterated this view in its **1 November statement**. It added, “CALD strongly believes that political stability results from respecting the fundamental rights of everyone, including the right to petition for redress of grievances and the right to dissent. A society that restricts these rights due to the mistaken belief that stability flows from the absence of opposition is sowing the seeds for further political instability and societal fragmentation.”



Its **13 November statement** was its last on Hong Kong for 2020. Condemning China’s 11 November passage of a resolution denying Hong Kong lawmakers their legislative seats “for promoting Hong Kong independence and threatening national security”, the statement also said that the resolution’s imposition was the “death knell to Hong Kong’s autonomy”.

Indeed, four opposition lawmakers were disqualified immediately after the adoption of the resolution. This in turn led to the mass resignation of all remaining 15 pro-democracy members of Legco. Observed CALD in its statement: “With the expulsion and resignation of all opposition legislators in Hong Kong, the territory became just a shell of its former self. Rule of law, judicial independence, and civil rights, which used to be Hong Kong’s cherished principles, are now all subsumed under China’s all-encompassing control and power.”

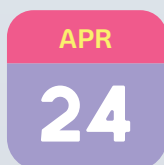


Hong Kong, however, was not the only place in Asia where freedoms were being curtailed as the pandemic swept through towns and cities. On **8 May**, CALD had issued a **statement**

expressing outrage over the shutdown of ABS-CBN, the largest broadcasting network in the Philippines. At the time, the Philippines had the second highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia; Metro Manila and some other areas in Luzon were still in lockdown.

The opposition Liberal Party, a founding CALD member-party, had noted that ABS-CBN provided not only information, but also comfort in the midst of the health crisis. In its statement CALD also pointed to the “systemic persecution of the media in the Philippines” and called for the Philippine government to “curb the virus, not the flow of information”.

“When information is silenced, truth is silenced,” it added. “This media shutdown is clearly a setback to the collective efforts, sacrifice, and unity of the country at a time when everyone, especially the leaders, should be focusing on beating the pandemic and protecting its people.”



CALD, however, kept watch even on countries that seemed to have avoided the worst of the virus and had low infection and death rates. Cambodia’s government, for instance, had CALD “outraged” by its “continued suppression” of the main opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party. In its **24 April statement**, CALD said, “At a time when the world is coming together to combat an invisible enemy in the form of the COVID-19 virus, the Cambodian government continues to fight the wrong enemy by arbitrarily arresting a total of 11 CNRP members since March 2020, and putting them in pre-trial detention in the notorious Prey Sar prison in Phnom Penh.”

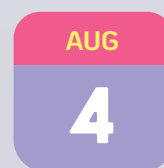
It then called on the Hun Sen government to stop attacking the political opposition, refrain from using the State of Emergency Law for political ends, and protect the Cambodian people from the COVID-19 pandemic.



But the situation in Cambodia would only get worse. July found CALD writing two letters to CNRP Vice President Mu Sochua. In its **21 July letter** to the exiled CNRP official, CALD expressed full support for a “campaign to end impunity and seek justice for the victims of state-backed killings in Cambodia”. Citing “an atmosphere of fear” pervading the country, it said, “Hun Sen has cultivated this environment over the years, which until now continued to thrive under the guise of democracy. We all know, however, that this democratic facade has masked the deaths of many Cambodians who fought hard for freedom and paid the ultimate price for it.”



The **24 July letter** to Mu Sochua, meanwhile, was actually sent by the CALD Women’s Caucus and expressed solidarity with and support for “the brave women spearheading the ‘Friday Women of Cambodia’ protest. The wives of men detained at the Prey Sar prison on politically motivated charges, the women would assemble every week to call on the Hun Sen government to uphold their husbands’ right to fair trials. CALD Women’s Caucus wrote: “Cambodian women are bearing the burden for the government’s misplaced priorities during the health crisis. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that they are now leading the pushback against the suppression of free speech and peaceful assembly, and the contempt for the rule of law.”



More than a week later, CALD was back to issuing another statement on Cambodia. Its **4 August statement** condemned the 31 July arrest and continuing detention of union leader

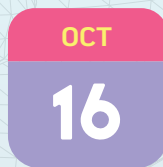
Rong Chhun “as a manifestation of Cambodia’s continuing weaponization of the law against human rights activists and government critics”. It also called on the Cambodian government “to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Rong Chhun and all prisoners of conscience”.

On 21 July, Rong Chhun had issued a statement on behalf of the Cambodian Confederation of Unions in which he cited land-related irregularities in a district in Tbong Khmum that had led farmers there to lose land. The Cambodian government charged Rong Chhun with “incitement to commit felony or cause social unrest”.



In a rare instance, the CALD Women’s Caucus issued a **statement on 7 September**, prompted by a violent dispersal of the protest led by the Friday Women of Cambodia. Among the casualties was Seng Chanthorn, wife of CNRP member Sun Thun; she was rushed to the hospital due to internal injuries. In its statement, the CALD Women’s Caucus called on the Hun Sen government “to fully respect the rights of Friday Women of Cambodia to peacefully assemble and express their legitimate grievances. Moreover, we demand that the members of the police forces involved in violent dispersals of peaceful protesters be charged and tried accordingly. We also appeal to the authorities to release without condition, and drop all the charges against, arrested opposition party members and other political detainees”.

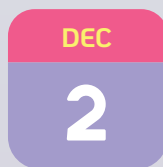
Meanwhile, growing political tension in Cambodia’s neighbour, Thailand, also had CALD worried. Like Cambodia, Thailand had managed to escape having a large number of COVID-19 cases. But the Prayut Chan-ocha government nevertheless remained unpopular especially among young people, many of whom joined peaceful protests calling for the premier’s resignation, the redrafting of the constitution, and the reform of key institutions, among other things.



When an incident involving some protesters and the royal motorcade resulted in Prayut issuing an emergency measure on 15 October - which in turn saw the arrest of more than 20 people, including student leaders — CALD promptly issued a statement. Dated **16 October, the statement** called for “sobriety” and for the police to exercise “maximum restraint in dealing with the protests”. At the same time, CALD said that “the other side must also refrain from using hate speech that tends to increase division in society.” It then called on the Thai government to “initiate inclusive dialogue to address the grievances of the people and pave the way to a peaceful resolution”.



The last two months of the year had CALD writing mostly letters of thanks. In its **letter dated 16 November** to CALD Individual Member Emily Lau, CALD thanked the Democratic Party of Hong Kong official for extending support to Filipinos hit by two typhoons that had come one after the other. CALD also told Lau, “This is truly an unprecedented time for the Philippines when we have to stay strong and united as a nation to work together and overcome these challenges. We are grateful that we are further strengthened by the solidarity and camaraderie of extraordinary individuals and kindred spirits who continue to extend extraordinary support when needed.”



CALD also sent separate **letters of thanks, all dated 2 December**, to the keynote speakers in some of the main events in the 13th CALD General Assembly. To Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, who spoke at Opening Panel of the GA on 23 November, CALD said,

“We are truly grateful that you took the time to share the effective and strategic decisions made by Taiwan, not only in terms of addressing the health crisis, but also in countering disinformation of influence operations during the 2020 Taiwan presidential elections and beyond.”

CALD also thanked in a separate letter German MP Andrew Ullmann, who delivered the keynote address at CALD’s 42nd Executive Meeting on 26 November. In the letter, CALD expressed appreciation for Ullmann’s “thoughts on how we can protect and promote scientific and evidence-based policy decision-making in the post-pandemic era”.

In its letter to Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo, who spoke at the GA’s Closing Panel on 27 November, CALD wrote, “Thank you for reminding us to focus on the tasks before us - to continue to find solutions to the pandemic, to continue to reach out to and help the people no matter what, to continue to work together with kindred spirits to uplift the level of discussion and public service, to continue to defend the truth amidst systematic efforts to propagate falsehoods, and to continue to listen to the people and strive for ‘authentic human connection’.”

CALD would close the year with its sole resolution for 2020. Fittingly enough, it chose to end 2020 the way it had begun: with optimism. CALD’s 2020 resolution, in fact, was in recognition of Taiwan’s success in mitigating and cushioning the impact of COVID-19, as well as in fighting the ‘infodemic’. And even as CALD in the resolution denounced “disinformation and the resurgence of populism as the twin scourges to today’s democracy”, it also reaffirmed its “belief and confidence in the principles of democracy, accountability and transparency, and good governance as the bases for handling major crises”.



CALD leaders condemn the use of lawfare

“WHEN THE protector becomes the predator, where will you run?”

So asked La Sallian Brother Armin Luistro as he opened the “International Forum on Lawfare: Weaponizing the Law Vs. Democratic Dissent” that was held 21 February at De La Salle University (DLSU) in Manila. Hosted by the university, which also organized it in cooperation with the Alternative Law Groups, Human Rights and People Empowerment Centre, and the Committee for the Freedom of Leila M. de Lima, the forum featured some members of the CALD family among its speakers.

The event gathered parliamentarians, political leaders, lawyers, academicians, human rights activists, and media practitioners to discuss the phenomenon of “lawfare” and share their experiences on how the law can be weaponized against oppositionists and dissidents. CALD Women’s Caucus Chairperson Jayanthi Devi Balaguru, and Cambodia National Rescue Party Vice President Mu Sochua

were among the international speakers invited to the forum.

Mu Sochua, Vice President of the CALD member party Cambodia National Rescue Party, narrated her own personal story and the struggles of her party members and those living with lawfare in Cambodia. She herself had been forced into exile, she said. Continued Mu Sochua: “When a prime minister is in leadership for 35 years, you can imagine what kind of dictator it can be...We can be in exile. But what about our people inside the country who continue to live in fear? We’re talking about indigenous peoples. We’re talking about education, about justice. We are talking about the welfare, the health of our children, our women. We are talking about Cambodia.”

She then praised Philippine Senator Leila de Lima for her bravery and determination. Indeed, many noted that de Lima, a staunch critic of Philippine President Rodrigo R. Duterte, is an example of how lawfare works. De Lima - who belongs

to the Liberal Party of the Philippines, another CALD member-party - has been detained since 2017 on trumped-up drug charges.

“What is more alarming is even relatively advanced democracies, such as the Philippines, as seen most prominently in the case of Senator Leila de Lima, are also drawn to the use of lawfare,” said Balaguru in her talk on the law as a political weapon in Singapore, China, and Saudi Arabia. “At a time when we are seeing a global decline of democracy and corresponding rise of authoritarianism, illiberalism and populism, lawfare has become the ‘new normal’.”

She also mentioned key persons from the opposition Singapore Democratic Party, yet another CALD member-party, who have been routinely subjected into repressive laws.

Balaguru and Mu Sochua would later be among the political leaders who participated in the press briefing for de Lima,



which led to the drafting of a statement on lawfare.

The forum featured as well simultaneous breakout sessions that focused on lawfare and its relations to the law practice; media; religion; economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; and the political opposition, with the last one moderated by CALD Executive Director Celito Arlegue.

Although unable to attend, rights activist Joshua Wong and former legislator Emily Lau from Hong Kong were able to give their solidarity messages to de Lima while sharing their own experiences on lawfare.

“Even if I can’t come to join the international forum, I still hope more activists, scholars, think tank leaders, or people in NGOs will have collaboration and interaction to strengthen Asian civil society development,” said Wong in his video message. “When our governments do not respect the voice of the people, we



must stand as one with solidarity, courage and determination.” He emphasized that people all over the world deserve democracy and freedom, and that these should not be taken for granted.

In her own video message, CALD Individual Member Lau said, “The senator’s courage and bravery are respected and admired not only by people in the Philippines, but by people in the international community. Her courage is an inspiration to us. I would like to work with the people of the Philippines and members of the international community to ensure an early release for the senator.

And of course, that you, people of the Philippines, must work hard to ensure that you really have the rule of law and that the authorities will not use lawfare as a weapon against you and your children.”

The forum’s closing message came from de Lima herself, but was read by her brother Vicente III. Said the lawmaker in her message: “As a long-standing defender of the Rule of Law, I value this gathering as being one decisive step towards fighting this pandemic. By the very act of uncovering its face, and giving a label to it, we have made it “silent” no more.”

