

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Jan. 2026)

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Old Complaints and Increasing Collective Conflicts Will Be Addressed, as ACRC Operates the “Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau” in Earnest

- Dedicated personnel under the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau will work in line with civil counselors and conflict management officials of respective institutions to actively address age-old, habituated complaints and collective conflicts as of Jan. 27

(Jan. 27th, 2026, ACRC)

The Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau under the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Acting Chairperson Han Sam Suk) officially launches on Jan 27th to specifically address old, habitual complaints that are being filed repeatedly along with the complex, fierce complaints on collective conflict which happen during the people’s daily livelihood.

The ACRC held a board-hanging ceremony for the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau at the KT&G Sejong Centre, along with Mr. Han Sam Suk, Acting Chairperson of the ACRC, and Mr. Joo Jin Woo, Public Conflict Mediation Secretary of the Presidential Office, in the afternoon of Jan. 27th.

The ACRC has been focused on the practical resolution of complaints on collective conflict and repetitive, frequent habitual complaints to realize the administrative philosophy of “People-centered, Field-centered, Achievement-centered” since the launch of the new administration in June 2025 which values the sovereignty of the people.

As a result of the seven months of active resolutions – such as mediation and agreement – with the new administration, 46 collective conflict complaints were addressed and 9,375 people were directly benefited, showing an increasing trend over the same period in the previous year.

Representative cases are as follows: Mediation to come up with safety measures for tourist attractions at Guryongpo of Pohang-si in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province for the better and safer lives of the people (Jul. 2025), Mediation on bridging built-up soil area at Yanggu-si, Gangwon-do under the cooperation without silos based on mutual communication (Aug. 2025), Mediation on the safe commute of three middle and high schools students of Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do Province, a practical mediation for various people based on the perception that the field always has an answer (Oct. 2025), and Mediation on building a power cable for Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) at Dangjin-si, Chungcheongnam-do Province, an endeavor as an active mediator for the interests of a long-standing issue (Dec. 2025).

When it launches, the Collective Complaint Mediation Bureau will prioritize addressing age-old unusual petitions – petitions that are being filed repeatedly and continuously due to dissatisfaction or distrust of the results – and start its duty.

Its aim is not simple completion but addressing petitions so that they are not raised again, by attentively listening to and persuading the petitioners while closely cooperating with related agencies and professionals, while analyzing the causes and structures of repetition and connecting them to institutional improvement.

The Bureau will bring in 100 people including officials from the Collective Complaint Mediation Bureau, professionals in communication, counsel, and

law, and civil counselors who are former public officials, and people who are in charge of the work in relevant agencies. They will be grouped considering the characteristics of the agenda items and operate as dedicated teams, for effective and systematic resolution of the petitions.

At the same time, the Commission prepared and is under discussion with the National Assembly regarding the revised bill of the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Management of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (Article 45-2, Paragraph 5) for every institute to have “Officials on Collective Conflict Management” to be centered on difficult agenda items such as unusual petitions and petitions on collective conflict for the improvement of all institutes’ capabilities in addressing their own agenda.

The age-old collective conflict complaints which involve multiple people and various interests, which used to be handled by the divisions under the ACRC’s Ombudsman Bureau based on the content of the petitions, will now be covered by the Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau.

For the administrative service to meet the people’s expectations, the Commission will conduct in-depth inspections by the increased number of professionals, customized mediation based on the importance, difficulty, and urgency of the agenda, and work for institutional improvement by proactively figuring out potential area of collective conflicts and cooperating with the relevant agencies.

People who want collective conflict petitions to be addressed can reach out to the e-People platform and the method will be the same as usual.

The ACRC will strengthen its solid cooperation system with the Office of the Public Conflict Mediation Secretary of the Presidential Office, as well as

central administration, local government, and public institutions. The Commission will systematically respond to the pending major collective conflict items as one of the agencies in charge of governmental meetings on public conflict mediation.

