

# **SENATOR EDGARDO J. ANGARA**

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## **INT'L PARLIAMENTARIANS GATHER IN MANILA FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE**

MANILA, Philippines -- Members of Parliament (MPs) and experts from thirteen countries today gather in Manila to affirm their commitment to the global fight against corruption.

Held at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza, the two-day conference of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) and the regional meeting of the Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC), aims to equip lawmakers with tools to implement the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

According to Senator Edgardo Angara, founding President of SEAPAC and the only Asian representative to GOPAC's Executive Board, "the two-day conference will help strengthen the region's fight against corruption."

"The fight against corruption is a continuous struggle and is not limited by borders or cultures. Each nation represented here must help in formulating an international cooperative strategy to aid us in this fight," Angara added.

He said, "This gathering will show the world that the Philippines joins the international community in committing to combat corruption and to promote good governance."

Keynoting the event is Justice Secretary Leila M. de Lima.

The two-day event is attended by thirty-six parliamentarians including Philippine Senators and Members of the House of Representative.

Together with leaders of multilateral institutions and members of civil society, the series of meetings focus on formulating strategies in combating corruption,

promoting transparency and upholding public accountability and good governance among the organization's member countries – with parliaments playing a key role.

Among the expected results of the conference is the ratification of all member countries of the UNCAC, which the Philippines ratified in 2006.

“We will assess the performance of every member country in their fight against corruption, their key strengths and weaknesses, as against their most recent anti-corruption initiative,” Angara added, referring to a Parliamentarians Toolkit developed by the GOPAC Global Task Force of parliamentarians, GOPAC and the Oslo office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), that brings together GOPAC policy positions and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

This Toolkit provides a reporting framework that can be adapted to regional and national circumstances for parliamentarians to assess their own roles in preventing corruption through legislation, oversight and representation.

It is also intended to facilitate the identification of strengths and weaknesses as well as areas for technical assistance and parliamentary strengthening in corruption prevention.

Angara led the passage of major anti-corruption laws including the Government E-Procurement Law and creation of the Office of the Ombudsman. He continues to push for the Political Party and Campaign Finance Reform bill which will transform political parties into public institutions and maintain transparency in their activities.

The event was made possible through the support of the Philippine Senate under the leadership of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the Asia Foundation, the United Nation's Development Program (UNDP) in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission of the Philippines, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).