

Aide Memoire
Regional Seminar on Democratic Local Governance in Asia: Impact of Reforms to
Deepen Local Democracy
(May 23-25, 2012)

Sponsorship and Purpose

The Regional Seminar on Democratic Local Governance in Asia: Impact of Reforms to Deepen Local Democracy will be jointly organized by East-West Center and the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy and held in Indonesia for a three day period between May 23-25, 2012. The purpose of the seminar is to examine the reforms in local governance in pursuit of creating and deepening local democracy, inclusive of the content and the results of reforms, and the factors constraining and/or supporting such reforms. The seminar is a follow-up to the regional dialogue held in Phnom Penh to identify critical local governance issues and regional trends.

Context and Rationale

Over the past few decades, three shifts in development dialogue have taken place – from economic growth to human and sustainable development with the participation of all segments of the society, from centralization to decentralization to localize the delivery of and access to services, and from government to democratic governance to provide institutional mechanisms for the engagements of the three sets of actors – those from the government, civil society and the private sector. The recent focus on the promotion of local democracy is the result of the above paradigm shifts. It is based on the recognition that governance should be both democratic and effective at both national and local levels to achieve inclusive development.

It is increasingly understood that the eradication of poverty requires actions at the local level. Local governments and the local civil society can play a major role in this effort by ensuring more effective and accountable local infrastructure and social service delivery for the poor, and by improving the dialogue among the state, citizens, and their communities. Too often, however, local governments are not adequately involved in consultations on national poverty reduction strategies or sector policies, nor are they given the mandate or institutional and financial capacity to plan and deliver local development interventions such as social services and local infrastructure, and local economic development initiatives.

Most importantly, democratic local governance provides an institutional framework through which groups and individuals at multi-levels can organize themselves and participate in making decisions affecting them. It helps the development of democratic values and skills among citizens. It allows for greater representation of various political, religious, social and ethnic groups. This enhances active participation of local citizens and, consequently, political legitimacy of the government and national integration.

Democratic local governance is, thus, based on principles of new thinking in development (sustainability, equity, poverty alleviation and inclusion), democratic governance (subsidiarity, representation, participation, accountability, transparency, access and rule of law), and decentralization (devolution, civil society engagement, and local partnerships).

As in other regions of the world, countries in Asia have witnessed rapid democratization over the past few decades. Today, an overwhelming majority of Asian countries are electoral democracies, with regular elections, functioning parliaments, active civil society, relatively free media, and systems of checks and balances among different organs of the state. Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea are examples of democratization. Democratization at the national level in Asia has been accompanied by greater decentralization of financial and political powers to local units of government and administration. Beginning in the mid-1980s, decentralization was broadened to include political power sharing, democratization, and market liberalization. During the 1990s, decentralization was seen as a way of opening governance to wider public participation through the organizations of civil society elections at the local level.

In India, for example, local governments were strengthened with two amendments to India's constitution in 1992 leading to the election of about 238,000 local councils across the country. They are made up of three million elected representatives, one third of which are women. In Indonesia, following months of political protest and turmoil in 1998, a comprehensive new decentralization Law was introduced. The decentralization policy aims at improving public service delivery, increasing community participation and ensuring the accountability of local governments. Decentralization has three key elements – greater weight to devolution than de-concentration; a shift from vertical to horizontal responsibility; and clear provisions for the allocation of funds from central to local governments. Recent democratic transitions in Bangladesh and Nepal will strengthen systems and processes of local democracy.