It will proactively find and mediate potential areas of collective conflicts during the execution of the national agenda such as the energy expressway and balanced regional development. Complaints that are closely connected to the lives of the people and repeated complaints will be prioritized and investigated to come up with the solutions regardless of their scale.

The Acting Chairperson Han of the ACRC stated that “People want the government to listen to the voice of the field, address the long-standing collective conflict complaints, and actively engage in and mediate the stakeholders. The Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau which launches today will listen to the voices of the people and do our best to make improvements based on field experience and capabilities so that people can feel the difference.”

The Public Conflict Mediation Secretary of the Presidential Office said the “The Collective Conflict Mediation Bureau will be the key organization which comprehensively mediates habitual, repetitive conflicts and collective complaints which involve various stakeholders. I expect the organization to be at the center and listen to the people’s voices from the closest position, resolve the repeated conflicts, and conduct the necessary mediation in a timely manner. My Office will work closely with the ACRC, prevent repeated complaints from being raised again, and build a system which proactively manages and mediates collective conflicts to reduce social costs and enhance public trust.”

“Corruption will Decrease in the Future” … People Perceive Implementation of Anti-Corruption Policies are “Effective”

- *2025 Corruption Perceptions Survey results released... corruption levels “will be lower than now”*
- *57.6% of the general public said “our society is corrupt” ... ACRC to make all-out effort to ensure anti-corruption policy achievements are recognized*

(Jan. 13th. 2026, ACRC)

The results of the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Survey showed that the rate of respondents who perceive ‘our society is corrupt’ decreased compared to the previous year among most respondent groups surveyed.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Acting Chairperson Han Sam Suk) conducted the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Survey and announced the results of the survey on perceptions of corruption across society; public sector corruption perceptions; perceptions of fairness; and effectiveness of government anti-corruption policy drive.

The ACRC has been carrying out annual national corruption perceptions surveys since 2002 to investigate and analyze social members’ perceptions of corruption across society and in public sector, to check the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies, and to utilize the results as basic data for establishing future policies.

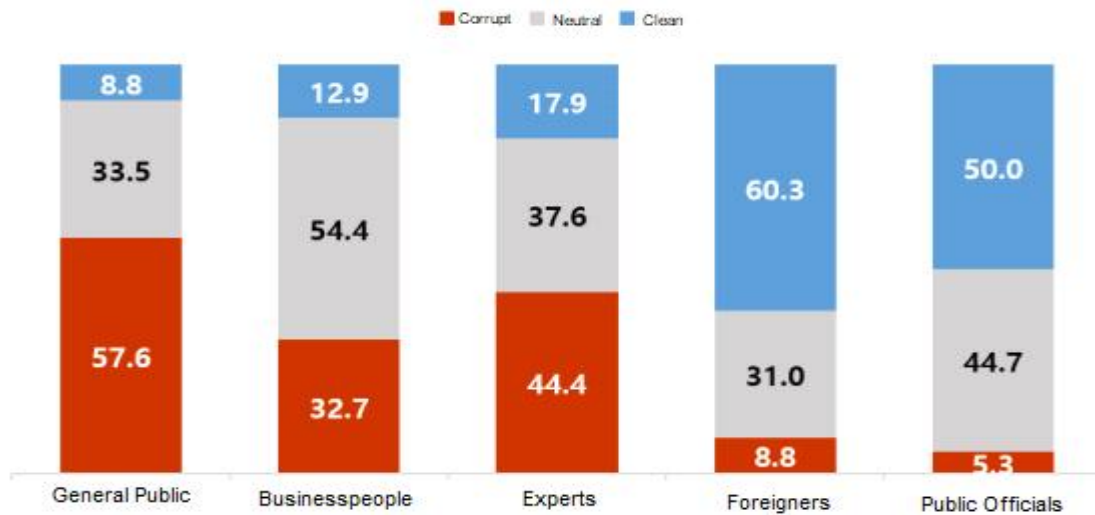
The 2025 survey was conducted in two rounds, in June and October, targeting 1,400 members of the general public, 700 businesspeople, 630 experts, 400 foreigners, and 1,400 public servants.

