

ACRC Korea Transparency Newsletter (Nov. 2023)

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ACRC and UNDP Showing Continued Commitment to Strengthen the Global Anti-Corruption Solidarity

*- Cooperating in and supporting the dissemination of anti-corruption
policies to developing countries by re-extending the initial MOU signed with
UNDP in 2015*

(23, Nov. 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Kim Hong-II) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will enhance their cooperation and support in disseminating Korea's anti-corruption policies to developing countries by extending the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

On November 29 in the morning at the Government Complex Seoul, ACRC will extend the MOU with UNDP concerning the dissemination of anti-corruption policies to developing countries.

Vice Chairperson and Secretary General of ACRC Chung Seung-Yun and Director of the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) Anne Juepner will participate in the MOU signing ceremony and engage in discussions regarding future cooperation measures.

In 2015, ACRC and UNDP signed the initial MOU with the aim of sharing and disseminating Korea's anti-corruption policies within developing countries.

At the ceremony, the two agencies will conduct a review of the anti-corruption policies sharing project carried out over the past eight years and exchange information on exemplary anti-corruption policies that have yielded achievements recognized in Korea. In addition, they will discuss measures for sharing and cooperation by leveraging the global network of the UNDP.

The two agencies have been sharing the Anti-Corruption Initiative Assessment (AIA) and Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA) with nine countries*, including Vietnam and Malaysia.

* Vietnam, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Colombia, Algeria, Montenegro, Kosovo, Myanmar, and Mongolia

AIA is an institution designed to assess anti-corruption practices and integrity activities and their achievements within public institutions, aimed at elevating their integrity levels. CRA is an institution designed to prevent corrupt behaviors in advance by identifying corruption-prone factors, implementing improvement measures, and recommending them to competent authorities concerning legislation.

The two agencies have sustained their active cooperation, including the joint publication of resource materials on both AIA and CRA.

Since 2022, they have been sharing Clean Portal, a platform for reporting corruption and public interest violations, with Kosovo, Mongolia, and Uzbekistan and promoting the publication of resource materials covering its achievements.

Vice Chairperson and Secretary General of ACRC, Chung Seung-Yun, said, “Through the UNDP, we have been sharing Korea’s exemplary anti-corruption policies with developing countries while contributing to raising the level of integrity in each country by establishing an anti-corruption solidarity. We will endeavor to ensure that the cooperation between our agencies translates into practical assistance in the fight against corruption within developing countries.”

Director of the UNDP Seoul Policy Centre, Anne Juepner, said, “We look forward to further disseminating Korea’s exemplary anti-corruption policies to developing countries by continuing our cooperation with ACRC.”

ACRC Coordinated with Local Administrative Offices to Prevent ‘Leakage and Waste of Government Subsidies’

- *ACRC discussed measures to improve integrity in public office and enhance strategies for fraudulent claims for public funds -*
- *ACRC held workshops for officials charged with matters related to audit and subsidies in local governments -*

(24, Nov. 2023, ACRC)

In order to prevent the misappropriation of public funds, such as subsidies, through false or illegitimate means, front-line administrative agencies have come together to share information and communicate.

On November 24, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Kim Hong-IL) held regional workshops at the Korea Railroad Corporation in Daejeon for around 300 officials, including audit managers and staff from 86* local governments and education offices in Chungcheong and Honam regions.

*Metropolitan and local governments, and education offices in Chungcheongnam-do, Chungcheongbuk-do, Jeollanam-do, and Jeollabuk-do

In this workshop, the ACRC thoroughly discussed measures to strengthen the management of the operation of the public fiscal recovery system, prevent the recurrence of illegitimate claims in vulnerable areas, and promote inter-agency collaboration to enhance protection and compensation for whistleblowers.

The ACRC Chairperson Kim Hong-IL participated in the workshop and conducted a lecture on "Integrity Mindset and Practices for Public Officials."