Over the past few decades, local governments in most Asian countries have tried different mechanisms, tools and instruments of local government accountability and transparency to promote and sustain devolution and strengthen trust between citizens and local governments. These include: transparent and accountable systems of public procurement, participatory auditing, and the promotion of ethics and integrity among local public officials. The Government of Andhra Pradesh in India, for example, established a new electronic system to offer tenders online and handle the procedures electronically. The government of Seoul City adopted the Integrity Pact (IP), by which the city government and companies submitting bids agree neither to offer nor to accept bribes in public contracts. The Public Record of Operations and Finance (PROOF) was launched in Bangalore, India in 2002 to monitor the financial performance of the City Corporation in Bangalore. In this same context, since 1994 the Public Affairs Center has utilized "Citizens Report Cards" (CRP) that rate and compare agencies on the basis of public satisfaction and the responsiveness of public agencies. The Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) is an independent, non-profit media agency specializing in investigative journalism. The PCIJ provides training for investigative reporting to full-

time reporters, free-lance journalists and academics. The Philippines Report Card on Pro-Poor Services, a pilot project, was supported by the World Bank to get feedback from citizens concerning the performance of government services, including basic health, elementary education, housing, potable water and food distribution.

The greater, faster and freer communication and movement of goods, people and ideas are both enabled and driven by advances in technology. This environment provides new challenges and opportunities, requiring enhanced governance capacities at both national and local levels. This entails, first of all, an assessment of ongoing reform efforts and practices within the various countries in the region, with a view to analyzing best practices and innovative approaches and learning from past efforts in furthering their development agenda.

Objectives

The objectives of the Regional Seminar on Democratic Local Governance in Asia are to:

- Describe the content, approaches and implementation modalities of democratic local governance reforms focused on decentralization policies, citizen participation, gender and human rights, civil society engagement and accountability and transparency;
- Examine impacts of reforms in improving the quality of local democracy;
- Identify factors influencing reforms to deepen local democratic governance
- Provide a forum to researchers, civil society representatives, politicians and senior government officials to present their experiences dealing with local governance reforms; and
- Promote the sharing of experiences and local governance reform perspectives from a variety of Asian contexts.

Content

Local democracy is both a means to an end (such as delivery of and access to services) and an end in itself (i.e. a process which is characterized by such principles as participation, accountability, rule of law, subsidiarity and transparency). Democratic local governance, therefore, needs to be both democratic in terms of processes and effective in managing local public affairs. Within this framework, it is important to examine the content, implementation modalities, impacts and factors influencing the success of local governance reforms in selected Asian countries. Reforms dealing with the following themes and sets of issues will be covered in the regional seminar.

1. Decentralization policies and programs: components of the policy; responsibilities and resources of local governments; reform implementation issues; the role of local government associations; systemic impacts and factors influencing the design and implementation of decentralization reform; impact of national political system and power structures on democratic local governance

2. Local governance participation and capacity: content of reform to promote citizen participation in issues that affect their lives; do local governments have the capacity to implement the reforms critical to sustain local democracy; are there other capacity related barriers to sustaining good local governance inclusive of non-conducive institutional culture and footholds for corruption?
3. Gender and rights perspectives in democratic local governance reform and change processes: review reform efforts to promote gender equality; impact of political processes and power structures on gender equality; access to justice and responsiveness of judiciary and police to protect human rights of women and minorities; tools and methodological issues in gender mainstreaming including reservation structures
4. Engagement of civil society: this would include local governance reforms aimed at legal and regulatory framework for civil society organizations (CSOs), their legitimacy and accountability, their capacity, their relationship with the government and their impact on local democracy
5. Accountability and transparency – content and impact of reforms including right to information; community-based initiatives; participatory budgeting; CSO auditing of government programs; anti-corruption programs at the local level; ethics and codes of conduct; procurement procedures and processes; factors influencing impact of reform.

Expected Outcomes

The seminar will contribute to our understanding of the environment for local democratic governance reform, impacts of past reform efforts and critical factors and elements from contexts in Asia where reform has been able to be implemented and sustained. It will provide a regional forum for the sharing of good practices in local democracy, experiences on the ground of reforms and innovations that emerged from the previous workshop in terms of what has worked and not worked as well as refinements of best practices that emerged, promoting capacity building of local governments, training and research institutions and supporting the network of institutions in the region engaged in democratic local governance.

Participants and Workshop Modalities

The seminar participants will consist of three groups. (1) two participants from each of the selected countries including one researcher and one senior government official/political leader; (2) resource persons on selected themes to make “context presentations” to guide discussion; and (3) ICLD’s Training Course Participants who are engaged in local development projects.