Perceptions of Corruption in Society in General

The percentage of those who perceived our society as ‘corrupt’ was highest among the general public (57.6%), followed by experts (44.4%), businesspeople (32.7%), foreigners (8.8%), and public officials (5.3%).

【 Perceptions of Corruption in Society 】

(Unit: %)



Compared to the previous year, the perception of corruption in our society improved among all surveyees except the general public, including businesspeople (↓10.9%p), experts (↓9.4%p), public officials (↓7.5%p), and foreigners (↓5.7%p).

【 Rate of Respondents Saying Our Society is ‘Corrupt’】 (Unit: %, %p)

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
2025	57.6	32.7	44.4	8.8	5.3
2024	57.1	43.6	53.8	14.5	12.8
YoY Change	↑0.5	↓10.9	↓9.4	↓5.7	↓7.5

Among 11 social sectors, the general public, experts, and public officials rated the ‘political/legislative’ sector as the most corrupt, while businesspeople and foreigners rated the ‘media’ and ‘religious organizations’ as the most corrupt, respectively.

Meanwhile, the education sector was rated most transparent by the general public, businesspeople, and experts; culture, art, and sports by foreigners; and administrative agencies by public officials.

【 Corruption Levels by Sector Over the Past 3 Years 】

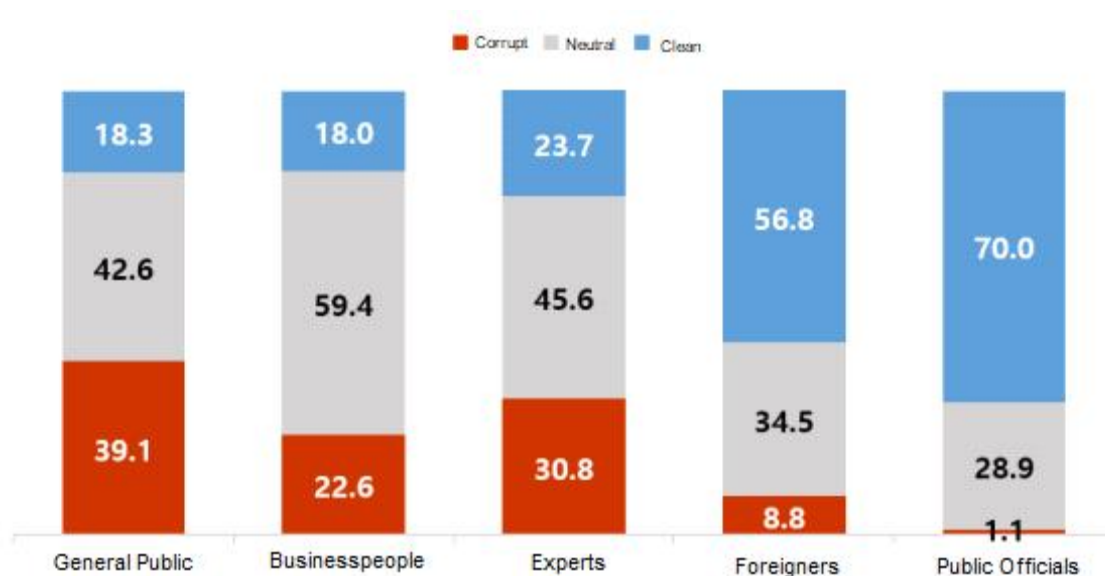
Category		General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
2025	Most corrupt	Political party and legislative body	Media	Political party and legislative body	Religious organizations	Political party and legislative body
	Cleanest	Education	Education	Education	Culture, art, sports	Administrative agencies
2024	Most corrupt	Political party and legislative body	Political party and legislative body	Political party and legislative body	Political party and legislative body	Media
	Cleanest	Education	Education	Education	Civic organizations	Administrative agencies
2023	Most corrupt	Political party and legislative body	Political party and legislative body	Political party and legislative body	Religious organizations	Media
	Cleanest	Education	Education	Education	Education	Administrative agencies

Perceptions of Corruption in Public Sector

The rate of respondents who perceived the public sector as ‘corrupt’ was the highest among the general public (39.1%), followed by experts (30.8%), businesspeople (22.6%), foreigners (8.8%) and public officials (1.1%).