TAIWAN'S TRUE TALE OF HOPE

IT IS a country that has not imposed a lockdown or adopted an emergency law since the COVID-19 pandemic started. Its businesses and schools remain open, and even sporting events continue, albeit with social distancing guidelines. This is the story of Taiwan - an inspiring story that needs to be told and retold in these rather difficult and uncertain times.

But Taiwan hasn't had it as easy as many think. "We are in a unique situation where we remain excluded

Tang summarized Taiwan's successful handling of COVID-19 into 3Fs: Fast, Fair and Fun. She recounted how, guided by its "collective memory" of the 2002-2004 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, Taiwan had responded immediately to reports of a possible epidemic by screening arrivals from China, isolating potential cases and holding daily press briefings. It later enlisted the support of the general public by encouraging the wearing of masks, the supply of which it distributed fairly and widely using technology and the national insurance card.

To address disinformation, and keep the Taiwanese people calm and collected during the pandemic, the government adopted as a mantra "humour over rumour". In practice, said Tang, this is essentially the use of meme guided by the "triple-two principle": it must be released within two hours, accompanied by two pictures, and captioned with 200 words or less.

This approach, combined with "transparency, technology and teamwork", accounts for Taiwan's compelling pandemic narrative, Tang said. Queried by the moderator, European Parliament Vice President Dita Charanzová, about the balance between technology (i.e. Bluetooth tracing apps) and data protection and privacy issues (the main bone of contention in Europe), Tang replied that Taiwan has not used any contact-tracing apps, but has relied on traditional contact-tracing interviews for information, and chatbot and telecom-collected signal strength to enforce the so-called "digital fence" on those subjected to mandatory quarantine.

"In Taiwan," said Tang, "transparency means making the government transparent to the people, not making the people transparent to the state, which is surveillance".

Tang also said that the country had partnered with American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) to launch the "Coronavirus Hackathon (Co-Hack)", which aims to boost the development of innovative solutions for controlling and stopping the COVID-19 pandemic. She said that this is Taiwan's contribution to finding a solution to the health crisis which can scale into the entire world.

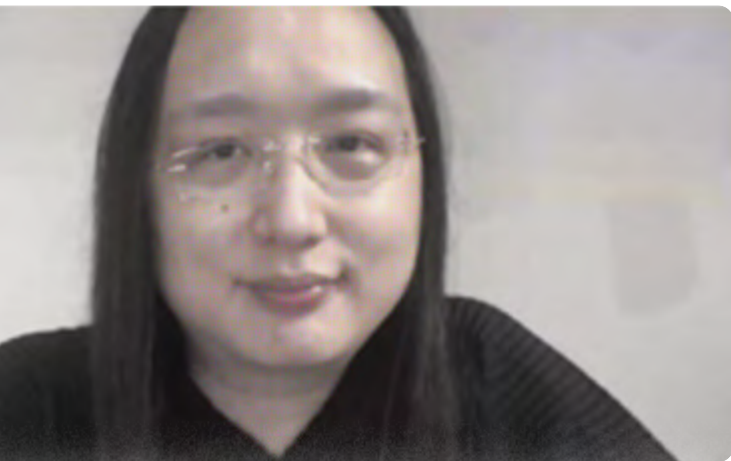
"It is possible to keep being a liberal democracy and operate under a way that respects all the essential freedoms, and not make a false dichotomy between anticoronavirus efforts and democracy," Tang pointed out. "The Taiwan model is something that all the liberal democracies can learn from."

from full and equal participation in the World Health Organization, which limits our ability to engage on pertinent healthcare matters at the global level," said CALD Chairperson Bi-khim Hsiao, who is also Senior Advisor to Taiwan's National Security Council. "We are also in a constant struggle to breakthrough from the political isolation imposed by Chinese pressures on other countries...."

The pandemic is changing all of that. More and more countries are becoming more vocal of their support to Taiwan because of its successful handling of the health crisis. "We at the international community have to set an example now," urged Hans van Baalen, President of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party. "Taiwan should be a part of the WHO and also of other organizations where it can fully participate in fighting this pandemic."

Van Baalen and Hsiao were among the speakers at the 5 May webinar initiated by ALDE Party in close coordination with CALD. Taiwan's success story took the spotlight at the event, with its Digital Minister Audrey Tang serving as keynote speaker.





Social innovation can help Sub-Saharan Africa

SOCIAL INNOVATION, defined as “people’s participation from all walks of life in order to benefit society”, can definitely help Sub-Saharan Africa in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. And it does not even have to be digital!

This was the unambiguous response of Taiwan’s Digital Minister Audrey Tang to the question, “Can Digital Social Innovation Work in Sub-Saharan Africa?” The question served as the focal point of the discussion in the 27 May webinar organized by the Africa Liberal Network (ALN), CALD, and Liberal International, in close cooperation with FNF Sub-Saharan Africa. The event was livestreamed on the Facebook pages of all the organizers.

“Social innovation — any new way for organizations in civil society to contribute to the public good — is essential for anything, not only to counter coronavirus,” Tang said. Drawing from Taiwan’s experience, she said that the digital level of bandwidth in all the social innovations they introduced was “very, very small”. She added, “You can power all the technology we used by WhatsApp, SMS, phone calls, or television level of bandwidth.”

The issue of applicability of digital social innovation to Sub-Saharan Africa was raised because the region’s Internet penetration and mobile phone use, while rapidly increasing, are still lower than global average. ALN President Gilbert Ouédraogo, citing the report of Alliance of Affordable Internet, said that this could be due to the fact that “African consumers are paying some of the highest rates in the

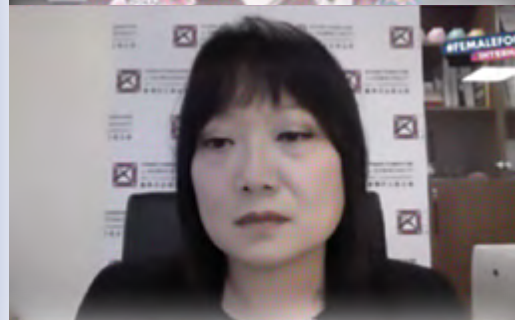
world for internet access as a proportion of income.”

In her intervention, LI President Hakima el Haite heralded Taiwan’s effective response to the pandemic, noting in particular the country’s successful contact-tracing and quarantine procedures that were undertaken without resorting to the declaration of a state of emergency or large-scale lockdowns. For this reason, Taiwan was able to avoid what she termed as the “second crisis”. In comparison, she said, “we have to deal with the health crisis while relaunching our economy. And this is such a mess because to relaunch the economy is more complicated than we imagine”.

Considering Taiwan’s success in containing the pandemic, FNF Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Director Jules Maaten, who also served as the webinar’s moderator, said that the country’s exclusion in the World Health Organization is “one of the enduring scandals of our time”. El Haite agreed, noting, “This is why Liberal International is a big defender of the participation... of the seat... of Taiwan within the WHO. We at the Liberal International believe that the help of any country is of value for all. We are also fighting against any political machinations which can deprive any member or human being of his right to health.”

The webinar ended with Tang pledging to be an “advocate” for Sub-Saharan Africa’s social innovation. She said that Taiwan’s willingness to extend assistance could be best seen in the launch of the website TaiwanCanHelp.Us, and its participation in conference briefings and bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly (WHA).

With Tang’s support, Sub-Saharan Africa’s embrace of digital social innovation could be sooner than expected.



Women leaders C.A.R.E.

“MANY OF the countries that have forged a successful response to COVID-19 are led by women,” said CALD Chairperson Bi-Khim Hsiao. “So the question is posed: Is this a coincidence, or are there common characteristics of women leaders that equipped them with the capabilities needed during such crisis situations?”

The responses of the speakers at the #FemaleForward webinar held on 29 May were unequivocal: There are indeed common characteristics of women leaders that make them effective in pandemic response. These traits can be aptly summarized by the acronym C.A.R.E. - Collaborative, Attuned, Resilient, and Empathetic.

Organized by FNF in close cooperation with CALD, the webinar had Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo delivering the keynote address. Among other things, she related how the Office of the Vice President had made much of the little resources and manpower it has through collaboration with civil society. “Working with the private sector was crucial,” she said. “Volunteers from everywhere formed the cornerstone of our success, and constant daily feedback paved the way for improvement.”

Robredo also said that listening to the feedback of the people on the ground was one of the reasons why her office was able to effectively provide free shuttle services to medical workers immediately after the shutdown of

public transportation was declared in mid-March as part of the government’s lockdown measures. “Our mantra, as always: Find the gaps and fill them,” Robredo said. “(Women leaders) are more attuned with how the public feels... so we are able to respond as swiftly as possible.”

Resiliency is another characteristic that is urgently needed in the time of the pandemic. Fortunately, Southeast and East Asian women are resilient. FNF Deputy Chair of the Executive Board Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger observed, “The region is prone to natural disasters where women are also the most vulnerable. But you endured and have always come up stronger.”

The strength of women also rests on their ability to empathize, which Ketty Chen, Vice President of the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) noted in her intervention: “It is the quality of female leaders, and also their way of dealing with multi-faceted culture and society even before the pandemic, that allow them to be more empathetic — their good abilities to collaborate, negotiate and discuss strategies and technologies to deal with this pandemic.”

Yet while all the speakers at the webinar were in agreement that the health crisis highlighted the abilities of women leaders, they all recognized as well how the pandemic has had negative effects on efforts to advance women’s rights

and gender equality. This was most evident in the presentations of Felippa Ananta of Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS) and Jayanthi Devi Balaguru of the International Network of Liberal Women (INLW) and the CALD Women’s Caucus.

Citing both global and national data, Ananta discussed how the lockdowns resulted in massive unemployment and its intertwined issues of unpaid care work in the household and domestic violence. Balaguru meanwhile focused on what UN Women has described as the “shadow pandemic” of growing violence against women. Balaguru lamented how “...this lockdown has actually shown us what kind of pattern women are put in and are expected out of the stereotyped cultural values or traditional values. (They are made) to actually face it as if they have no right for anything else, but it is like their destiny or their fate.”

The webinar, which was moderated by Arpee Santiago of the Working Group for ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, ended with the observation that while the silver lining in the pandemic is the spotlight it gives to effective women leaders, it has also highlighted the work that still needs to be done to advance women’s rights and gender equality.

WOMEN IN politics may be getting the recognition they deserve more often these days because of the stellar leadership some of them have displayed during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the going has been no less difficult for female politicians. For those in the CALD family, a webinar held on 4 June enabled them to kick back and relax for more than an hour or so as they shared experiences and exchanged views on how to thrive as women politicians, and especially during challenging times like the COVID-19 crisis.

“Women, Power, and the Pandemic: A Liberal Roundtable” was organized by Liberal International in close co-operation with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party, the Africa Liberal Network, CALD, and the International Federation of the Liberal Youth (IFLRY). Livestreamed on the Facebook pages of the organizers, the webinar featured a panel of committed women liberal leaders from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

“We must not only survive the coronavirus, but we must emerge renewed by women as a powerful face at the centre of recovery,” said LI President Hakime el Haite in her opening remarks. She said that women, who constitute the majority of frontline healthcare workers, should be given a seat in pandemic planning and

decision-making. Citing the successes of women political leaders, including Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen, el Haite called for gender-sensitive responses that would put the women’s perspective front and centre in the COVID-19 response.

After all, everyone agreed, female political leaders were performing better in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic compared to their male counterparts. The consensus was that the successful women leaders had one thing in common: compassion. For sure, though, the health crisis was putting up all sorts of challenges in their way. For instance, Emma Murphy of Fianna Fail (Ireland) found herself asking, “Should I be ashamed of campaigning during the pandemic?” Her answer to that self-query was that as a political leader, she was elected to do a job, and so she should continue doing it regardless of the circumstances.

