

Building a Clean Taiwan

The people's trust is the greatest asset of governments, and corruption has the most corrosive influence on that trust.

– President Ma Ying-jeou

Anti-Corruption and transparency are core issues of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). As an APEC member, Republic of China (Taiwan) is committed to making contributions to the international community by fighting corruption and building a clean government.

President Ma's Resolve

Since his inauguration on May 20, 2008, President Ma Ying-jeou has demonstrated his determination to push for clean governance, taking integrity, professionalism, economic sustainability and equitable distribution of wealth as the administration's guiding principles, and demanding that public servants uphold the core values of integrity, professionalism, effectiveness and compassion. In his inaugural address, he stated,

This new administration will push for clean politics and set strict standards for the integrity and efficiency of officials. It also will provide a code for the interaction between the public and private sectors to prevent money politics. I hope every civil servant will keep in mind the well-known adage "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

At the 2008 International Anti-Corruption Conference in Taiwan, President Ma further emphasized, "The reason we put integrity first is that we place great importance on the establishment of clean government," adding, "Success in realizing governmental integrity depends on two key elements: First is political will, demanding that heads of state and government set good examples that others can follow. Second is the need for society-wide consensus." Further, he stated, "Fighting corruption and promoting clean government are the top priorities of this new administration. We look forward to everyone's full cooperation, enabling Taiwan to play an important role in the world not only by virtue of its miraculous economic accomplishments, but also through its achievements in governmental integrity."

Taking to heart Confucius's words of wisdom—"Governance is defined by integrity. If the leader embraces integrity, who will dare be corrupt?"—President Ma's resolve and perseverance are unquestionable. His administrative team members likewise take the formation of a clean government as an essential mission. In addition to aggressively combating corruption, they are expediting the establishment of a legal framework conducive to clean government while boosting publicity and educational campaigns to make "integrity" a common value in society.

According to a public opinion poll conducted by the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission of the Executive Yuan in May 2008, about 60 percent of respondents expressed confidence in the newly elected government's ability to build clean government. The Ma administration will surely strive not to disappoint them.

Actions by the Government

1. A Central Integrity Commission was established on August 1, 2008, with the Premier serving as its head. The commission is mandated to establish policies that promote clean government and systems that provide guidance, monitor performance and assess policy implementation.
2. Local governments have established integrity committees to promote reforms that help ensure clean government at the grassroots level, with county magistrates and city mayors serving as the heads of the committees. (February 2009)
3. The Integrity and Ethics Directions for Civil Servants were promulgated on August 1, 2008, providing clear guidelines for civil servants to follow when dealing with invitations to banquets, gift giving and requests for favors.
4. A number of sunshine laws have been enacted and implemented:
 - (1) The Lobbying Act has established an application and registration system for lobbying activities, rendering them more open and transparent so that they can serve their function of enabling the private sector to participate in policy-making. (August 8, 2008)
 - (2) Amendments to the Political Donations Act provide augmented mechanisms for verifying and returning political contributions and

- accessing and reviewing records of such contributions. (August 13, 2008)
- (3) Amendments to the Act on Property-Declaration by Public Servants have broadened the scope of public servants obligated to declare assets and have strengthened the review system. (October 1, 2008)
 - (4) Draft amendments to the Act on Recusal of Public Servants Due to Conflicts of Interest are designed to make various rules stipulated in the law more reasonable and complete. (May 27, 2009)
 - (5) The law was amended to designate as a crime “refusal of those indicted for corruption to explain sources of assets,” stipulating that such persons are obligated to explain to prosecutors the sources of unusual increases in assets. (April 22, 2009)
 - (6) Another amendment was drafted to curb “red envelope culture” by designating “bribery without violation of duties” as a crime. (Forwarded to the Legislative Yuan for deliberation on October 2, 2009)
 - (7) The Money Laundering Control Act was amended so as to bring it into line with the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the 9 Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing issued by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). (June 10, 2009)
 - (8) A National Integrity Building Action Plan was promulgated as a blueprint and developmental strategy for reorganizing efforts to build a clean government. (July 8, 2009)

New Blueprint for a Clean, Competent Government

In formulating the National Integrity Building Action Plan as the new blueprint for clean government, we have used as reference the concepts underpinning the United Nations Convention against Corruption and Transparency International’s National Integrity System. The plan comprises eight specific actions, 44 tactics and 80 measures whereby key ministries and commissions will set goals for effectiveness and integrate the strengths of government, private enterprise and the public as a whole to forcefully pursue such goals. The concrete actions are as follows:

1. *Strengthening anti-corruption measures*: enhancement of internal and external control mechanisms, strict action against corruption and other illegal behavior

2. *Upholding public-sector ethics*: implementation of the Integrity and Ethics Directions for Civil Servants, including maintenance of detailed records of private-sector contacts (meetings with lobbyists, gifts, etc.), and performance evaluations
3. *Promoting corporate credibility*: establishment of business ethics guidelines to strengthen corporate governance and social responsibility
4. *Expanding public guidance*: reinforcement of educational programs focusing on character building and rule of law, encouragement of public participation in maintaining ethical standards
5. *Increasing efficiency and transparency*: construction of e-government, ensuring information transparency and accessibility
6. *Enhancing the openness of government procurement*: implementation of the Government Procurement Act, ensuring fair competition
7. *Ensuring fair participation in politics*: establishment of sound electoral laws and forceful action against vote-buying so as to allow talented individuals to run for public office
8. *Participating in international cooperative efforts*: enhancement of transnational exchanges, prevention of money laundering, mutual assistance in law enforcement

A Clean Government, An Honest Society

Corruption undermines the principles of fairness, distorts the distribution of resources and destroys the public's trust in and identification with the government. Our nation's second transfer of power between political parties on May 20, 2008 reflected the public's rejection of corruption through the ballot box and marked a new milestone in Taiwan democratization. Under the leadership of President Ma, we have completed a series of necessary reforms. We hope that, with the people's full support, the ideals of a clean government and an honesty society will soon be realized.