【 Perceptions of Corruption in Public Sector 】

(Unit: %)



Compared to the previous year, the perception of corruption in public sector improved among all surveyees except the general public, including

businesspeople (↓ 9.3%p), experts (↓ 5.3%p), public officials (↓ 2.0%p), and foreigners (↓ 5.4%p). In particular, only 1.1 percent among public officials perceive the public sector is corrupt, marking the lowest percentage point, which show there is a big difference in corruption perceptions among the general public and public officials.

Meanwhile, the rate of the general public who perceive the public sector is corrupt showed a slight increase from a year earlier, indicating that improving public integrity perceptions of the general public remains a key challenge for future anti-corruption policies.

【 Rate of Respondents Saying Public Sector is ‘Corrupt’】 (Unit: %, %p)

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
2025	39.1	22.6	30.8	8.8	1.1
2024	35.5	31.9	36.1	14.2	3.1
YoY Change	↑3.6	↓9.3	↓5.3	↓5.4	↓2.0

For 11 administrative sectors, ‘legal affairs including prosecution/correction’ was rated the most corrupt by the general public, businesspeople, and public officials; and ‘construction, housing, and land’ by experts, while ‘firefighting’ sector was rated the most transparent by all groups of respondents.

【 Corruption Levels by Admin. Sector Over the Past 3 Years 】

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Public Officials
2025	Most corrupt	Legal affairs incl. prosecution/correction	Legal affairs incl. prosecution/correction	Construction, housing, land
	Cleanest	Firefighting	Firefighting	Firefighting
2024	Most corrupt	Construction, housing, land	Legal affairs incl. prosecution/correction	Construction, housing, land
	Cleanest	Firefighting	Firefighting	Firefighting
2023	Most corrupt	Construction, housing, land	Construction, housing, land	Construction, housing, land
	Cleanest	Firefighting	Firefighting	Firefighting

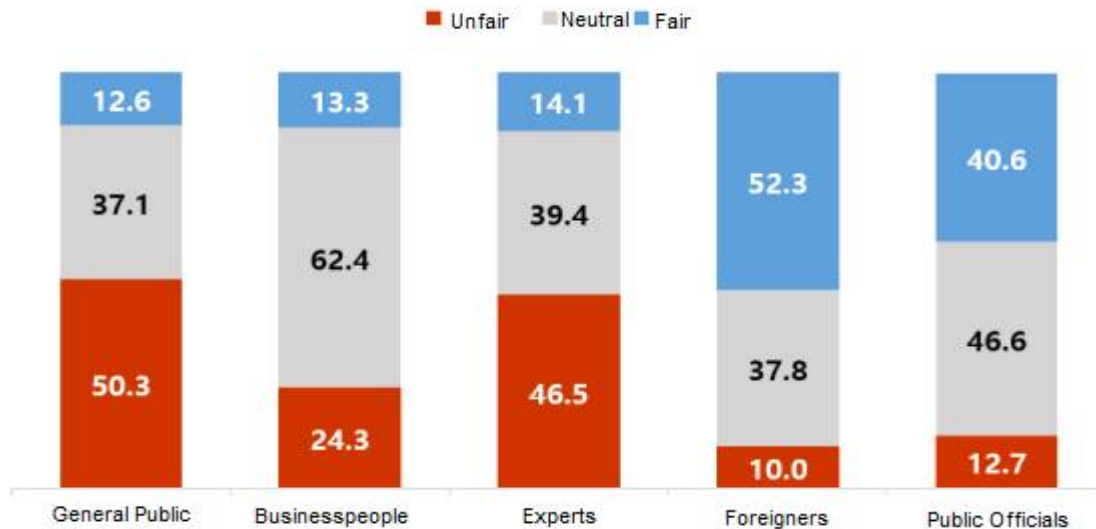
Perceptions of Fairness

The rate of respondents who perceive our society is ‘unfair’ was the highest

among the general public (50.3%), followed by experts (46.5%), businesspeople (24.3%), public officials (12.7%), and foreigners (10.0%).

