

## Seoul Democracy Declaration

**22 Oct. 2013**

We participants, democracy advocates and human rights defenders from various Asian countries, in the Founding Assembly of the Asia Democracy Network on the occasion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Seoul Democracy Forum held in Seoul, Korea on 21 and 22 October 2013,

- 1) Paying tribute to those who preceded us in the fight for democracy and human rights and consolidating their legacy,
- 2) Recalling the sacrifices of democracy advocates who shed their blood for defending and promoting democratic values and principles in different countries in Asia,
- 3) Reaffirming our commitment to build a just, equitable and peaceful community of democratic societies in Asia,
- 4) Recognizing the urgent need to create a network of democracy advocates and human rights defenders in Asia,
- 5) Expressing our deep solidarity with all democracy advocates who struggle for the realization of democracy and human rights in Asia and beyond,
- 6) Emphasizing the essential role and contribution of citizens and civil society organizations to advance democracy in Asia,
- 7) Appreciating the efforts and work of all organizers including members of the Korea Democracy Network to host the Founding Assembly of the Asia Democracy Network,
- 8) Welcoming the launching of the Asia Democracy Network as a common platform for action and reflection among democracy advocates and human rights defenders in Asia,

Hereby adopt the Charter of Principles as guiding principles for the Asia Democracy Network.

## **ASIA DEMOCRACY NETWORK (ADN)**

### **Charter of Principles**

#### **Vision, Mission and Goal**

1. ADN is committed to building a just, equitable and sustainable community of democratic societies in Asia, where all human rights of all individuals, groups and peoples are fully respected and realized. (Vision)
2. ADN works to promote and advance democratization and democratic governance at all levels of society through effective solidarity and cooperation among civil society organizations and democracy advocates in Asia. (Mission)
3. ADN aims to build a stronger regional democracy network and movement engaged effectively in international advocacy and engagement with governments, inter-governmental organizations and other stakeholders in Asia and beyond. (Goal)

#### **Values and Principles**

1. ADN embraces principles such as international solidarity and partnerships, plurality and diversity, shared responsibilities and leadership, human rights based approach.
2. ADN believes :
  - that democracy is a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world community.
  - that participatory and inclusive democracy plays a role in promoting social justice, reducing inequality, and preventing armed conflict.
  - that women's active participation and empowerment is crucial in advancing inclusive democracy.
  - that democracy should contribute to the protection of religious, ethnic and other minorities.
  - that free, fair and democratic elections are essential to good governance.
  - that education for democracy at all levels ensures that citizens are aware of their rights and civic duties.
3. ADN recognizes :
  - the role of the private sector in democracy building by promoting good and sustainable business practice according to international norms and standards.
  - the importance of international development cooperation as an effective tool for democracy promotion.
  - the importance of constructive engagement with governments and international organizations while maintaining independence and autonomy.
4. ADN upholds and reaffirms universal values such as human rights and democracy as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Universal Declaration on Democracy (1997), UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to

Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms [Human Rights Defenders] (1998).

In accordance to the above principles, ADN shall identify and address key challenges and threats to inclusive and participatory democracy in Asia such as:

- Corruption and failure of accountability mechanisms.
- Culture of impunity.
- Poverty and social inequality.
- Negative impacts of globalization.
- Bad governance including fraudulent elections.
- Authoritarianism, militarization, and armed conflicts.
- Control and manipulation of media and information.
- Religious fundamentalism in all its forms.
- Gender Inequality.
- Exclusion of marginalized groups.