Earlier this year, the ACRC held workshops in the metropolitan area (April), Gangwon region (June), and Yeongnam region (July).

The Act on Prohibition of False Claims for Public Funds and Recovery of

Illicit Profits was enacted and implemented in January 2020 to prohibit false claims, etc. for public funds and establish a system for the recovery and management of profits earned through such false claims, etc.

In cases of illegitimate receipt of government subsidies and grants, not only is recovery enforced, but the ACRC also imposes additional monetary sanctions up to five times the amount of the illegitimate gains.

The ACRC has regularly examined the compliance status of various agencies' measures against false claims for public funds, encouraging efforts to recover illicit profits at all levels.

Additionally, the ACRC has continuously worked to prevent public finance leakage and enhance fiscal integrity by conducting joint inspections with relevant agencies, especially in vulnerable and high-incidence areas of illegitimate claims.

* The amount of illicit profits recovered and additional monetary sanctions imposed by various agencies: 45.7 billion won (2020) → 105.6 billion won (2021) → 133.6 billion won (2022)

** Recommendation for the recovery of illicit profits and imposition of additional monetary sanctions after the intensive inspection conducted by the ACRC: 400 million won (2020) → 300 million won (2021) → 3.1 billion won (2022) → 10.1 billion won (2023)

ACRC Chairperson Kim Hong-IL stated, "The ACRC will continue to actively collaborate with public agencies of various levels to ensure that public finances are not wasted or used improperly," adding that "we will further strengthen the operation of the public fiscal recovery system and actively support efforts to enhance fiscal soundness across the government."

ACRC Participated in the Assembly of Parties of the International Anti-Corruption Academy

- Vice Chairperson Chung Seung-Yun presented key anti-corruption achievements, including the implementation of fair standards for employment -

(10, Nov. 2023, ACRC)

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Kim Hong-II) presented Korea's key achievements in anti-corruption measures at the Assembly of Parties (AoP) of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), held on November 9 in Vienna, Austria.

The Korean delegation, led by Vice Chairperson and Secretary General Chung Seung-Yun, participated in the 12th session of the AoP of IACA attended by 80 Parties.

IACA is an international organization dedicated to global anti-corruption education and research, established in Austria in 2010. Since 2012, the Academy has convened the AoP annually, sharing anti-corruption trends of each country and discussing issues related to IACA's operational matters.

During the recent AoP, Parties elected new officers—President and two Vice Presidents—and discussed the agenda, including the implementation report of the Work Programme 2021-2024 and current and emerging trends and challenges in prevention of and combating corruption.

At the AoP, ACRC presented Korea's anti-corruption efforts made over the past year, encompassing the establishment of the Integrated Center for

Reporting on Hiring Irregularities, ▲publication of the Integrity and Ethics Compliance Program Guideline for businesses, and ▲introduction of a mobile application enabling citizens' convenient participation in the Comprehensive Integrity Assessment of public institutions.

In addition, the Commission engaged in in-depth discussions regarding the latest trends in the utilization of cutting-edge technologies, such as AI and Big Data analysis, for preventing and combating corruption.

ACRC Vice Chairperson and Secretary General Chung Seung-Yun said, “The efforts of ACRC and other Parties in sharing advancements in anti-corruption laws and institutions have significance in anti-corruption education and research within the international community. We hope IACA evolves further as an educational and research organization contributing to the international community's anti-corruption capacity building.”

Collective Complaint Regarding Environment Damage Caused by Fine Dust to be “Resolved through Mediation by ACRC”

*- Gunsan-si will purchase a woodchip factory through the
farming area overhaul project contest -*

(21, Nov. 2023, ACRC)

An intense conflict between Gunsan-si residents and a woodchip factory, ongoing for over a year, is resolved through mediation by the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Kim Hong-Il).