【 Perceptions of Fairness in Society 】

(Unit: %)



Compared to the previous year, the perceptions of fairness in our society have improved among all categories of respondents, including businesspeople (↓ 9.8%p), public officials (↓ 9.1%p), experts (↓ 8.9%p), foreigners (↓ 4.0%p), and general public (↓ 1.5%p).

【 Rate of Respondents Saying Our Society is ‘Unfair’】 (Unit: %, %p)

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
2025	50.3	24.3	46.5	10.0	12.7
2024	51.8	34.1	55.4	14.0	21.8
YoY Change	↓1.5	↓9.8	↓8.9	↓4.0	↓9.1

Effectiveness of Government Anti-Corruption Policy Drive

The rate of respondents who said the government anti-corruption policies proved effective has increased from a year earlier among all categories of respondents. In particular, there was a 27.0%p increase in the number of businesspeople who recognized the effectiveness of the government anti-corruption policies, showing the greatest improvement.

【 Effectiveness of Gov't Anti-Corruption Policy Drive 】

(Unit: %, () means YoY %p)

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
Effective	24.4(↑ 6.8)	47.1(↑ 27.0)	27.5(↑ 4.5)	44.5(↑ 19.5)	56.4(↑ 15.4)
Not effective	45.1(↓ 9.9)	10.9(↓ 34.0)	31.1(↓ 16.5)	9.8(↓ 4.5)	7.4(↓ 16.8)

In addition, there was a significant increase in the number of respondents who said ‘corruption levels will be lower than now’ among all categories of respondents, indicating escalated expectations for transparent society in the future across all corners of society.

【 Prospects for Future Corruption 】

(Unit: %, () means YoY %p)

Category	General Public	Businesspeople	Experts	Foreigners	Public Officials
Corruption will decrease compared to the present	39.6(↑ 14.7)	31.3(↑ 14.0)	41.0(↑ 19.5)	45.5(↑ 17.0)	52.9(↑ 12.5)
Corruption will remain similar to the present	31.5(↓ 10.2)	53.1(↓ 2.2)	40.3(↓ 3.2)	46.8(↓ 14.2)	42.1(↓ 5.6)
Corruption will increase compared to the present	28.9(↓ 4.5)	15.6(↓ 11.8)	18.7(↓ 16.3)	7.8(↓ 2.7)	5.0(↓ 6.9)

Lee Myong Sun, ACRC Anti-Corruption Vice Chairperson, said, “The survey result shows that positive perceptions of integrity and fairness has spread widely across society thanks to active anti-corruption policy implementation of the Korean government.”

He also added, “However, we seriously acknowledge the fact that corruption perceptions of the general public still lag behind and will do our utmost to have people feel the effects of anti-corruption policies in their daily lives.”

ACRC Has Been Allocated a Budget of KRW 111.7B for 2026 and Will Focus on Enhancing the Convenience of the People and Disseminating the Culture of Integrity

- *Enhance the convenience of the people by integrating non-emergency consultation calls to 110, and expanding the platform of people's rights and interests with the artificial intelligence*
- *Strengthen the petition handling process by establishing the "Conflict Mediation Consultation Council" and managing "Civil Consultation for Unusual Petitions"*
- *Work for the dissemination of anti-corruption culture by building an integrity education curriculum in universities*

(Jan. 5th, 2026, ACRC)

The 2026 budget of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Acting Chairperson Han Sam Suk) has been confirmed as KRW 111.7B, up 6.6B from last year's 105.1B.