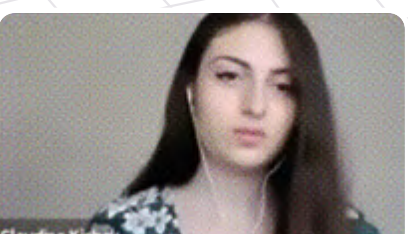
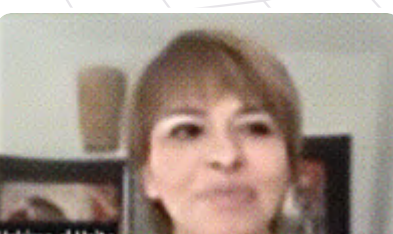
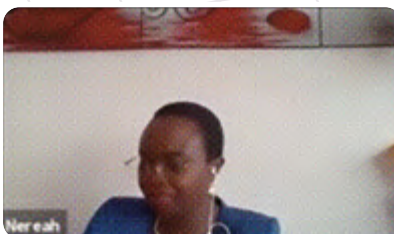
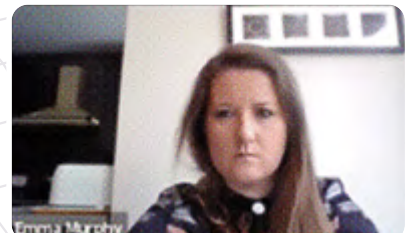
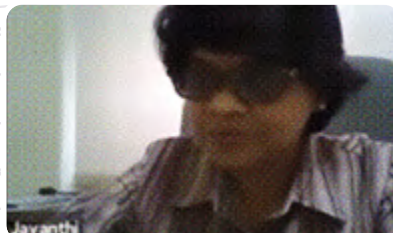
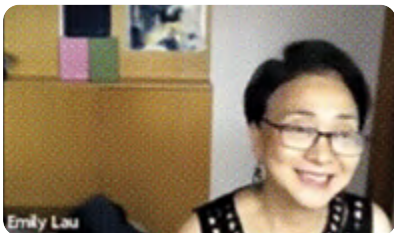
ALN’s Nereah Amondi Oketch meanwhile pointed out that the pandemic had brought three realizations about women to the fore. One was that women are at the frontlines both at work and at home. Another was that women dominate the informal sector. The third was that women leaders have done exceptionally well in pandemic response because of empathy, clearer communication, and innovation.

Indeed, while CALD Individual Member Emily Lau said that Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam may not be a good example of female leadership during the pandemic, she also said that Asia can really be proud of Taiwanese President Tsai’s leadership, as well as of her digital minister, Audrey Tang. At the same time, IFLRY’s Claudine Kishkek (Jordan) noted that these days social media could draw attention to women’s issues and also provide an “agency to make our voices heard”.

Both panelists and participants, however, agreed that on other fronts, particularly addressing domestic violence, much more is needed to be done.

“Though I say that women have long smashed the glass ceiling, alas, until today, the shadow of that glass ceiling remains... and it remains as a threat to persecute and silence women...,” said International Network of Liberal Women President and CALD Women’s Caucus Chair Jayanthi Devi Balaguru. “It continues to be an obstacle and a challenge to women who want their voices heard and who aspire for gender equality and elimination of discrimination in all forms in society. Thus, our work together continues.”

WOMEN POWER THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



Liberal leaders propose solutions to curb hate speech

POLITICS AND hate speech are intricately connected. Studies suggest that there is a correlation between the rise of hate speech and the level of political conflict. This can be best observed during electoral contests, when some unscrupulous political actors either consciously employ hate speech as an electoral mobilization tool, or turn a blind eye to its use when it serves their political interests. But the implications of hate speech go beyond elections. In the medium to long-term, hate speech damages the very foundations of free society: democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. More fundamentally, this phenomenon — which has been significantly amplified by digital technology in terms of scope, speed, and scale — has repercussions on the exercise of human rights and on building a diverse, tolerant, and civilized society.

On 9 October, CALD organized a panel in Asia Centre's online conference on "Hate Speech in Asia: Challenges and Solutions". Using the Zoom platform, the panelists from Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines discussed the impact of hate speech on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, at times using their own experiences.

Philippine Senator and CALD Chairperson Francis Pangilinan, for instance, was asked how he remains civil despite the constant barrage of hateful comments and verbal jabs he receives online and offline. Pangilinan and his political party, the Liberal Party of the Philippines, have been perennial targets of hate speech under the Duterte administration.

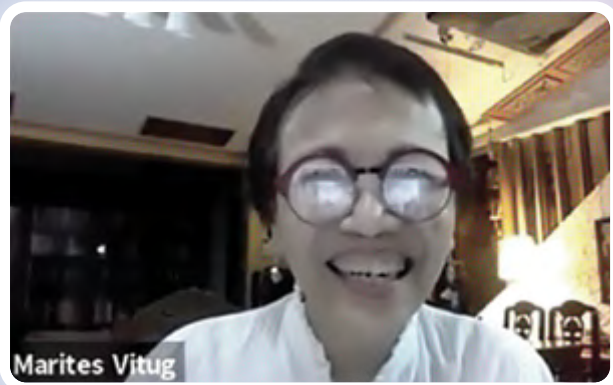
Pangilinan's reply: "We cannot become the dragon we seek to slay. And therefore, we have to be mindful that there are ways to confront [hate speech]... without succumbing to it."

The senator said that part of the political opposition's realization about hate speech was that "while our response was able to officially clarify the matter... the stain remains. And that has been the target of democracy's enemy — to stain the image of critics, of opposition forces, of dissent, so badly so as to render... critics or opposition figures irrelevant".

"I think it has to be recognized that hate speech is only a symptom of deeper problems, which is one of racial, religious, sexual or political bias, and intolerance," said former Thai Prime Minister and former CALD Chairperson Abhisit Vejjajiva. Recognizing that these issues maybe ingrained in society, he said that "there is no better way than to deal with these problems at the root, which means you need policies, you need measures that will address these problems in the first place".

Moreover, Khun Abhisit pointed out that while the political arena can be a fertile ground for hate speech, it may be hard to delineate the scope of the phenomenon in politics, especially in highly polarized societies. He said, "On issues like race, religion, or sex, it's probably easier to draw the line because... there are clear norms and standards now being established at international levels, and even at national levels, about what would constitute a racial, sexual, religious discrimination. The political difference is going to be a lot more difficult to try to define."

In Malaysia, however, race, ethnicity and religion remain to be unsettled and highly divisive issues. CALD Women's Caucus Chairperson Jayanthi Devi Balaguru explained why: "(Many) politicians or leaders try always to look the other way. No one wants to actually be there to take it on or run to any one's defence or make any statements in defence [of marginalized groups]."



Marites Vitug

Citing Malaysia's racial riots in the 1960s, which subsequently led to the passage of the dreaded Internal Security Act (ISA), Balaguru lamented the fact that government authorities themselves were the ones silencing the people through forceful means. She said, "Instead of being a champion for the public and listening to their pleas in order to serve them better, the leaders opted to shut out all forms of criticism in order to make sure that no forms of movement are sparked."



Abhisit Vejjajiva

Despite the differences in context, the Liberal leaders at the event agreed on the importance of curbing hate speech, and forwarded these proposals:

- Enact policies that address the root causes of hate speech in society - poverty, inequality, and marginalization;
- Formulate clear guidelines, both at the international and national levels, of what constitute hate speech and how to prevent it;
- Adopt a multi-stakeholder approach in the formulation and implementation of such guidelines;
- Ask for cooperation of social-media platforms and technology companies to be a key stakeholder in the process, considering the important role that they would play in the enforcement of the guidelines;
- Constitute a team that can monitor the kind of information that is floating around in social media, and can get the truth out with comparable scope, speed, and scale;
- Encourage victims and witnesses to report hate speech-related crimes, as hate speech remains a largely invisible entity because many victims do not report the cases or do not even understand that they are victims of hate speech;
- Continue to create safe spaces online and offline - free, honest, and critical conversations that engage social-media users politely by pointing out facts from opinion, sharing not only proof but also a mindset of openness and tolerance; and
- Instill the values of tolerance and civility in society through education, as discrimination and hate come largely from the lack of understanding and acceptance.



Francis Pangilinan

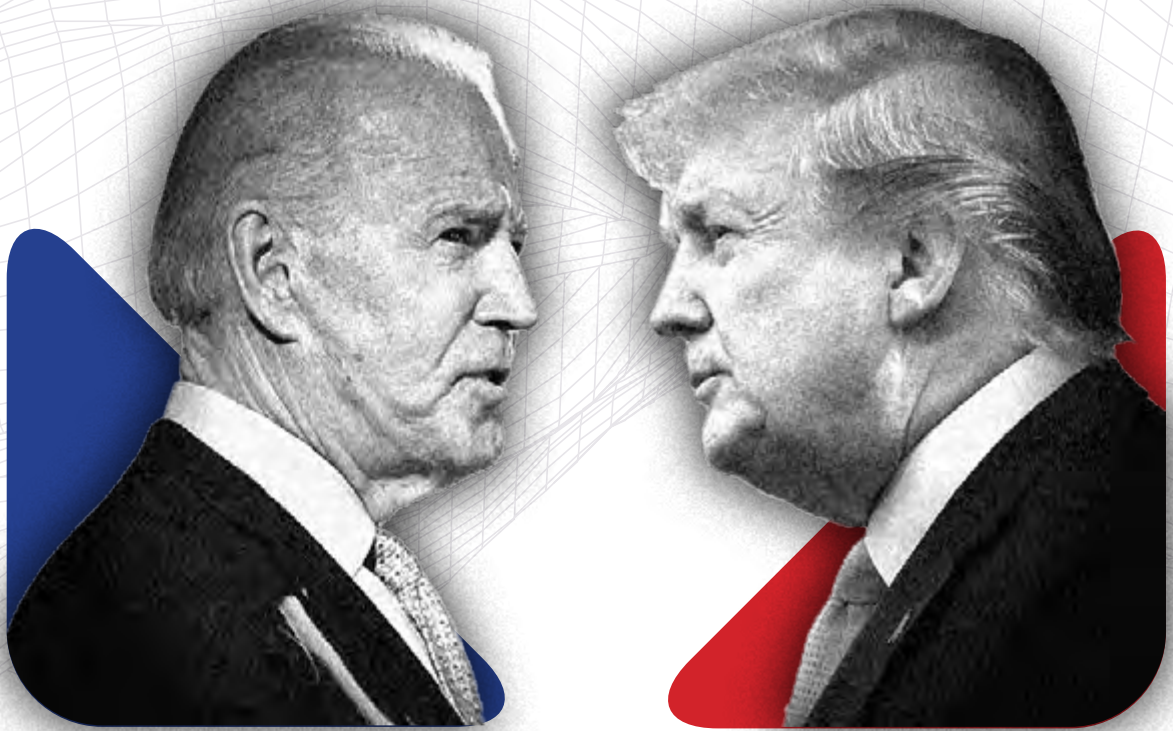
Pangilinan also asserted: "In the end, it's a concerted effort of the community to put hate speech in its place — the media, nongovernment organizations, public leaders, private sector leaders, the owners of these social media platforms - all should come together and hopefully move towards a common direction to address and put a check on hate speech."



Jayanthi Balaguru



Asia Centre



CALD PARTICIPATES IN U.S. ELECTIONS BRIEFING

CONSIDERING THE high stakes at the 2020 U.S. elections that was about to take place on 3 November, CALD made sure to be present on the online briefing about the polls. In fact, more than 20 representatives of CALD member-parties participated in the briefing on 23 October, just a little over a week before the elections.

GQR, a global consultancy on opinion research, strategy, and communications with experience in over 90 countries for the past four decades, facilitated the event, which revolved around this query: What do we know and what are the uncertainties that remain about the U.S. elections?

GQR Managing Partner and Washington veteran Dr. Jeremy Rosner, who conducted the briefing, described the 2020 U.S. elections as marked by the “unprecedented COVID campaign”. He said that in contrast to previous electoral contests that were dominated by the economy, wars, and scandals, the pandemic loomed large over the 3 November polls. Another characteristic that differentiated the 2020 elections from the previous ones was the massive shift to online campaigning, which had been accompanied by equally massive disinformation efforts.

