

PRESS RELEASE

Dedicated anti-corruption agency inaugurated

Agency Against Corruption
Ministry of Justice
July 20, 2011

The newly established Agency Against Corruption under the Ministry of Justice was formally inaugurated this morning at a ceremony attended by President Ma Ying-jeou and Premier Wu Den-yih, as well as by other top government officials, including Judiciary Yuan President Rai Hau-min, Control Yuan President Wang Chien-shien, Executive Yuan Secretary-General Lin Join-sane, Minister Without Portfolio Luo Ying-shay and Minister of Justice Tseng Yung-fu. Also witnessing the event were some 200 guests from all sectors of society.

At the ceremony, the agency's first director-general, Chou Chih-jung, was sworn into office. Thereafter, Director-General Chou, together with the President, the Premier and others in attendance, unveiled the AAC headquarters name plate, marking the organization's official launch, a major milestone in the effort to ensure honest government.

The agency's launch is the culmination of a year of organizational work with inputs and support from across the government and society. A year ago today, President Ma held a press conference announcing that work would commence to establish an agency dedicated exclusively to preventing and combating corruption. The urgency of doing so had become especially apparent in the face of a series of cases of improper behavior among police and instances of bribery of judges.

The organization has four major departments focusing, respectively, on general strategy making, eradication of corruption, prevention of corruption and affairs concerning government ethics departments. In addition to its Taipei City headquarters, the AAC has three field offices for conducting investigative work in northern, central and southern Taiwan. Currently, it is budgeted to employ 180 permanent personnel.

Although this is not a large number of people, the AAC can rely on the cooperation of police authorities, the Investigation Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, the government-wide system of ethics offices and other government agencies.

Personnel of the AAC main office's corruption eradication division and its regional investigative departments include prosecutors vested with police powers, able to take direct action in order to obtain key evidence at the earliest possible opportunity.

The AAC's three main operational objectives are to reduce the rate of corruption, to effectively prosecute indicted suspects, and to safeguard human rights. Meanwhile, it will utilize a three-step cycle of action—preventive action and legal action followed by refinement of preventive action. The primary goal, after all, is to prevent corruption in the first place.

In remarks delivered at the ceremony, Director-General Chou stated that the AAC would begin its work with seven immediate focuses:

- make comprehensive efforts to reinforce ethical awareness and practice in government;
- integrate efforts of the public and private sectors and deepen the roots of professional ethics;
- develop anti-corruption tools that promote administrative transparency;
- bolster regulatory mechanisms and bring them in line with international standards;
- carry out investigations and prosecutions with absolute independence, rejecting all attempts at interference;
- uphold principles of due process and safeguard basic human rights; and
- issue reports to the public on a regular basis, welcoming oversight from all social sectors.

Director-General Chou emphasized that the AAC will impose the most stringent standards of conduct on itself and open itself to public scrutiny. To that end, it will invite experts, upstanding members of society and representatives of a variety of civic organizations to form a “Clean

Government Review Committee” that will monitor the AAC’s conduct and transparency. In addition, ACC staff members are required to declare their assets, premised on the principle that uprightness begins with oneself.

In addition to investigating and prosecuting instances of corruption and assisting government agencies develop sound internal control mechanisms, the AAC will do its utmost to promote preventive measures and broad social participation in the mission of creating an honest society and to heighten anti-corruption awareness. It will work to integrate government departments, private enterprises and civil society to pursue the goal of a clean government and honest society. A nation can thereby become more competitive in the international community as well.