On November 21, ACRC Vice Chairperson Kim Tae-Gyu visited the woodchip factory located in Seongsan-myeon, Gunsan-si to inspect the site and formalized the resolution through mediation, inviting town residents, the head of the factory, and the deputy mayor of Gunsan-si.

In November 2022, the factory owner who previously operated a clay brick factory applied for a change in business type to a woodchip factory in Gunsan-si due to shifts in the business environment.

However, residents have continued their rally in front of the city hall, arguing that “the factory, located in the center of the town, will cause environmental damages, such as through producing fine dust, and adversely affect not only residents but also nearby areas of eco-friendly agricultural produce and a large number of people by causing a setback to the support for school meals provided by the integrated center for food support.”

With this regard, in July of this year, Gunsan-si requested ACRC for mediation and arbitration, which was followed by mediated plans as a result of multiple consultations among ACRC and relevant agencies.

According to the mediated plans, both residents and the factory owner related to the necessity of concessions to resolve conflicts, agreed with decision by Gunsan-si applying land and facilities within the premises of the woodchip factory for the “farming area overhaul project contest,” and decided to collaborate mutually for a seamless selection and promotion of the project.

In line with mediated plans, Gunsan-si will finalize its purchase of the woodchip factory by October 15, 2024, if it is chosen for the farming area overhaul project contest. Scope, price, and procedures of the compensation will be in accordance with the guidelines for the project contest.

In the event that the woodchip factory is not selected for the farming area overhaul project contest, Gunsan-si will establish alternative plans for projects serving public interest and purpose by the end of December 2024.

At the same time, the residents have agreed to conclude their rally and demonstrations immediately upon the signing of the mediation document.

ACRC Vice Chairperson Kim Tae-Gyu said, “The complaint involved residents, the factory owner, and Gunsan-si, making it challenging to resolve. However, through mutual understanding and concessions among stakeholders, an opportunity for the resolution of the conflict emerged. ACRC will remain committed to protecting the rights and interests of citizens by fostering consensus, engaging in the resolution of intense public conflicts and actively offering alternatives.”

Issuance of Complaint Forecast, Following a 2.8-fold Rise in “Bedbugs” Complaints Compared to the Previous Week

- *ACRC has requested relevant agencies to take thorough actions, such as enhancing disinfection measures focused on multiuse facilities and conducting preemptive prevention*

(15, Nov. 2023, ACRC)

Recently across the country, the voices of citizens have continuously urged for the strengthening of preventive measures, prompted by consecutive cases of bedbug detection and bites.

The Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC, Chairperson Kim Hong-II) analyzed civil complaints received through the Civil Complaint Analysis System* for the week spanning from October 30 to November 5 and confirmed that the number of bedbug-related complaints increased by 181.1% from 37 last week to 104 cases.

* ACRC’s pan-governmental civil complaint analysis system designed to comprehensively collect and analyze civil complaints big data received through the e-People platform and civil complaints channels of local governments

In this regard, ACRC issued a civil complaint forecast concerning “the prevention of the spread of bedbugs,” and urged relevant agencies to implement thorough measures in order to prevent the suffering faced by citizens due to bedbugs.

Key civil complaints regarding “bedbugs” received over the past week included requests for ▲enhancing preventive measures focused on multiuse facilities, ▲implementing preemptive preventive measures, and ▲promoting ways to control bedbugs.

<Key civil complaint cases regarding the “prevention of the spread of bedbugs”>

[Requests to strengthen the preventive measures focused on multiuse facilities]

