

## **ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (MAY. 2023)**

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## **ACRC Attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023 G20 ACWG Meeting**

- *Actively engaged in discussion about high-level principles on promoting the integrity of anti-corruption bodies*

(May 25<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) attended the second 2023 G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group (ACWG) meeting held in India from May 25 to 28 and participated in discussions on the establishment of international principles on anti-corruption.

The ACRC attended the second G20 ACWG meeting to actively engage in discussions regarding anti-corruption within the international community.

The G20 ACWG meeting has been an annual event since 2010, serving as a platform for international cooperation in anti-corruption. Every year, the host country selects and presents major anti-corruption agenda, which becomes the key focus of discussions throughout its presidency. Member countries engage in discussions to establish anti-corruption principles, and the outcomes are adopted as an annex to the annual report.

The meeting was the second in the series, following the initial meeting held in March 2023. Attendees of the meeting included India, the country currently holding the G20 presidency, delegates

from member countries such as Italy, and delegations from invited countries, including Singapore and Mauritius.

This year, the meeting focus on discussing the following matters to establish G20 anti-corruption principles: ▲strengthening asset recovery mechanisms related to corruption, ▲strengthening law enforcement cooperation and improving information sharing for fighting corruption, and ▲ promoting integrity and effectiveness of public bodies responsible for preventing and combating corruption.

The Korean delegation actively participated in these discussions. In particular, the delegation shared opinions on the necessity of establishing regular anti-corruption strategies and plans based on the assessments and analyses of corruption risks to ensure an effective response to new forms of corruption, with an aim to incorporate such ideas into the anti-corruption principles.

ACRC Assistant Chairperson of Planning and Coordination Office Lim Yoon-Ju said, “We will join the efforts for international cooperation in anti-corruption by proactively engaging in discussions on the anti-corruption principles during the G20 ACWG meeting.”

## **Korea Shared Experience in Conducting Integrity Assessment with Sri Lanka**

*- ACRC hosted an anti-corruption training course for the  
public officials of Sri Lanka*

(May 18<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) of the Republic of Korea organized a training course to share Korea's experience in implementing Integrity Assessment and Corruption Risk Assessment with Sri Lanka.

The training course took place on May 15 to 19 at the Anti-Corruption Training Institute of the ACRC in Cheongju for ten public officials from the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) of Sri Lanka.

CIABOC is the constitutional anti-corruption body of Sri Lanka which has extensive mandates including investigation and prosecution of bribery, corruption and illegal accumulation of assets, and raising public awareness of corruption.

The government of Sri Lanka has been implementing the National Action Plan for Combatting Bribery and Corruption in Sri Lanka (2019-2023), which provides for the establishment of corruption prevention committees in public institutions, conduct of institutional corruption risk assessments, and legal amendments to include provisions on protect whistleblowers, witnesses and victims.

The National Integrity Council, comprising a panel of independent experts appointed by the President, will monitor and review the implementation of the national anti-corruption action plan next year.

The ACRC came up with a plan to host this training course to follow up on the official request made by the anti-corruption body of Sri Lanka which showed a keen interest in adopting Korea's Integrity Assessment and Corruption Risk Assessment.

This tailored capacity-building program was aimed at helping Sri Lanka implement its anti-corruption action plan. Based on more than 20 years' experience in conducting Integrity Assessment for public organizations in Korea, the ACRC provided intensive training and advice for Sri Lanka to introduce its first assessment of institutional anti-corruption activities.

Integrity Assessment is designed to measure the levels of integrity in individual public organizations, and identify and remove corruption risks in each organization.

It has gained international recognition as best practices in the anti-corruption field as the first place winner of 2012 UN Public Service Awards in the category of "preventing and combating corruption". The assessment program has been introduced to five countries including Indonesia, Mongolia and Thailand.

Jeon Hyun-heui, Chairperson of the ACRC, said “the ACRC will spare no efforts to help Sri Lanka improve its national integrity by adopting Korea’s anti-corruption systems such as Integrity Assessment and Corruption Risk Assessment.”

The Chairperson added “the ACRC will continue to expand technical cooperation in the field of anti-corruption and governance to help countries in the Indo-Pacific region promote democracy and achieve sustainable development”.

## **The First “Integrity and Ethics Compliance Guideline for Business” is Planned to be Released**

*ACRC “Anticipates a heightened level of addressing the anti-corruption regulations. a key component of Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) management”*

(May 4<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

The first “Integrity and Ethics Compliance Guideline for Business” will be introduced in the first half of 2023, which elaborates on details necessary for addressing strengthened anti-corruption regulations, a key component of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) management.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) has been preparing a guideline for the “Integrity and Ethics Compliance Program (K-CP) for Business,” given the rising importance of international ESG disclosure and investment and the ceaseless occurrence of cases where domestic companies violate against the US Foreign Corruption Practices Act.

※ International ESG disclosure standards, such as the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) of the European Union (EU), have been strengthened, and “anti-corruption” has become one of the four pillars of India-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), established in May 2022.

ACRC has been developing the first draft of the guideline working together with experts and stakeholders through meetings with policy advisory groups and operation of working groups of the economic organizations, following its decision of the direction of the guideline based on the analysis of domestic and foreign ESG disclosure and anti-corruption regulations and public discussion.