The ACRC has allocated the budget under the three strategic goals for President Lee's administrative vision "People-centered country, where everyone is happy," which are: resolve people's grievances by proactive and practical response; institutional improvement based on the people's voice, and resolve grievances through administrative appeal; and update anti-corruption laws and regulations and disseminate the culture of integrity.

Key items for the budget of the Commission are as follows:

First, allocate a budget for integrating non-emergency consultation calls to 100 to address the people's inconvenience. The ACRC will gradually expand the

integration and connection service to 697 institutions from today's 150, so people can be relayed to the most adequate consultation number once they call 100. At the same time, the representative numbers of central administration agencies will be also streamlined to 100 for easier and more convenient consultation.

※ Integration of non-emergency consultation calls to 110: newly allocate KRW 4.93B (2026)

Second, work for the platform for people's rights and interests to equip with the AI technology for easier petition filing and efficient petition handling. Under this goal, the present e-People platform will adopt AI technology to provide real-time conversational petition services* from 2027, and support agile petition handling by prioritizing safety and disaster-related emergency petitions and automatically merging repeated petitions.

* AI model dedicated for petitions which communicates with the petitioner like a chatbot

※ Communication system, including establishment of AI-based platform: KRW 3.35B (2025)
→ 3.9B (2026, up by 16.4%)

Third, actively address collective complaints and unusual complaints which cause massive amounts of social costs by increasing the budget for the collective complaints handling system for the overall government such as building the "Conflict Mediation Consultation Council" and operating "Civil Consultation for Unusual Complaints." Moreover, support for the civil grievance handling commissions located in local governments will be strengthened to vitalize local ombudsmen to focus the commission's capacity for the thorough relief of people's rights and interests.

※ Investigative activity for grievance petitions: KRW 1.6B (2025) → 1.9B (2026, up by 18.7%)

Fourth, strengthen integrity education for the younger generation to firmly settle the culture of integrity in society as a whole. The Commission will make integrity education mandatory so that the younger generation –

students in primary, secondary, and universities – can naturally learn integrity and a sense of ethics from their early lifespan. At the same time, the ACRC will expand customized integrity education based on age group, including “on-site classroom for integrity experience” and “special classes for integrity courses in universities.”

※ Disseminate the culture of integrity including integrity education expansion: KRW 2.41B (2025) → 2.97B (2026, up by 23.1%)

Acting Chairperson Han of the ACRC said “The ACRC will prioritize addressing people’s grievances to continuously realize ‘people-centered country, a nation where everyone is happy’ and further endeavor for the Corruption Perceptions Index to be placed in the solid 20s.”

**To Protect the Rights to Know of the Digitally
Marginalized, Progress Status of In-Person and Mail Petitions
Will Also Be Informed to the Petitioners**

*- ACRC implements an improvement plan to inform of
off-line petition status as of Jan. 9*

(Jan. 9th, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Acting Chairperson Han Sam Suk) implements the “Improvement Plan on Off-line Petition Progress Report System” which informs of progress status from receipt to completion for off-line petitions such as in-person visits and mail through mobile text message or email as of Jan. 9th.

This is to address the inconvenience of the petitioner and inefficient administration, as petitioners cannot know the progress of their petitions and have to repeatedly request information from the administration agency, which results in an unnecessary burden on the public officials who are in charge of it.

Petitions received through online platforms have been automatically notified of their progress status – received, need to be updated, results – through text message or email, while those received off-line such as through in-person visits or mail have no relevant regulation hence it is difficult to know the progress without the notification of the public officials who are in charge of respective cases.

For its improvement, the ACRC created an “Manual Input for Off-line Petition” step under the “Regulations on Handling e-People Petitions” for public officials to check contact information of petitioners from the receiving status and inform them of the necessity of contact information – if not filled

out properly – such as phone number or email address. With this information, public officials can register the off-line petitions in the e-People system and notify the status to petitioners.