Dr. Rosner then proceeded to identify the aspects of the elections that observers and analysts knew “for sure” would happen and those that were “very likely” and “fairly likely” to happen. He also noted that there were the bigger questions that would come after the elections. These included: When will the election outcome be clear? How does Trump exit, and what is the future direction of the GOP? If Democrats regain control, how will they play power politics? Is there any likelihood of stopping the steady partisan polarization in the United States?

The briefing also went into a discussion of the implications of a Biden victory for U.S. policy. Dr. Rosner argued that in terms of foreign policy, a Biden presidency would: return to more traditional cooperation; focus more on human rights and democracy; be more anti-Russian; and be still skeptical of China.

An open forum wrapped up the event, with the questions touching on U.S. electoral-college reform and Hong Kong policy, among others.



MONGOLIA: CIVIL WILL GREEN PARTY

A Reason to Celebrate

During the 2020 State Great Hural (parliamentary) election, the Civil Will Green Party allied with the Mongolian People's Revolution Party (MPRP) and Mongolian National Progressive Party (MNPP). The alliance acquired eight percent of the total vote and resulted in it placing third. As a result, we now have one seat in parliament and will be able to participate in the Presidential election on 9 June 2021.

Currently, CWGP ranks as fourth among all political parties in Mongolia.

In 2020, Taiwan amazed the international community twice. The first was with our democratic elections; the second was with our success in the fight against COVID-19.

Despite the global crisis that is the COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan has demonstrated to the international community that it is an "Island of Resilience". Quickly addressing the initial impacts of the crisis, Taiwan has wound up as one of the few countries in the world that did not lock down their cities or close down schools. With pandemic control measures in place, people in Taiwan were still able to play professional baseball, and hold major arts and cultural events. We also showed impressive national strength by

CAMBODIA: CAMBODIA NATIONAL RESCUE PARTY

A Call for Peaceful Action for Freedom and Democracy in Cambodia

The Cambodia National Rescue Party calls on the government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the people of Cambodia, the international community, and all other interested individuals and institutions to support democracy, justice, and human rights in the country at this crucial juncture in its history, in order to pave the way for national unity.

More specifically, the CNRP puts forward a three-point call for:

- The government of Mr. Hun Sen to respect the constitutional rights of all three CNRP leaders currently living abroad to be issued valid travel documents and to allow their safe return to Cambodia in order to answer criminal charges of "incitement to commit insurrection" and "incitement to commit treason".
- For the Supreme Council of the Magistracy to guarantee that all defendants receive a fair trial with all due process rights and international human-rights standards honoured. A trial in absentia will not adjudicate or vindicate the accused of these charges, which are politically motivated and very serious. If found guilty, the CNRP leaders will serve up to 30-year prison sentences.
- There is no need for the detention of any of the charged individuals, neither while they await trial nor when they are tried for their alleged misdeeds. Many cannot leave the country in any event, while we are trying to do the opposite: enter Cambodia to attend our trials.

TAIWAN: DEMOCRATIC PROGRESSIVE PARTY

Resilient and Always Ready

sending pandemic prevention supplies to countries around the globe.

Since March 2020, Taiwan's pandemic control performance has been covered in over 3,300 international media reports. This has helped the world to see Taiwan more clearly, and our international image has never been better. These achievements are a tribute to the unity and cooperation the people of Taiwan have shown. Our successful response to the challenges of the pandemic has proven our nation's viability during times of adversity and boosted public confidence. More importantly, we have united, because we are well aware of the importance of defending our homeland. So while 2020 was decidedly

difficult, it turned to be also very rewarding.

Having gotten the COVID-19 crisis under proper control, Taiwan became one of the few countries in the world that maintained positive economic growth. What has inspired us most is that our citizens and companies now have more confidence in Taiwan's economic development. The long-term capital outflow trend has been completely reversed.

For sure, Taiwan will play an active role in establishing new regional and international orders. We will forge alliances based on shared values and friendly ties throughout the international community, and continue to enhance partnerships

with like-minded and friendly nations. We will also participate more actively in multilateral cooperation and dialogues. Upholding belief in peace and goals of economic development, we want to be an advocate for the forces of good, and share our progressive and good faith values with the whole world.

Taiwan has been deemed a democratic success story, a reliable partner, and a force for good in the world by the international community. Let's all join our hands and keep in step together. If there's a path, let's follow it, singing along the way. If there's no path, let's ford the stream, scale the hill, and keep moving towards the light.



This call for action takes place against a backdrop of unprecedented actions by the government, including but reaching far beyond the highly questionable trial:

- The unconstitutional dissolution of CNRP prior to the 2018 national elections, thus paving the way for the ruling Cambodian People's Party to secure all 125 seats in the National Assembly.
- The passage of a series of laws and amendments that clamp down on Cambodians' rights to free expression, assembly and association.
- Arbitrary arrests of CNRP members and supporters and union members, youth, and environmental activists.

CNRP also urges the international community to support the return of three of its leaders, to insist that the trial proceeds in accordance with accepted international human rights and other standards, and to monitor the proceedings.

The CNRP is confident that a fair and open trial will result in acquittal of the accused and a victory for democracy, justice, and human rights, and that such results will constitute a final step towards national unity in accordance with the principles of the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements.



MALAYSIA: PARTI GERAKAN RAKYAT MALAYSIA

People and Nation First

The 2020 Malaysian political crisis — commonly known as the ‘Sheraton Move’ — is an ongoing political crisis in Malaysia that has led to the appointment of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as the 8th Prime Minister of Malaysia. It has also witnessed the ousting of the coalition government of Pakatan Harapan that had ruled the nation for 22 months following its unprecedented victory in the 2018 Malaysian General Election.

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia decided to support the leadership of Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin after “looking at the big picture” with regards to the nation on 15 May 2020. The party leadership believes that, in the struggle against the pandemic, the country has also faced a severe economic blow. Therefore, nothing is more important than economic stability and preventing negative repercussions on the public. In addition, there are political conflicts between the ruling government and opposition. This does not bring any benefit to the people. As a professional and responsible party towards people and the nation, Gerakan always prioritizes the interests of the people and the country.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Malaysia, Gerakan has launched several campaigns to battle the pandemic’s impact:

- Campaign “Satu HatiLawan COVID-19”, to give the needy and frontliners food and medical supplies (Mask/Sanitizer/Personal Protective Equipment or PPE);
- #BforB (Business for Business), a free business advisory platform to assist entrepreneurs to re-strategize and transform their business plan;
- Campaign “Gerakan Prihatin Doakan Malaysia”, to pray for our nation;
- Forum “Sambutan 50 Tahun Rukun Negara” in conjunction with Malaysia Day, to promote unity of all races in Malaysia; and
- Campaign “Gerakan Prihatin”, to help targeted groups who have been affected by pandemic COVID-19.

Gerakan has also been busy with other matters. With great joy and pleasure, Gerakan officially welcomed YB Sivasubramaniam, Member of the Perak Legislative Assembly for Buntong, as a party member on 26 June 2020 at Wisma Gerakan, Perak. YB Sivasubramaniam left the Democratic Action Party in March after being with them since 1997, or for nearly 23 years.

YB Sivasubramaniam said that he saw Gerakan as one big family and not a race-centred party, and as a party grounded in intellectual leadership. He added that his commitment to the people of Buntong is strong and reaffirmed his undivided support to the Menteri Besar of Perak and Tan Sri Muhyiddin’s government.

In July 2020, Gerakan Penang introduced its constituency spokesperson. On 5 August, Gerakan introduced the 5E platform or the five important points of focus involving the interest of the country and its peoples: Education, Environment, Economy, Employment, and Social Equality.

On 1 September 2020, the Gerakan Talk Show (GTS) was launched. The show airs live on the GTS Facebook fans page (<https://www.facebook.com/GerakanTalkShow>) Tuesdays, every two weeks, from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. It focuses on important issues in society, politics, economy, and education, among others.

Gerakan prays and hopes that 2021 will bring great fortunes for Malaysia, our beloved country, and the rest of the world.



PHILIPPINES: LIBERAL PARTY

Working Through the COVID-19 crisis

It is a truth universally acknowledged that 2020 has been an unbelievable year. With the global political landscape at a critical juncture, the last thing we all needed was a pandemic falling right into our laps and driving everything to a standstill.

But the work continues— from our homes, through our screens, in Zoom meetings and near-endless correspondence with friends and colleagues, as we collectively strive to keep up with the demands of nation-building and keeping democracy alive.

Pandemic response

This year, LP officials in the legislature focused on passing laws that aimed to mitigate the pandemic's effects on the people and the economy. Crucial to this was a stimulus plan authored and advocated by LP Representative Stella Quimbo, who leads the fight in Congress as it continues to deliberate on the nation's economic future.

Philippine Vice President and LP Chairperson Leni Robredo also spearheaded various pandemic and disaster responses, despite a very limited budget allocation for the Office of the Vice President. Her staff managed to pull together resources from the private sector and individual donors, and to gather volunteers to distribute relief goods to heavily affected areas in the country - especially in far-flung areas, which were hit not only by COVID's economic impact, but also by consecutive typhoons. During the early days of lockdown, she worked closely with local enterprises in producing protective equipment for medical frontliners, providing shuttle services and putting up dorms for frontliners, and setting up online platforms for community markets. Her team also worked closely with experts to craft interventions that will make the

shift to digital learning easier for educators, students, and their parents.

Defending freedoms

This year, at the height of the pandemic, the Duterte administration continued its crackdown on press freedom by denying the franchise renewal of ABS-CBN, the country's largest broadcasting network. LP officials denounced the decision of the House of Representatives, where the LP-led minority fought for the station's franchise renewal for over a year. Thousands took to the streets in protest; LP members and leaders alike joined the nation in defending press freedom and demanding ABS-CBN's return on air.

Under the guise of an anti-terrorism campaign, this administration also enacted the Anti-Terrorism Law. LP leaders in Congress fronted the widespread opposition to this bill, whose vaguely-worded definitions of "terrorism" and "terrorist" threaten the people's freedom to speak up, criticize government, and participate in democratic discourse especially amidst the Duterte regime's growing list of corrupt and unjust policies and practices. Liberals continue to work with its members and friends in arguing against the law's merit through various appeals filed with the Supreme Court.

LP remains vigilant about the furthering of this administration's charter-change agenda. The Duterte government's intentions are clear: To undermine the Constitution, cancel the upcoming elections, and consolidate and redistribute political power among the regime's allies.

And while indeed the Liberal creed is to protect and defend the people's rights and freedoms - in this instance, the nation's right to elect its leaders - the fight is also a little more personal to LP: The 1987 Constitution is a hard-won freedom born of the sacrifices of those who fought the

Marcos dictatorship, many of whom were Liberals. The Party has held the line on this issue since its inception in 2018, and is opposing it through rigorous legislative efforts and grassroots organizing.

Community organizing and chapter mobilization

A huge part of LP's work in 2020 went into community organizing and focused on helping Filipinos cope with the pandemic and the several natural disasters that struck the country one after another.

The Party's chapters were at the helm of all relief operations and donation drives mobilized in response to the Taal Volcano eruption, the COVID-19 lockdowns, and the three major typhoons that damaged large areas of Luzon and Visayas in the later parts of the year.

2021 and beyond

LP celebrated its 75th founding anniversary on 19 January 2021. The planned year-long celebration hopes to build on 2020's many triumphs and lessons as the country gears itself up for the 2022 presidential elections. Among its initiatives scheduled to launch within 2021 are a podcast where issues relating to liberalism and democracy can be discussed; a book of liberal speeches and a primer on liberalism; outreach programmes and creative resistance projects spearheaded by its chapters; and a Filipino translation of the Turkish CHP's *Book of Radical Love*— a timely publication aimed to penetrate the thick veil of enmity and online hostility that has taken hold of social-media spaces in the country.

The fight for the soul of the free Filipino continues; LP perseveres and forges on. *Tuloy lang. Padayon.*



SINGAPORE: SINGAPORE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Politics of POFMA

The year 2020 was the pandemic year. Yet, Parliament was dissolved on 23 June—a mere seven days before Nomination Day on 30 June and the polls themselves on 10 July. As usual, the dice were loaded and the odds heavily stacked against the opposition. This time around, two major hurdles were in our way.

