ACRC Prepares the Foundation for Korea to Leap Forward as an Advanced Nation with Integrity, Following the Achievement of Reaching a Record High in Corruption Perceptions Index

*For the past five years, ACRC has led the efforts to improve CPI in collaboration with the public servants and citizens based on fair and stringent anti-corruption laws and institutions*

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The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Jeon Hyun-Heui), a national corruption control tower in Korea, plans to continue to push for anti-corruption reform for more transparent and fair society with an aim to join the top 30 countries in the global ranking in Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) based on the achievements of anti-corruption reform it has made over the last five years.

ACRC has made various achievements such as the improvement in CPI for five consecutive years and recording an all-time high in the said index, etc. by drawing up the pan-governmental five-year anti-corruption master plan for the Moon administration, revamping norms and institutions including enacting the Act on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest Related to Duties of Public Servants (the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act) and implementing policies aimed at spreading a culture of integrity and fairness in everyday life.

Above all, reflecting higher level of expectations of the people for public servants’ integrity, ACRC reformed anti-corruption norms and institutions including the code of conduct for public servants and anti-corruption assessment.

After nine years of promoting the legislation of the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act, the Act was finally enacted in May last year and is scheduled to be in force on the 19thofnext month. The scope of duties subject to the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act was also expanded through the revision to the Act made last December to include duties of selecting scholarship students, examining dissertation, and conferring a degree.

In 2018, the Code of Conduct for Public Servants were revised to prohibit public officials’ abuse of authority, and the Corruption Risk Assessment of public organizations’ bylaws has been conducted to identify and remove legal provisions there from that may result in unfair privileges or undermine fair performance of duties in public organizations for three years starting in 2020.

In addition, with the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment System being completely overhauled for the first time in 20 years, the anti-corruption efforts in public organizations at various levels are to be assessed in a comprehensive manner as of this year.

Furthermore, ACRC has promoted various policies for anti-corruption norms and regulations to take root as part of a culture of integrity and fairness in everyday lives of public servants and citizens.

ACRC has also carried out annual inspections of hiring irregularities in public organizations since 2017, detected a total of 679 cases of irregularities, and provided relief and aid for around 3,500 victims, while strengthening inspections of actual conditions of compliance with behavioral norms by public servants, such as the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act and Code of Conduct, so that those norms can be more deeply permeated into their lives.

※ Hiring fairness of public institutions: (2017) 45.4 points → (2020) 62.0 points (based on the survey conducted in May 2021 of how fair public institutions’ hiring process is perceived to be)

※ The percentage of respondents saying that “the implementation of the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act has brought a positive impact in our society”: (2016) 84.3% of the general public, 87.8% of public servants → (2021) 87.1%, 96.3% (based on the survey conducted in Sep. 2021 of perceptions about the Act after five years of its implementation)

ACRC inspected the current status of integrity education in each public institution to see to it that they faithfully promote integrity education in order to reinforce the anti-corruption capacity of the public sector, supported poor-performing public institutions in securing implementation capabilities, strengthened education for high-ranking officials with tailored programs, and provided consulting services for public institutions with low integrity levels. Also, ACRC offered integrity education not only to public officials but also to the general public including the future generation.

※ The number of public officials taking integrity education courses: (2017) 19,805 →(2019) 24,619 →(2021) 88,329

Not being complacent about the anti-corruption feats it achieved over the last five years, ACRC will push ahead with more systemic and comprehensive anti-corruption policies so that corruption and unfairness will not hamper economic revitalization and undermine the foundation for fair society.

Furthermore, in order for the Conflict of Interest Prevention Act slated to come into force on May 19th to be smoothly established in early stages, ACRC produced and distributed the operation guideline and work manual for the effective implementation of the Act, and will continue to promote the Act-related education and promotional activities targeting public institutions for the months to come.

On top of this, to spread a culture of fair hiring in the public sector, ACRC is stepping up its inspections of hiring irregularities in all public institutions and pushing for the revision bill to the Improper Solicitation and Graft Act to prohibit public officials’ solicitations to the private sector, along with the revision to the Code of Conduct for Public Servants to strengthen the control over the abuse of power in the public sector.

In the future, ACRC will check and remove factors vulnerable to corruption in local areas after the local elections, and beef up the integrity education for the spread of a culture of integrity by creating new educational courses for integrity and ethical management for public corporations with a huge influence in people’s lives.

ACRC Anti-Corruption Bureau General Director Han Sam-Seok said, “all the fruitful outcomes of anti-corruption policies ACRC has pushed for under the rapid circumstantial changes, including the coronavirus pandemic and industrial sophistication thanks to the fourth industrial revolution, over the past five years can be attributed to citizens and public officials cooperating with ACRC with great interest,” adding that “ACRC will continue to play its role as an anti-corruption control tower to complete its on-going anti-corruption reform in collaboration with citizens and public officials to realize fairer and more transparent society aspired to by the people.”