In case of mail petitions received without proper contact information, public officials can now ask for updated contact information such as a phone number to petitioners for progress notification. Information on petition documents or mail packages will be double-checked by the person in charge to inform petitioners of the status.

The update will address the gap between the inform process of online and offline petitions to enhance the rights to know of petitioners and reduce repeated requests, resulting in better work efficiency for public officials. People who have difficulty in using online services, such as the elderly and digitally marginalized groups, can easily get notification of the status of their petitions although they are filed through in-person visits or mail.

Mr. Kim Ki Sun, Director General for Institutional Improvement, stated “The Commission will continuously check for blind spots and improve petition handling services.” Adding, “The petition handling system will improve the function of the e-People system and relevant regulations by listening to the opinions of the field so that petitioners can wait for the results without concerns.”

“What Anti-Corruption Policies Will Drive Growth for All?”

A Forum for Cooperation Between ACRC and Public

Institutions Convened

- *ACRC convened the 2026 Anti-Corruption & Integrity Policy Forum attended by participants from 216 public institutions across the nation*
- *Under the slogan “Trust Created by Integrity, Growth for All led by Trust,” participants discussed anti-corruption policies to reform the anti-corruption constitution of the public sector and spread a culture of integrity*

(Jan. 28th, 2026, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Acting Chairperson Han Sam Suk) held the 2026 Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum for Cooperation between ACRC and Public Institutions at the International Conference Hall of the Seoul Government Complex Annex, attended by auditors from 216 public institutions, to realize transparent Korea that citizens can feel.

This meeting was organized to bring together public institutions at all levels to discuss this year’s priority anti-corruption policies, share exemplary policy cases of public institutions that have performed best, enhance integrity within the public service, and promote trust and growth in our society.

This year, to accelerate anti-corruption reform that fulfills the people’s rights and interests, which is task No. 16 of the 123 government tasks, the ACRC has set anti-corruption policy directions as follows: 1) strengthening anti-corruption laws and systems to reform the public sector’s anti-corruption constitution; 2) eradicating corrupt practices that afflict the public service; and

spreading a culture of integrity led by the public sector, alongside pursuing 14 priority tasks together with public institutions.

Specifically, through amendments to anti-corruption laws such as the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment and Operation of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission, the Enforcement Decree of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act, the Act on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest Related to Public Officials' Duties, and The Public Interest Whistleblower Protection Act, obligations of public officials for corruption prevention will be strengthened and sanctions for corrupt conduct made more effective.

In addition, to actively address corrupt practices that sicken the public sector and undermine the vitality of work operations, such as public finance leakage, unfair hiring, and unreasonable workplace culture, fact-finding investigations and institutional improvements will be carried out.

Finally, the integrity capacity of the public sector will be more solidified, and based on that foundation, the Commission will strive to spread a culture of integrity across society including businesses and future generations by strengthening comprehensive integrity assessments of public institutions and enhancing integrity education.

Furthermore, during this meeting, real policy cases implemented by public institutions that carried out outstanding anti-corruption initiatives were also shared.

* Outstanding Policy Cases: 1) Korean Intellectual Property Office – building an integrity ecosystem led by the head of the agency with staff participation; 2) Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education – implementing field-oriented integrity policies focused on establishing institutional foundations in vulnerable areas and on communication with staff; 3) Korea South-East Power – analyzing corruption likelihood and focusing management on corruption risk factors; and 4) Jeonnam Development Corporation – operating a real-estate speculation prevention system to monitor real-estate speculation in approval/consent areas by affiliated executives and employees.

ACRC Anti-Corruption Vice Chairperson Lee Myong Sun said, “The experiences and opinions of public institutions at all levels that implement policies in actual administrative fields are essential for pursuing anti-corruption policies with a sense of reality,” adding that “I call for joint action among public institutions with the mindset that integrity based on mutual trust is a precious asset that will lead growth for all.”