Having to run in an election in the middle of a pandemic lockdown was no mean task. Much of the preparations we had readied in the pre-COVID-19 days were either unusable or had become irrelevant. For instance, most of our plans for events and walkabouts had to be tossed out of the window. Social-distancing guidelines made it almost impossible for candidates to meet the constituents. Citizens who broke social-distancing rules were fined up to S\$300 – even though candidates from the ruling party did so with impunity.

Facing such physical restraints, the Singapore Democratic Party scrambled to produce videos and other online contents for the campaign. Given the constraints, the short order, and limitation of resources, we would like to think we did a pretty good job. It was nevertheless dwarfed by the ruling party's machinery, which included the entire mainstream media: TV, radio, newspapers, both online and offline.

Unsurprisingly, a politico-legal weapon that the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) had been honing for over a year was put to use. The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) was passed in 2019 with the expressed purpose of protecting citizens from online fake news. But the real intent was anything but that.

During the nine-day campaign leading up to Polling Day, one of SDP's messages to voters was to "say NO to a 10 million population". It was not a new message. We had used it for several years since a former chief planner of the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore, Liu Thai Ker, broached the idea in 2014. More recently, in 2019, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat in a dialogue alluded to what Liu had said. During the campaign, however, the government claimed that DPM Heng neither endorsed Liu's idea nor did the government ever plan for a 10 million population. Accordingly, the Ministry served us with a Correction Direction under POFMA.

As an immediate consequence, we had to insert into the top of our "offending" message a statement dictated by the government that our message was false. The implication thereafter was our inability to use any messaging that contains or alludes to the 10 million population issue. To say that a wrench was thrown into our works is to put it mildly. While it is doubtful that any of our ardent supporters would be negatively affected by the POFMA, it is worrying to think how uninitiated voters might have viewed the episode and whether it had affected their votes.

What was even more insidious was that several private citizens were also POFMA'ed just for sharing our message on their Facebook pages. This struck fear in voters. Our head of communications, John Tan, was able to contact one of these citizens to find out more details about her case. She was so frightened she would not divulge anything. Such is the clout of an authoritarian state.

In a separate incident, SDP Candidate Prof. Paul Tambyah in an interview criticized the ministerial committee that handled the COVID-19 situation. He said that the committee was managing with scant consultation with the public health community. Five organizational and media platforms were POFMA'ed for carrying news about the interview or for posting the video containing the interview. Clearly, the POFMA is yet another tool for the ruling party to distract people's attention from real campaign issues that did not put it in a good light.

PAP returned to power with 83 seats out of 93 (compared to 83 out of 89 in 2015). Although SDP did not win a seat, its Chairman and Secretary General fought a fabulous fight. Dr. Tambyah netted 46.3 percent of the votes and Dr. Chee Soon Juan had 45.2 percent.

For many of us who had hoped to see a change through the Poll, 2020 wasn't the year. As the cacophony of the General Election died down, our world settled back into its usual authoritarian mire. Even though Prof. Tambyah is one of fewer than 100 infectious disease specialists in Singapore and the President-Elect of the International Society of Infectious Diseases (ISID), he has little chance of serving in any of the government-controlled pandemic committees. SDP Vice Chairman John Tan is still unable to contest in an election because of a statement he had made that was critical of the judiciary.

SPEAKERS & SESSION CHAIRS

CALD TAIWAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

Michael Cole
Editor-in-chief, Taiwan
Sentinel
Senior Fellow, Global
Taiwan Institute

Yen-jong Lee
Spokesperson,
Democratic Progressive
Party (DPP) of Taiwan

Ahai Lua
Tzu Chi Buddhist
University, Hualien

Andrea Yang
Director, Department of
Press and Information
Democratic Progressive
Party (DPP) of Taiwan

CALD EXECUTIVE MISSION TO HONG KONG

Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung
Legislative Council Member,
Labour Party

Cyd Ho Sau-lan
Former Legislative Council
Member,
Labour Party

Sin Chung-kai
CALD Individual Member
and District Council Chair,
Democratic Party

Eric Lai Yan-ho
Convenor, Civil and
Human Rights Front

Dennis Kwok Wing-hang
Legislative Council Member,
Civic Party

Emily Lau
Former Member of Hong
Kong Legislative Council
CALD Individual Member

Martin Lee
Founding Chairperson,
Democratic Party
of Hong Kong

WHEN JUSTICE BECOMES OUT OF LEAGUE: ASIA IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Emily Lau
Former Member of Hong
Kong Legislative Council
CALD Individual Member

Philip Sawali
Chief of Staff Office of
Senator Leila de Lima

Jayanthi Devi Balaguru
Chairperson, CALD Women's
Caucus
Parti Gerakan
Rakyat Malaysia

Martin Lee
Founding Chairperson,
Democratic Party
of Hong Kong

Mu Sochua
Vice President,
Cambodia National
Rescue Party

THE PANDEMIC DILEMMA: RECESSION OR CONTAGION?

Abhisit Vejjajiva
Former Prime Minister,
Kingdom of Thailand
Former Leader, Democrat
Party Thailand
Former Chairperson, CALD

Abhir Al-Sahlani
Member of European
Parliament,
Sweden

Cho Jung-hoon
Member of the National
Assembly,
South Korea

Emily Lau
Former Member of Hong
Kong Legislative Council
CALD Individual Member

Karl-Heinz Paqué
Chairman, Friedrich
Naumann
Foundation for Freedom,
Germany
Vice President, Liberal
International

COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE DEMOCRACY IN ASIA

Abhisit Vejjajiva
Former Prime Minister,
Kingdom of Thailand
Former Leader, Democrat
Party Thailand
Former Chairperson, CALD

Florencio "Butch" Abad
Former Minister of
Budget and Management,
Philippines
Former Chairperson, CALD

Karl-Heinz Paqué
Chairman, Friedrich
Naumann
Foundation for Freedom,
Germany
Vice President, Liberal
International

Marites Vitug
Editor-at-Large, Rappler

Mortiz Kleine-Brockhoff
Regional Director, Southeast
and East Asia Office
Friedrich Naumann
Foundation for Freedom

IS HONG KONG'S PRESENT ASIA'S FUTURE?

Cherie Wong
Executive Director
Alliance Canada Hong Kong

Emily Lau
Former Member of Hong
Kong Legislative Council
CALD Individual Member

**Francis Gerald "Blue"
Abaya**
Secretary General, CALD
Congressman, Republic
of the Philippines

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan
Chairperson, CALD
Senator, Republic of the
Philippines
President, Liberal Party
of the Philippines

Kelly Chen
Vice President
Taiwan Foundation
for Democracy

Manpreet Singh Anand
Regional Director, Asia-
Pacific
National Democratic
Institute, USA
Former Deputy Assistant
Secretary of State,
Obama Administration

Marites Vitug
Editor-at-Large, Rappler

Richard Heydarian
Columnist, Philippine Daily
Inquirer
Political Analyst,
GMA Network

THE 2020 US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: WILL IT MATTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA?

David Timberman
Director for Asia Programs
Freedom House

**Francis Gerald "Blue"
Abaya**
Secretary General, CALD
Congressman, Republic
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Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan
Chairperson, CALD
Senator, Republic of the
Philippines
President, Liberal Party
of the Philippines

James Gomez
Regional Director
Asia Centre

SPEAKERS & SESSION CHAIRS

Manpreet Singh Anand
Regional Director, Asia-Pacific
National Democratic Institute, USA
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Obama Administration

Maria Leonor "Leni" Gerona Robredo
Vice President, Republic of the Philippines

Marites Vitug
Editor-at-Large, Rappler

Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff
Regional Director, Southeast and East Asia Office
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

WHY YOU-TH MATTER: LIBERALISM IN THE AGE OF COVID-19: A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Abhisit Vejjajiva
Former Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand
Former Leader, Democrat Party Thailand
Former Chairperson, CALD

Elroy Rendor
Executive Director
Center for Liberalism and Democracy, Philippines

Jeremiah Tomas
Secretary-General, CALD Youth
Head of International Affairs Committee, Liberal Youth

Issara Sereewatthanawaut
Member of Parliament
Democrat Party, Thailand

Naresh Subramaniam
Facilitator, Youth Arm
Singapore Democratic Party

Ooi Zhi Yi
Director, Sedar Institute
Parti Rakyat Gerakan Malaysia

Siripa Nan Intavichein
CALD Youth Chairperson

MIND MATTERS: THE STRONGMAN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

Alyannah Lagasca
National Secretary-General, Youth for Mental Health Coalition
Vice President, 12th National Youth Parliament

Amornthep Sachamuneewongse
Founder & CEO, Sati App
Outgoing Curator, Global Shaper Bangkok

Chel Diokno
Human Rights Advocate
Founding Dean, De La Salle University - College of Law
Chairman, Free Legal Assistance Group

Francis Gerald "Blue" Abaya
Secretary General, CALD
Congressman, Republic of the Philippines

Jeremiah Tomas
Secretary-General, CALD Youth
Head of International Affairs Committee, Liberal Youth

Joefrrey Cruzada
Head, Mental Health Information System
National Center for Mental Health

Meryl Hilda A. Jalani
National President, Millennials PH
COO, Impactville
Chief of Staff, I am MAD (Making a Difference) Inc

Min Cheong
General Election 2020
Candidate, Holland-Bukit Timah GRC
Singapore Democratic Party

Therese "Gang" Baduy-Capali
Lead Trauma Therapist, Project: Steady
Executive Director, RockEd Philippines

REIMAGINING SMART CITIES: CURRENT CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Abdullah Azwar Anas
Regent of Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia

Christian Taaks
Head, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Korea Office

Dae Yeon Cho
Chief Director/Advisor, Smart City National Strategic Program
KOREAN Smart Cities Special Committee
Korea Agency for Infrastructure Technology Advancement (KAIA)

Francis Gerald "Blue" Abaya
Secretary General, CALD
Congressman, Republic of the Philippines

Paolo Zamora
Program Manager
CALD

Ronnie Dadivas
Mayor of Roxas City, Philippines

Yi-Chun Lo, MD
Deputy Director-General
Taiwan Centers for Disease Control

OPENING PANEL OF THE 13TH CALD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Emily Lau
Former Member of Hong Kong Legislative Council
CALD Individual Member

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan
Chairperson, CALD
Senator, Republic of the Philippines
President, Liberal Party of the Philippines

Tsai Ing-wen
President, Taiwan
Chairperson, Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Moritz Kleine-Brockhoff
Regional Director, Southeast and East Asia Office
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Mu Sochua
Vice President, Cambodia National Rescue Party

Paul Ananth Tambyah
Chairperson
Singapore Democratic Party

Pedro Urruchurtu
Vice President, Liberal Network for Latin America
Coordinator for International Affairs, Vente Political Movement, Venezuela

YOUTH CREWMATES ACROSS REGIONS: EXPOSING THE POPULISTS AND RADICAL NATIONALISTS AS IMPOSTORS

Cherie Wong
Executive Director
Alliance Canada Hong Kong

Gijs Houben
International Officer
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)

Jeremiah Tomas
Secretary-General, CALD Youth
Head of International Affairs Committee, Liberal Youth

Jobelle Domingo
Program Director
Liberal Youth of the Philippines

Min Cheong
General Election 2020
Candidate
Singapore Democratic Party

Ooi Zhi Yi
Director, Sedar Institute
Parti Rakyat Gerakan Malaysia

Peifen Hsieh

Deputy Director, Department of International Affairs
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Samady Ou

Youth Leader
Cambodia National Rescue Party - Los Angeles Chapter

Siripa Nan Intavichein

CALD Youth Chairperson

Yara Asmar

Regional Strategy Manager
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
Regional Office For Middle East and North Africa (FNF MENA)

BOOK LAUNCH OF "BREATHING DEMOCRACY: A PLAYBOOK"**Abhisit Vejjajiva**

Former Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand
Former Leader, Democrat Party Thailand
Former Chairperson, CALD