Discussion on each theme will start with “context presentation” in the plenary by a senior scholar, followed by a “country presentation” on the same theme, and a “project presentation” by the ITP participants. This will be followed by brief discussion in the plenary. The participants will then be divided into three working groups to discuss

specific questions related to the theme. This process will be repeated for each theme. Summing up plenary session in the afternoon of the third day will attempt to integrate lessons learned from the local governance reform experiences.

Five resource persons/context presenter will be invited i.e. one for each theme. Their role will be to guide and set the stage for discussion on local governance reform by providing comparative and theoretical perspectives on local governance reform and identifying emerging local governance reform issues in the region.

Countries to be invited to participate in the seminar are Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Cambodia, China, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Each country presentation will examine the following:

1. What were the main characteristics and/or elements of local governance reform introduced in the country?
2. Who were the stakeholders involved in designing, implementing and assessing the impacts of local governance reform?
3. What are the tangible results of the reform and innovation and which groups did it benefit the most? Were reforms an isolated effort or did it create a positive environment for changes in other areas leading to the attainment of national long-term development goals?
4. What challenges were encountered in designing and implementing the reform and how were they overcome? Alternatively, what factors account for its success?
5. What makes the reform adaptable to other countries in the region?

Contacts

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AGENDA

Regional Seminar on Democratic Local Governance in Asia: Impact of Reforms to Deepen Local Democracy

**Yogyakarta, Indonesia
May 23-25, 2012**

Organized by East-West Center and the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

WEDNESDAY, 23 May 2012

**WORKSHOP VENUE:
Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta
Semeru conference room**

8:00 a.m.

MORNING REFRESHMENTS
REGISTRATION FOR THE SEMINAR

8: 30 – 9: 15 a.m.

OPENING STATEMENTS

Shabbir Cheema, East-West Center

**Lena Johansson de Château, Swedish International Centre
for Local Democracy**

Swedish Embassy to Indonesia

9: 15 a.m. – 12: 30 p.m.

**REFORMING DECENTRALIZATION POLICIES AND
PROGRAMS**

This session will discuss issues and trends in reforming decentralization policies and programs including responsibilities and resources of local governments, reform implementation issues and change agents, systemic impacts of decentralization reform, and impact of national political system and power structures on democratic local governance.

Seminar Facilitator: Robertson Work

Chair for the Morning Session: Shabbir Cheema

9: 15 – 9: 40

Context Presenter: Mark Turner, University of Canberra

1: 55 – 2: 05	Discussion
2: 05 – 2: 25	<i>Country Presenter:</i> Mayor Shamim Al Razi, Municipal Association of Bangladesh
2: 25 – 2: 35	Discussion
2: 35 – 2: 50	<i>Project Presenter:</i> Anh Phung Thi Van, Centre for Community Empowerment
2: 50 – 3: 00	Discussion
3: 00 – 4: 00	<i>Working Groups:</i> Group 1 to meet in Bromo 1 Group 2 to meet in Bromo 2 Group 3 to meet in Bromo 3 Group 4 to meet in Semeru
4: 00 – 4: 30	Working Groups Report to Plenary
4: 30 – 5: 30	SPECIAL PRESENTATION ON ASSESSING DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA: RETRIEVING THE FUTURE?
4: 30 – 5: 10	Amalinda Savirani and Willy Purna Samadhi, University of Gadjah Mada
5: 10 – 5: 30	Discussion
6: 30 p.m.	DINNER
	Departure from the hotel entrance at 6:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, 24 May 2012

**WORKSHOP VENUE:
Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta
Semeru conference room**

**9: 00 a.m. – 12: 30 p.m. GENDER AND RIGHTS PERSPECTIVES ON
DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE REFORM**