The guideline will include details necessary for addressing strengthened ESG management and anti-corruption regulations, such as managing supply chains and establishing systems for whistleblowing, with an aim to prevent and mitigate corruption-causing factors of businesses.

In particular, the guideline will provide detailed measures in the form of a checklist by including international guidelines and regulations in detail to ensure that businesses can easily understand and comply with them.

ACRC plans to support domestic companies to encourage their voluntary utilization of the K-CP by offering briefing sessions and educations after the guideline is published.

At the same time, ACRC plans to complement the “Integrity and Ethics Compliance Program Guideline for Public Institutions,” which was released last year, based on the results of a one-year trial operation.

ACRC has striven to spread the culture of integrity and ethical management in accordance with Article 12 (Functions) and Article 5

(Duties of Enterprises) of the “ACRC Act<sup>\*</sup>” and Article 3 (Support for Ethical Business Management) of the Enforcement Decree of the same Act.

\* the Act on the Prevention of Corruption and the Establishment of the Anti-corruption and Civil Rights Commission

ACRC distributed the “Integrity and Ethics Compliance Program Guideline for Public Institutions” in June 2022 to every public institution, including state-owned companies, quasi-government agencies, and local public companies and bodies.

In addition, the Commission has been supporting public institutions to ensure that they voluntarily prevent and mitigate corruption risks, aligning with the integrity efforts indicator of the “Public Institutions Comprehensive Integrity Assessment.”

Moreover, ACRC conducts a trial operation of the K-CP, provides education, and releases monthly publications called “Integrity and Ethical Management Briefs.”

ACRC Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, “It is necessary for domestic companies to actively address strengthened ESG management and international anti-corruption regulations as the international status of Korea has improved. ACRC will remain dedicated to supporting businesses to ensure that they implement integrity and ethical management.”

## **Global Sharing of Korean Ombudsman Experience**

*ACRC Chairperson attended the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) Board of Directors' meeting*

*Discussed and approved major issues, including IOI membership application and financial status*

(May 9<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui of the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) attended the Board of Directors' meeting of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) in her capacity as the Asian regional director, which was held on May 9 in Vienna, Austria, and engaged in discussions on major issues.

Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui was unanimously elected as one of the Asian regional directors of the IOI by 13 Asian members of the IOI through an election held in May 2021.

※ International Ombudsman Institute (IOI): A non-profit organization established in 1978 with 232 members from 125 countries, which aims to develop the system of ombudsman\* and foster exchanges and cooperation among the ombudsmen worldwide. The Institute's General Secretariat and Executive Committee are located in Vienna, Austria. The General Assembly and Board of Directors' meeting are held on a four-year cycle and an annual basis, respectively.

\* Ombudsman: the term refers to a mediator, arbitrator, and observer in Swedish, originating from the establishment of the Ombudsman in Sweden in 1809, which oversees legal compliance by the Judiciary and public officials from the Executive branch as representatives of the Parliament.

23 directors (ombudsmen) from 6 regions—Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Caribbean and Latin America, Europe, and North America—attended the meeting and engaged in discussions on a wide range of agenda items.

The major agenda items included ▲ assessment of membership applications, ▲ financial matters, including the Audit Report 2021/2022 and external audit for 2023/2024, ▲ regional subsidies 2023/2024 and IOI crisis fund, and ▲ By-laws reform with regard to the loss of membership, membership applications, and decision without meeting.

Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, “ACRC will make every effort to enhance the accountability of the government and public officials to the citizens and earn the trust of the people by actively serving as the Ombudsman in Korea, protecting the rights and interests of the people. Moreover, the Commission will provide guidance for the advancement of Asian and international ombudsmen and take the lead in the international community by fostering cooperation and sharing experiences of the Korean Ombudsman with other members of the IOI.”

## **“Cooperating with the Ombudsman of Thailand to Protect the Rights and Interests of Citizens Living in Foreign Countries**

- *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ACRC and the Ombudsman of Thailand extended for five years*

(May 8<sup>th</sup> 2023, ACRC)

On May 8, in Vienna, Austria, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ombudsman of Thailand in an effort to enhance the capacity for handling grievance complaints.

ACRC, as the Korean Ombudsman, has been committed to fostering exchange activities since signing the first MOU with the Ombudsman of Thailand in 2011. These activities included ▲visiting counterparts to listen to the grievances of their respective citizens and ▲establishing an online channel for filing civil complaints in the mother language of citizens living in foreign countries.

The ACRC has agreed to extend the MOU as the previous MOU signed in 2018 between the ACRC and the Ombudsman of Thailand is set to expire in May 2023.

Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui and Chief Ombudsman of Thailand Mr. Somsak Suwansujarit, signed the original copy of the MOU during their visit to Vienna, Austria to attend the Board of Directors’ meeting of the IOI.

Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui said, “With the extension of the MOU, we look forward to the resumption of active exchanges between the two agencies, which have been halted due to COVID-19. We are confident that strengthening our capacity for handling grievance complaints through bilateral cooperation between the national Ombudsmen of the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of Thailand will set a prime example in the global society.”