Criselda Yabes

Co-writer, Breathing Democracy: A Playbook

Jayanthi Devi Balaguru

Chairperson, CALD Women's Caucus
Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia

Marites Vitug

Co-writer, Breathing Democracy: A Playbook
Editor-at-Large, Rappler, Philippines

42ND CALD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**Andrew Ullman**

Member of Parliament, Germany Free Democratic Party

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan

Chairperson, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
Senator, Republic of the Philippines
President, Liberal Party of the Philippines

CLOSING PANEL OF THE 13TH CALD GENERAL ASSEMBLY**Emil Kirjas**

Vice President and Former Secretary General, Liberal International

Florencio "Butch" Abad

Former Minister of Budget and Management, Philippines
Former Chairperson, CALD

Francis Gerald "Blue" Abaya

Secretary General, CALD
Congressman, Republic of the Philippines
Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo
President, Africa Liberal Network

Hans van Baalen

President, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party

Irine Yusiana Roba Putri

Member of Parliament, Indonesia
Indonesian Party of Struggle

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan

Chairperson, CALD
Senator, Republic of the Philippines
President, Liberal Party of the Philippines

Gerry Bulatao

CLD Chairperson

John Nery

Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippines

Noel Bernardo

Doctor of the Barrios of Batanes

Stella Quimbo

Marikina Congresswoman

Wolfgang Heinze

FNF Country Director

KAYA PALA! (IT CAN BE DONE!): HOW TAIWAN CONTAINED THE TWIN PANDEMIC OF COVID-19 AND DISINFORMATION**Audrey Tang**

Taiwan Digital Minister

Camile Diola

PhilStarcom Editor-in-Chief



CONTACT

67 Setsiri Road,
Samsannai Phayathai,
Bangkok 10400, Thailand

T +66 2 0 2270 0036
F +66 2 0 2279 6086
public@democrat.or.th
www.democrat.or.th

The Democrat Party

The Democrat Party, founded in 1946, is the longest standing party in Thailand, and is one of the longest standing in Southeast Asia as well. Since its inception over 70 years ago, the Democrat Party has held ideologies that oppose all forms of dictatorship, and is committed to the promotion of democracy for the people, and most importantly, by the people. The survival and existence of the DP has not come easily. The party had to go through political struggles throughout its history that has five periods:

1st Period (1946-1967)

Party Building, Pro-Democracy and Anti-Dictatorship

2nd Period (1968-1979)

Party Rehabilitation and Democracy Promotion

3rd Period (1979-1990)

Policy Improvement and Participation in National Administration

4th Period (1991-2000)

Leading Party of Opposition and Coalition Government

5th Period (2001-Present)

Combating Parliamentary Dictatorship and opposing the abuse of power and conflicts of interest in public sector

Introducing the People's Agenda

Throughout its history, the DP has always stood firm on the principles of democracy, freedom, transparency, accountability, and public participation. These principles, stipulated in the Party Guidelines, which guided the party in the last seven decades, and will continue to guide it for many years and generations to come.

Under the leadership and guidelines of the Executive Committee, DP aims to provide the Thai public with a viable responsible political alternative to the populist political environment that has been permeating the Thai atmosphere since 2001. Through various schemes and measures implemented since 2008, especially the People's Agenda, the Party has been able to steer national development toward a new direction. It uses the idea of "policy for the people and by the people", which

highlights the point that "People must come first". The Party has assured the inclusiveness of its socio-economic policy and measures. Programs such as 15 years of free education, income-guarantee initiative for farming population, debt relief and access to micro-credits, and social and health security scheme had been launched when they were in the government.

LEADERS

Jurin Laksanawisit
Party Leader

Chalermchai Sri-on
Secretary General

Kiat Sittheamorn
Chairperson, Foreign Affairs Committee



CONTACT

Peifen Hsieh
Spokesperson/Deputy Director
Department of International Affairs

10F, No.30 Beiping E.Rd.,
Taipei, Taiwan

T +866 2 23929989
F +866 2 23930342
www.dpp.org.tw
f dpptaiwan

Democratic Progressive Party

The Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan was founded on 28 September 1986 by political, social, and human-rights activists, along with defence lawyers of political prisoners. It was then Martial Law, and Taiwan was under the authoritarian regime of Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), which had lost the Chinese Civil War.

Through social and political movements, and participation in elections, the founders of DPP risked their freedom and their lives to champion a democratic Taiwan. Indeed, DPP played an important role in the consolidation of Taiwan's democracy.

In 2000, DPP captured the presidency. From 2000 to 2008, DPP continued to push for freedom of expression, gender equality, social and transitional justice, judicial impartiality, and democracy. DPP also gained valuable experience and lessons as a young party during its eight years of governance.

In 2014, DPP won Taiwan's nine-in-one elections – the largest local polls in Taiwan's democratic political history – by a landslide. DPP took 13 out of the 22 cities and counties, including four out of six special municipalities. The election was DPP's best poll showing yet since its founding. At that time, more than 70

percent of Taiwan's population resided in a DPP-governing city or county.

The year 2016 actually marked the 30th anniversary of the party's founding. Coincidentally, in January 2016, under the leadership of its Chairperson Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, the party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan, clinching 68 of the 113 seats. This was the first time in Taiwan's political history that the legislature experienced a political transition. Dr. Tsai, DPP's standard bearer in the elections, and her running mate Dr. Chen Chien-jen meanwhile garnered 6.89 million votes or 56.1 percent of the total. This meant Dr. Tsai would become Taiwan's first female president.

In 2017 DPP pushed through many reforms and progressive laws, including pension reform, a forward-looking infrastructure plan, transitional justice acts, and other important policies geared towards a better Taiwan.

In 2019 DPP helped pass the same-sex marriage bill.

In 2020 President Tsai Ing-wen resumed her position as the chairperson of the DPP. She has envisioned three goals for the Party to strive for: calling for actively recruiting members from all sectors of society, demanding young engagement participating

in the Party, and continuing DPP's momentum. The three innovative methods aim to maintain the Party's progressiveness and competitiveness.

During the 2020 Presidential Elections, President Tsai Ing-wen won by a landslide for her second term. It was marked as the most number of votes garnered by a presidential candidate in the history of Taiwan.

DPP plans to further deepen Taiwan's democracy and safeguard for the Taiwanese people. Internationally, DPP continues to promote and strengthen the principles of democracy, and advocate for human rights and good governance through close alliances with democratic countries around the world.

DPP is a founding member of CALD and member of Liberal International.

LEADERS

Tsai Ing-wen
Chairperson

Lin Hsi-yao
Secretary General



CONTACT

Jason Gonzales
Acting Director General

Liberal Party of the Philippines
Lower Ground Floor, AGS
Building, EDSA, Guadalupe
Nuevo, Southbound, Makati
City, Philippines

M +63 917 857 4858
T +63 2 709 3826
T +63 2 709 3817
F +63 2 709 3829
www.liberal.ph
f LiberalPartyPhilippines

Liberal Party

The Liberal Party of the Philippines is a founding member of CALD. It is a full member of Liberal International. The LP has championed freedom, justice, and the dignity and rights of the individual for 75 years. At great cost to its stalwarts and members, it stood among the few voices of dissent during the dark days of the Marcos dictatorship, and at every turn in the country's recent history when democracy came under threat.

To this day, the LP upholds its legacy as the only major political party standing its ground against an increasingly authoritarian, populist regime. Its leaders and members have consistently adhered to the Party's thrusts:

- Protecting human rights, as it did in challenging the return of the death penalty and lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and in calling for an end to murder, violence, and lawfare as the primary instrument of the government's anti-drug and anti-terrorism campaigns;

- Advocating for the welfare of workers and consumers; pushing back against anti-consumer, anti-poor economic policies, and burdensome tax laws; and demanding a more strategic, more transparent, and more humane whole-of-nation approach to the COVID-19 pandemic;

- Defending democracy, press freedom, and the rule of law against attempts to undermine democratic institutions to consolidate power.

The LP forges onward by harnessing the energy of a massive volunteer base that was at the heart of its unconventional election campaign in the midterm elections of 2019. It builds on the promise of becoming a true people's party through opening memberships to the general, liberal democratic public and key sectors of society; organizing and mobilizing citizens in the grassroots; and declaring a policy direction geared towards inclusiveness, dignity, and empowerment.

LEADERS

Benigno Aquino III
Chairman Emeritus

Leni Robredo
Chairperson

Franklin Drilon
Vice Chairperson

Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan
President

Teddy Baguilat
Vice President for Internal Affairs

Lorenzo Tanada III
Vice President for External Affairs

Christopher Belmonte
Secretary-General

Josephine Ramirez-Sato
Treasurer



CONTACT

Hng Chee Wey
*International Relation and
Affairs Bureau Chairman*

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia
Level 5, PGRM, No. 8 Jalan Pudu
Ulu, Cheras, 56100,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

T +60 3 9287 6868
F +60 3 9287 8866
www.gerakan.org.my
f partigerakan
t partigerakanrakyatmalaysia

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia

Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM) was founded on 24 March 1968 as an independent party. It won the general election the following year and ruled the Penang State for the next 40 years (1969 - 2008).

After successfully forming a state government in 1969 general elections, Gerakan was invited by Tun Abdul Razak, the second prime minister of Malaysia, to join the national ruling coalition, the Alliance Party, which formed the federal government.

In 1972, Gerakan joined the Alliance and inspired the formation of Barisan Nasional. On 23 June 2018, Gerakan left the coalition and became an independent political party.

In its 50 years of being in the Barisan Nasional, Gerakan was known as the conscience, or rather the opposition within the coalition. When Gerakan, led by Datuk Seri Mah Sew Keong, Gerakan, left the coalition in 2018, it did so because it could no longer

the hegemony and arrogance of some members of the coalition who made unilateral decisions and disregarded the spirit of consensus and the need to abide by the constitution of Barisan Nasional.

Gerakan with its new generation of leadership led by Datuk Dr. Dominic Hoe Chai proceeded to carve a new identity and path to be the third political choice for the Malaysians — thus initiating a new third force in Malaysia's political landscape.

LEADERS

Dominic Lau
National President

Oh Tong Keong
Deputy President

Mah Kah Keong
Secretary General



CONTACT

Jufri Salim

International Liaison to CALD,
and Organising Secretary

M +65 9674 8633
jufri.salim@yoursdp.org

Singapore Democratic Party
3 Ang Mo Kio Street 62, #02-30,
Link@AMK, Singapore

T +65 6456 4531
sdp@yoursdp.org
www.yoursdp.org
f @ @ @ yoursdp

Singapore Democratic Party

The Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) was constituted in 1980. It believes in and is working towards restoring human, civil, and political rights in Singapore; cultivating a transparent and accountable political system based on free competition and equal opportunity for all; removing all policies and practices that discriminate against the less fortunate, women, and minorities, and cooperating with democratic parties and organizations in Asia to achieve peace and sustainable development in the region.

The SDP is widely recognized as the party in Singapore that is most adept in using the Internet to bypass the state-controlled media in the city state. It uses blogging, political videos, and social media to reach out to the people. It is the first opposition in Singapore to have a youth wing (Young Democrats).

The party is in the process of crafting a policy pertaining to the protection

of the environment, its latest in a series of policy papers it has drew up in the last several years.

The Central Executive Committee (CEC) governs the party with Prof. Paul Tambyah as Chairman and Dr. Chee Soon Juan as its secretary general.

Party leaders and members have had to endure a series of court cases, and even imprisonment, for exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and assembly in the recent past.

In the past two general elections, the party was seen to be the most "improved" opposition party, in terms of making the largest gain in the share of votes among opposition parties.

LEADERS

Paul Tambyah
Chairman

Chee Soon Juan
Secretary General



CONTACT

Mardi Seng

International Liaison to CALD

Cambodia National Rescue Party

House #576, National Road
N2, Sangkat Chakangres
Leu, Khan Mean Chey,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

T +855 012 90 5775
T +855 012 92 5171
info@cnrp7.org
www.cnrp7.org
f CNRPparty

Cambodia National Rescue Party

Cambodian National Rescue Party is an electoral alliance between the two main democratic opposition parties, the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party. It was founded in mid-2012 for the purpose of running together in the 2013 elections.