This session will discuss gender and rights perspectives in democratic local governance reform and change processes: review reform efforts to promote gender equality; impact of political processes and power structures on gender equality; access to justice and responsiveness of judiciary and police to protect human rights of women and minorities; tools and methodological issues in gender mainstreaming including reservation structures

9: 00 – 9: 25	<i>Context Presenter:</i> Aida F. Santos-Maranan, Isis International-Manila/ WeDpro, Inc.
9: 25 – 9: 35	Discussion
9: 35 – 9: 55	<i>Country Presenter:</i> Vice Mayor Illiza Sa'Aduddin Djamal, Banda Aceh City
9: 55 – 10: 05	Discussion
10: 05 – 10: 20	<i>Project Presenter:</i> Nurul Widyaningrum, Akatiga Foundation
10: 20 – 10: 30	Discussion

10: 30 – 11: 00 a.m. COFFEE BREAK

11: 00 – 12: 00	<i>Working Groups:</i> Group 1 to meet in Bromo 1 Group 2 to meet in Bromo 2 Group 3 to meet in Bromo 3 Group 4 to meet in Semeru
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12: 00 – 12 : 30	Working Groups Report to Plenary
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12: 30 a.m. – 1: 30 p.m. LUNCH
Venue: Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta

1: 30 – 4: 30 p.m.

ENGAGEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

This session will discuss the engagement of civil society: this would include local governance reforms aimed at legal and regulatory framework for civil society organizations (CSOs), their legitimacy and accountability, their capacity, their relationship with the government and their impact on local democracy.

1: 30 – 1: 55	<i>Context Presenter:</i> Goran Hyden, Professor
1: 55 – 2: 05	Discussion
2: 05 – 2: 25	<i>Country Presenter:</i> Deputy Governor Aunny Ieng, Takeo Province in Cambodia
2: 25 – 2: 35	Discussion
2: 35 – 2: 50	<i>Project Presenter:</i> Sinthay Neb, Advocacy and Policy Institute
2: 50 – 3: 00	Discussion
3: 00 – 4: 00	<i>Working Groups:</i> Group 1 to meet in Bromo 1 Group 2 to meet in Bromo 2 Group 3 to meet in Bromo 3 Group 4 to meet in Semeru
4: 00 – 4: 30 p.m.	Working Groups Report to Plenary

4: 30 – 6: 00 p.m.

POSTER SESSION

Semeru Room

7: 00 p.m.

DINNER:

Venue: Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta, Paseban Lobby Court

FRIDAY, 25 May 2012

9: 00 – 12: 30 p.m.

**REFORM ISSUES AND EXPERIENCES IN
ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

This session will discuss accountability and transparency – content and impact of reforms including right to information; community-based initiatives; participatory budgeting; CSO auditing of government programs; anti-corruption programs at the local level; ethics and codes of conduct; procurement procedures and processes; factors influencing impact of reform.

9: 00 – 9: 25	<i>Context Presenter:</i> Daniyal Aziz, Adviser, Governance Institutes Network International
9: 25 – 9: 35	Discussion
9: 35 – 9: 55	<i>Country Presenter:</i> Win Myo Thu, ECODEV Group and Nilar Myaing, Local Resource Institute
9: 55 – 10: 05	Discussion
10: 05 – 10: 20	<i>Project Presenter:</i> Uzzal Bhattacharjee, Transparency International Bangladesh
10: 20 – 10: 30	Discussion

10: 30 – 11: 00 a.m. COFFEE BREAK

11: 00 – 12: 00	<i>Working Groups:</i> Group 1 to meet in Bromo 1 Group 2 to meet in Bromo 2 Group 3 to meet in Bromo 3 Group 4 to meet in Semeru
12: 00 – 12: 30	Working Groups Report to Plenary

12: 30 a.m. – 1: 30 p.m. LUNCH
Venue: Hyatt Regency Yogyakarta

1: 30 – 3:00 p.m.

**PLENARY DISCUSSION ON KEY POLICY
MESSAGES**

3: 00 – 3:30 p.m.

Closing remarks

Lena Johansson de Château, ICLD
Shabbir Cheema, EWC