The party principles and values: are the rule of law and democracy, with social merit and harmonization, as well as mutual respect of interest. The party believes in the strengthening of freedom and human rights, institution of free and fair elections, and "rescue, serve, protect."

After the 2013 elections, it became the second largest party in Cambodia, accounting to 55 seats out of the 123 seats in parliament.

In the June 2017 commune elections, CNRP received 43.83 percent of the votes cast versus 50.76 percent of the ruling Cambodian People's Party.

As CNRP's electoral momentum threatened the ruling party ahead of the 2018 parliamentary elections, court cases, widely perceived as politically motivated, were filed against its leaders, resulting in the continuing exile of Sam Rainsy and the imprisonment of Kem Sokha.

In November 2017, the CNRP was dissolved by Cambodia's high court with its 118 leaders banned from politics for 5 years. Despite this major setback, these former CNRP leaders are still exerting all their efforts, particularly by appealing to the international community, to bring Cambodia back to the democratic path.

LEADERS

Sam Rainsy
Acting President

Kem Sokha
President



CONTACT

Hanjaya Setiawan
Secretary of
Government Affairs Department
International Liaison to CALD

PDI Perjuangan
Jl. P. Diponegoro No. 58, Menteng,
Jakarta Pusat 10310, Indonesia

T +62 21 3909925
T +62 21 3900715
hanjaya@pdiperjuangan.id
www.pdiperjuangan.id
f DPP.PDI.Perjuangan
t pdi_perjuangan

Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan) came into existence as a result of the people's struggle against the efforts of the New Order regime to hold onto power. The year 1999 was a milestone for the party, which emerged as the winner of the general election and thus put an end to Suharto's regime. The sudden victory initiated a long and hard work of consolidation in the organization, from national level down to the community level.

The party's ideology is based on Pancasila (Five Principles) that was first articulated by Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno in a speech he gave on 1 June 1945. It is derived from the old indigenous Indonesian philosophy and way of life. Pancasila reflects Indonesian nationalism, humanity and internationalism, democracy, social justice, and belief in one God.

Our founding father, Ir. Sukarno, once said, "Indonesian nationalism is a nationalism that grows and flourishes in the garden of internationalism." It is impossible to separate nationalism and internationalism; one needs the other. PDI Perjuangan thus understands the importance of international relations. We will continue to develop and strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation among countries.

As the vanguard force that raises Pancasila's banners high, PDI Perjuangan faces constant challenges

on becoming the uniting power of Indonesia. PDI Perjuangan is always at the forefront in supporting social diversity, pluralism, and human rights in Indonesia. We believe that equality among citizens is the basic foundation of unity in diversity.

In the current Indonesian democracy, PDI Perjuangan plays its role to fulfill people and state sovereignty by strengthening democratic institutions, mechanisms, and political practices. PDI Perjuangan also aims for a self-sufficient economy in the globalized era to bring prosperity and social welfare to the people. A nationalist party, PDI Perjuangan maintains a political stance of pluralism, humanity, democracy, and social welfare.

After 10 years as an opposition party, PDI Perjuangan had its political comeback in 2014. It was during 2014 that PDI Perjuangan won around 19 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections held that April, making it the biggest party in the legislature. Three months later, PDI Perjuangan's Joko Widodo won the presidential polls, clinching more than 53 percent of the votes; his rival Prabowo Subianto, by comparison, garnered just less than 47 percent.

In April 2015, PDI Perjuangan held its 4th Party Congress in Bali. Her Excellency Madame Megawati Soekarnoputri was re-elected as party General Chairperson. The congress also solidified the party's decision to become a major

supporter and partner to the current government. In addition, the party restructured the organization in 34 provinces, over 550 regencies/cities, more than 6,000 subdistricts, and down to tens of thousands at the village/community level.

In April 2019, incumbent President Joko Widodo was the party's presidential candidate running for a second term, with Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate. Widodo was re-elected with 55.50% of the vote. PDI-P remains the largest party in the People's Representative Council, with 128 seats, and 418 in the Provincial People's Regional Representative Council.

PDI Perjuangan is not merely an electoral party, it is an ideological party. The biggest challenge that the party faces is to make Pancasila our living and working ideology, or something we practice in our daily life. For us victory is only a stepping stone towards our ultimate goal: a just and prosperous society, in a united yet diverse Indonesia.

LEADERS

Megawati Soekarnoputri
General Chairperson

Hasto Kristiyanto
Secretary General



CONTACT

Erka ERDENECHIMEG
Secretary, Foreign
Relations Division

**Civil Will Green Party
of Mongolia**
Freedom Square
Orange Plaza - 606
PO Box - 90
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

T +97611319006
F +97611319006
nyamdavaa.monsor@gmail.com

Civil Will Green Party of Mongolia

The Civil Will Party (CWP) the precursor of the current Civil Will Green Party (CWGP) was established on March 9, 2000 when Oyun Sanjaasuren was elected as the Chairman and Z. Narmandakh as the Secretary General. The party won their first seat in the parliamentary election that same year. In 2005, the CWP strengthened its activities by establishing the Civil Will Youth Wing and soon after this the CWP also structured the party to have their own senior, women youth and student organizations. In January 2006, the special session of the Fourth National Convention announced that it would work as the opposition in the Parliament. In 2009, the party formed a coalition with the Democratic Party for the presidential election which resulted in victory. Elbegdorj Tsakhia was elected president of Mongolia.

The CWGP consists of the following organizations: the National Convention which is gathered once in every four years; the National Committee which consists of 200 members gathered annually; the Political Council with 36 members gathered on monthly; and the Monitoring Council consisting of 5 members. The main executive organization of the party is the Secretariat under the direct management of the Secretary General.

The municipal branches of the party operate at the grassroots level. There are 6 policy committees within the party that are Finance, Education, Science and Culture, Legal Activities, Foreign Relations and Security.

LEADERS

Tserendorj GANKHUYAG
Chairman

Lkh. GANKHUYAG
Vice Chairman

Nation Awakening Party



CONTACT

Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)
Jl. Raden Saleh No. 9,
Central Jakarta, Indonesia

T +62 21 314 5238

F +62 21 314 5329

dpp@pkb.or.id

www.pkb.or.id

f DPP PKB

v DPP_PKB

The Nation Awakening Party or Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) was founded on 23 July 1998 in the Ciganjur, South Jakarta at the residence of KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia's first democratically elected president. Wahid was also the head of the Council of Scholars, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, in which its members, the nahdliyyin, formed the party's base support. The five key leaders who were instrumental during the party inception were KH. Munasir Ali, KH. Ilyas Ruchiyat, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, KH. A. Musthofa Bisri and KH. Muhith Muzadi.

PKB's vision are: 1) to realize the desired ideals of independence of the Republic of Indonesia as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution; 2) to realize a just and prosperous society; and 3) to establish democratic, clean and honourable national politics.

The mission of party includes:

Religious Sector: To increase piety to the Almighty God by serving the society, nation and state;

Political Affairs: To maintain the Unitary of the Republic of Indonesia; To uphold the sovereignty of the people; To realize a clean, reliable, democratic government; To implement national development for the prosperity of the people;

To carry out an independent and active foreign policy and develop foreign cooperation to create a world of lasting peace that is also equitable, and prosperous;

Economic Sector: To uphold and to develop the economic life of people fairly and democratically;

Legal Affairs: To establish and develop a civilized state law that is able to protect all its citizens; To affirm human rights and social justice;

Social and Cultural Affairs:

To endeavor in building an advanced culture and modernity while maintaining the nation's identity for the sake of elevating the dignity of the nation;

Educational Sector: To strive to improve the quality of the human resources to be of noble character, independent, skilled, professional, and critical towards the surrounding social environment ; To seek the establishment of a national education system that is welfare-oriented, affordable, and sustainable; and

Defense: To build awareness of the obligation of every citizen to participate in the national defense effort; To encourage the establishment of community of self-defense against treatment that creates a feeling of insecurity, from either individuals or certain institutions in society.

The PKB is part of the Coalition Indonesia Superb (KIH), a group of political parties that supported the Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla election campaign in 2014 and the Jokowi Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin in 2019. Aside from PKB, the other members the coalition were the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI-P), Nation Democratic Party (Nasdem), while others including the United Development Party (PPP) and Party of the Functional Groups (Golkar).

The coalition has 388 seats in Parliament, with 128 seats from PDI P, 85 seats from Golkar, 58 seats from PKB, 39 seats from PPP, 59 seats from Nasdem and 19 seats from PPP.

Three PKB leaders have been appointed ministers in the Jokowi government. Ida Fauziyah is serving in the Ministry of Manpower, Agus Suparmanto in the Ministry of Trade, and Abdul Halim Iskandar in the Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged regions and Transmigration.

LEADERS

A. Muhaimin Iskandar
General Chairman

M. Hanif Dhakiri
General Secretary

O B S E R V E R P A R T Y

Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan



Founded in 2017, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP) is a political party fostering democratic politics that value constitutionalism and deliberation. It is a party protecting human lives and wellbeing, and with the people as the leading actors. It aims to build a genuine grass-roots democracy in the country. A politics which is rooted in the real voices of real people.

They aspire to connect with a diverse range of people living in the Japanese society and to chart a new vision for the future.

LEADERS

EDANO Yukio
Party Leader

HIRANO Hirofumi
Executive Deputy Leader
Chairperson, Election
Strategy Committee

RENHO
Executive Deputy Leader
Chairperson, Office for National
Campaigns & Public Relations

CONTACT

Akiko Kamei, MP
Director-General, International
Bureau, Constitutional Democratic
Party
Member of House of
Representatives, Japan

3F, 2-12-4 Hirakawa-cho,
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
102-0093 Japan

T +03 3595 8529
international@cdp-japan.net

Abdurrahman Wahid



Abdurrahman Wahid served as the fourth president of the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, from 1999-2001. He was an important figure among religious groups and political movements during the restoration of freedom and democratic rights after 32 years of the Suharto dictatorship.

More popularly known as "Gus Dur," he showed fellow Indonesians his lifetime commitment to public service and the promotion of liberal democracy and staunchly defended human rights, ethnic minorities, and Indonesia's secular tradition. Wahid headed the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest Muslim organisation.

His position as a moral leader was transformed, however, when he and his supporters formed the National Awakening Party (PKB) following the dramatic fall of President Soeharto. He became the Chairman of its Advisory Council and its official presidential candidate in 1999. Though dominated by NU members, Wahid promoted PKB as a party that is non-sectarian and open to all members of society. Wahid passed away in 2009.

Martin C. M. Lee



Martin C.M. Lee (Lee Chu Ming) is the founding chairman (1994 - 2002) of the Democratic Party, which is one of the largest and most popular political parties in Hong Kong. Prior to the founding of the Democratic Party in October 1994, Lee was chairman of the United Democrats of Hong Kong — Hong Kong's first political party that won the first-ever democratic elections to the territory's Legislative Council in 1991.

Since its establishment, the Democratic Party has committed efforts to advancing democracy and safeguarding human rights and the rule of law in Hong Kong. In 2008, the Democratic Party merged with another pan-democratic party The Frontier, and further strengthened its political influence in Hong Kong. Lee was also a popularly elected Legislative Councillor from 1985 to 2008.

Chung-Kai Sin



Chung-Kai Sin is the Treasurer of and previously the Deputy Chairman of the Democratic Party. He has served as a member of the Central Committee of Democratic Party of Hong Kong since the party was founded in 1994.

Sin was elected as Kwai Tsing District Councillor for a term of 4 years in November 2019 for a term of 4 years (2020-2023).

Sin is a member of the 1200 members of Election Committee for Electing the Chief Executive Of HKSAR.

He was an elected Legislative Councillor of Hong Kong serving a term of 4 years from Oct 2012 to Sep 2016. Sin also served as a Member of Legislative Council from 1995 - 1997 representing New Territories South and 1998 to 2008 representing the Information Technology Sector. Sin has

a long public service record. Sin served as a member of the Housing Authority from 2001 to 2009 and a board of director Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited from 1999 to 2009. 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, 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.

Sin is married to Yvonne Ying Yee Chan. They have two sons Clement and Ryan.

Emily Lau



Emily Wai-hing Lau was a member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council from 1991 to 1997 and 1998 to 2016 and was the first woman directly elected to Legco. She was Chairperson of the Democratic Party from 2012 to 2016. Lau is a member of the Board of Directors, China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group. She received her B.A. degree in Broadcast Journalism from the University of Southern California in 1976 and her M. Sc. degree in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1982. She worked as a print and television journalist and university lecturer from 1976 to 1991. She was chairperson of the Hong Kong Journalists Association from 1989 to 1991. Throughout her political career, Lau is dedicated

to fighting for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Her ambition is for a democratically elected government in Hong Kong and in China. Because of her pro-democracy work and her outspokenness, she has not been allowed to travel to Mainland China for over 20 years. Lau received Honorary Doctorate from the London School of Economics and Political Science on 23 July 2019, the Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Award from the Bruno Kreisky Foundation in Vienna in 1998, the Monismann Prize on Freedom of Speech from the University of Uppsala in Sweden in 2003, and the Political Leader Award from The Hong Kong Women's Foundation in 2009.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Aung San Suu Kyi is the State Counsellor of Myanmar in charge of the Foreign Ministry, Energy Ministry, and the Ministry of Education. She is currently serving as the Chairperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD). In 1991, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle against oppression and her fight to attain democracy and human rights in her country.

"The Lady" has spent most of her life committed to the people of Burma's struggle for justice, freedom, and democracy. Much of the last two decades has seen her locked up, but in 2010, she was released from house arrest. In 2012, she contested a by-election and won a seat in parliament. In 2015, NLD won by landslide, paving the way for her appointment as Myanmar's State Counsellor.

P A R T N E R S



Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Based on the principles of liberal democracy, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) offers political education in Germany and in over 60 of its offices worldwide. It is the creative innovation platform for the promotion of freedom.

Its work in Southeast & East Asia goes back to the late 1960s with its first office in Indonesia. Since then, FNF has grown in presence along with the projects that it has taken on in seven countries in the region. FNF advances individual freedom, open and digital society, and social market economy. It has

a successful network of leaders, institutes, and organizations that shares its liberal values.

Among which is CALD.

FNF has been in partnership with CALD since CALD's inception in 1993. They collaborate to produce publications, and organize conferences and meetings in the spirit of international dialogue designed to further policy dialogue and cooperation among like-minded Asian political parties.

CONTACT

29 BBC Tower, 25th Floor,
Sukhumvit 63 Road,
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

T +66 2 095 2740
fnf-bangkok@freiheit.org



Liberal International

Liberal International (LI) is the world federation of over 100 liberal and progressive democratic political parties and affiliates. LI was founded in 1947 to strengthen liberal protection from totalitarianism and communism. It has since become the

pre-eminent network for promoting liberalism, individual freedom, human rights, the rule of law, tolerance, equality of opportunity, social justice, free trade and a market economy.

CONTACT

1 Whitehall Place,
London, SW1A 2HD

T +44 20 7839 5905
office@liberal-international.org
www.liberal-international.org



National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing

democratic values, practices, and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government.

CONTACT

455 Massachusetts Ave.,
NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20001

T +1 202 728 5500
F +1 202 728 5520
www.ndi.org

Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party



The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party is the party for liberal democrat values in Europe. Together with its liberal member parties across the European continent the ALDE Party is translating the principle of freedom into politics, economics and all other areas of our societies. It provides an increasingly vital link between citizens and the EU institutions and is continuously growing in size and significance.

Formerly the European Liberal Democrat and Reform (ELDR) party, the ALDE Party consists of more than 70 member parties and thousands of individual members from countries across Europe. Liberal Democrats created their European political family in 1976 in view of the first European elections and in 1993 was established as a true transnational political party.

Leaders and key figures

Hans van Baalen was elected President of the European Liberal Democrats for a two-year mandate on 21 November 2015 at the Congress in Budapest, Hungary and was re-elected as President in 2017 and in 2019.

The ALDE Party brings together elected representatives, mayors, ministers, prime ministers, and members of the European Parliament from among its member parties. Together with the MEPs from the European Democratic Party and in partnership with *La République En Marche* form the Renew Europe group in the European Parliament, which is led by Dacian Cioloș MEP.

As of 1 February, six EU Prime Ministers belong to ALDE Party member parties:

- Andrej Babis, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
- Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg
- Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of Belgium
- Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of Estonia
- Micheál Martin, Prime Minister of Ireland
- Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of The Netherlands

As of 1 December, six European Commissioners represent liberal democrats:

- Margarethe Vestager, Executive Vice President, Commissioner for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age
- Věra Jourová, Vice President, Commissioner for Values and Transparency
- Didier Reynders, Commissioner for Justice
- Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management
- Kadri Simson, Commissioner for Energy
- Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market

Mission Statement

In 60 years of European integration, the European Union has served us well in achieving peace, stability and prosperity. The EU has promoted and extended to half a billion people the four freedoms: the free movement of people, services, capital and goods across borders. We want the Union to play a key leadership role in tackling today's and tomorrow's global challenges.

We strengthen the Liberal Democrat movement in the EU and throughout Europe;

We assist Liberal Democrat politicians across Europe to become better acquainted and to define a common political vision;

We draw up and adopt a common manifesto for the European Parliament elections.

CONTACT

ALDE Party

Rue d'Idalie 11 - box 2 1050
Brussels, Belgium

T +32 2 237 0140
info@aldeparty.eu
www.aldeparty.eu

Renew Europe

Let's Renew Europe together

There has never been a larger centrist group in the European Parliament. By ending the dominance of the Conservatives and the Socialists, Europeans have given us a strong mandate to change Europe for the better.

We will invest in a sustainable continent. We do not have a Planet B, so we must make sure that we preserve the one we have for future generations. The Paris climate agreement of 2015 set out the

roadmap, now it is time to deliver on the promises made and even go beyond them.

At a time when the rule of law and democracy are under threat in parts of Europe, our Group will stand up for the people who suffer from the illiberal and nationalistic tendencies that we see returning in too many countries.

We thrive for a more prosperous Europe to the benefit of all Europeans. By investing in the talents of our citizens and unlocking the potential

of Europe's internal market. We strongly believe that economic growth, environmental sustainability, fair competition and responsibility go hand in hand.

Our mission is to Renew Europe. Because Europe is our future and is well worth fighting for!

CONTACT

reneweuropesgroup.eu
f reneweurope

renew europe.

Taiwan Foundation for Democracy



Taiwan's peaceful transition to democracy is not only a historical accomplishment for its 23 million people, but a landmark in the worldwide spread of democracy. Only after years of struggle and effort could this transformation take place. We must never forget this history, for it shapes the cornerstone of our continued commitment to the principles of democracy and human rights.

The Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) was established with an inter-related, two-tracked mission in mind. Domestically, the TFD strives to play a positive role in consolidating Taiwan's democracy and fortifying its commitment to human rights; internationally, the Foundation hopes to become a strong link in the global democratic network, joining forces with related organizations around the world. Through the years, Taiwan has received valuable long-term assistance and stalwart support

from the international community, and it is now time to repay that community for all of its efforts.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy project in 2002. After much research and careful evaluation, the Ministry integrated the required resources from many sectors of society. In January 2003, the Ministry obtained the support of all political parties to pass the budget for the Foundation in the legislature. The TFD formally came into being on 17 June 2003, with its first meeting of the Board of Trustees and Supervisory Board. At that meeting, Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng was elected its first chairman. According to its by-laws, the TFD is governed by a total of 15 trustees and five supervisors, representing political parties, the government, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and the business sector.

CONTACT

No.4, Alley 17,
Lane 147, Section 3,
Sinyi Road, Taipei 106, Taiwan

T +886 2 2708 0100
F +886 2 2708 1148
www.tfd.org.tw

Africa Liberal Network



Developed from what was originally called the Organisation of African Liberal Parties, the network was established during an initial meeting of political parties in Mombasa, July 2001, and was later launched formally in Johannesburg, June 2003. At the Johannesburg, June 2003 meeting, one of our cornerstone commitments, the Johannesburg Declaration was adopted, pledging like-minded political parties, organisations, networks, think-tanks and individuals to the core principles of liberal democracy.

The network's mission is to support and empower political parties, organisations, networks, think-tanks and individuals, to grow their support,

to increase their influence on politics and to implement policies of good governance when in government.

The current active programme of the network is the Women Empowerment Programme. It is an annual development programme for women politicians from ALN member parties. We aim to develop their knowledge and skills to win candidate nominations, upcoming elections, and internal party leadership positions. The programme also aims to dismantle barriers to women's political participation and selection as candidates.

CONTACT

3rd Floor Travel House,
6 Hood Avenue, Rosebank,
Johannesburg 2196
Republic of South Africa

T +27 11 880 8851
M +27 73 707 8513
www.africaliberalnetwork.org

Liberal Network for Latin America



RELIAL (Red Liberal de América Latina), the Liberal Network of Latin America, is a Latin America-wide network of currently 41 civil society organizations, political parties, think tanks, and research-institutes. RELIAL is forming the institutional frame for leaders and opinion makers, academics, intellectuals, business

people, and personalities from the region who share and profess the ideas of individual freedom, limited government, the market economy, the rule of law, and a free democratic system in the continent.

CONTACT

IOS Offices Torre Murano,
Av Insurgentes Sur 2453,
Suite 6000, Piso 6
Col. Tizapan
Alvaro Obregon
CP 01090 CDMX

T +55 52 5556 5548
www.relial.org



The Council for Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) was inaugurated in Bangkok in 1993, with the support of then Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and South Korea's Kim Dae-Jung. CALD, which offers a unique platform for dialogue and cooperation, is the only regional alliance of liberal and democratic political parties in Asia.

CALD was formed out of the recognition of leaders of like-minded political parties in Asia of the need for a dynamic forum promoting discussion and exchange of ideas regarding trends and challenges affecting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the region. The chair parties of CALD since its inception to the present have been the Democrat Party of Thailand or DP (1993 - 1995, 2002 - 2004, 2016-2018), the Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan or DPP (1995-1997, 2004-2005, 2018-2020), the Liberal Party of the Philippines or LP (1997-1999, 2005-2007, 2020 to present), the Singapore Democratic Party or SDP (2007-2010), the Liberal Party of Sri Lanka or LPSL (1999-2000, 2010-2012), the Sam Rainsy Party/Cambodia National Rescue Party (2000-2002, 2012-2014), and the Civil Green Party of Mongolia (2014-2016).

The other members of CALD are the Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM), the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and the Nation Awakening Party (PKB) of Indonesia, while the Hong Kong legislators Martin Lee, Sin Chung-kai, and Emily Lau are individual members. In 2010, CALD bestowed honorary individual membership to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar. The Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) of Japan is an observer party.

Through CALD, political parties, groups, and individuals have a continuing discussion on the developments occurring in the various countries of the region. The aim is to assess the possibilities for liberal solutions to problems facing Asian democracies.

Accordingly, CALD organizes network meetings including those with its partners (Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Liberal International, Alliance for Liberals and Democrats for Europe, Renew Europe, Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs), international conferences on vital issues affecting the region, and regular workshops on communication, political management, and women in politics. It also sends missions for various advocacies, sponsors internship programs in its secretariat, as well as maintains a website, a social-network group account, and a weekly electronic newsletter.

Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats

Francis Pangilinan
CALD Chairperson

Francis Gerald Abaya
CALD Secretary General

**Unit 410, La Fuerza Plaza 2,
2241 Don Chino Roces Avenue
corner Sabio St.,
1231 Makati City, Philippines**

Telephone
+63 2 8819 6071

info@cald.org
www.cald.org

   **asianliberals**

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

CALD SECRETARIAT

Celito Arlegue
Executive Director

Paolo Antonio Zamora
Program Manager

Audrie Semeona Frias
Program Officer

Mari Julianne Janolo
Communications Officer

EDITOR
C.C. Balgos

LAY-OUT & ART
Michael A. Gadi