- **(Public transportation) I want fabric seats of subways and KTX replaced with plastic or stainless material.** The fabric seats have serious issues concerning not only bedbugs but also mites, dust, mold, and germs. I am reluctant to use the subway due to concerns over bringing bedbugs home from public transportation and do not sit when I do use it. Please conduct a complete replacement of fabric seats. (Nov.5)
- **(Accommodations) Please ensure that accommodations post a completion notice of bedbug disinfection or inform the completion of disinfection on website.** This will provide reassurance to people who visit accommodations as **guests are anxious about bedbugs and accommodations are also suffering from the bedbug infestation.** (Nov. 3)
- **(Logistic centers) Bedbugs can be transported through delivery boxes across the country. Please ensure that logistic centers thoroughly disinfect delivery boxes.** (Oct. 30)
- **(Others) Please disinfect areas with fabric seats, including lecture rooms at universities, arenas, and theaters.** Please carry out intensive inspections and pest control at **hostels, dormitories, Korean-style spa, large supermarkets, shopping centers, as well as facilities for kids and teenagers.** (Nov. 1)

[Request for preemptive prevention measures]

- I live in a region where many industrial complexes are located, so there is a high influx of **foreigners**, and many others commute from Seoul. There have been no reports of bedbug incidents in the region yet, but I believe that **it is the best way to prevent the infestation in advance since eradication of bedbugs is challenging.** Please **conduct preemptive disinfection and prevention measures rather than addressing issues after their occurrence.** (Oct. 26)
- My child is going on a **school trip** to Seoul this week, and I am **concerned about the hygiene and cleanliness of the accommodation.** If children return home from places where bedbugs reside, it could lead to a bedbug infestation in our region. Please ensure that **the hygiene conditions of the accommodation are inspected before departure.** (Nov. 6)
- I heard about bedbugs being found near my home. Bedbugs are not infectious disease vectors, which is why they are not subject to mandatory reporting, so

once they are spread, controlling them becomes incredibly challenging. Please **take prompt measures as bedbugs spread fast.** (Oct. 24)

[Request for enhanced promotion of the methods to control bedbugs]

- **(Governmental measures)** Please **inform citizens with the government's measures and plans** to prevent the spread of bedbugs. In particular, I would like to know how the government is preparing to address the spread of bedbugs resulting from the use of public transportation. Please **conduct preventive measures actively to alleviate citizens' anxiety** and put emphasis on daily prevention practices. In addition, we need to know **guidance on handling situations where bedbugs are discovered at home or in public transportation.** Furthermore, I want to know **effective insecticides to prevent bedbugs, among which are reported to and approved by the Ministry of Environment.** It is challenging to identify **which insecticides in the market work for bedbugs.** It would be helpful to know **the ways to find those insecticides easily.** (Oct. 31)
- **(Local government's measures)** Bedbug-related issues have been covered daily on the news. With regard to this matter, I want to know **what kind of preventive measures are taken by local governments** and whether there are **prevention plans** to prevent bedbugs and curb the spread of bedbugs. (Nov. 1)
- **(Request for crackdown on fraudulent and exaggerated advertisements)** There is an increasing number of products (bedding vacuum cleaners, high-temperature steamers, etc.) **being advertised to kill bedbugs without proper verification procedures.** Please **review these exaggerated advertisements and errors on product labels and issue warnings.** (Oct. 31)
- **(Request for the promotion of correcting misinformation on preventive measures)** **Misinformation about bedbug prevention, such as scattering diatomaceous earth on floors or claiming that cockroaches are natural enemies of bedbugs, etc. has been spreading on the internet.** Diatomaceous earth can be harmful to humans if inhaled or ingested, which is why it should not be scattered indoors. Please correct the misinformation. (Oct. 31)

ACRC will conduct post-management for the governmental innovation by monitoring the trends in civil complaints through the civil complaint analysis system regarding the complaints for which forecasts have been issued.

In addition, ACRC released the big data trends for the first week of

November by analyzing civil complaints collected through the civil complaint analysis system over the past week.

Other significant civil complaints, apart from those related to preventing the spread of bedbugs, included requests from residents for a prompt performance of guaranteed obligations and loan extensions since the performance of guaranteed obligations for leased apartment deposits has been delayed.

Another major civil complaint was about requests from residents of Namyangju, urging adherence to the original construction plan of Suseokdaegyo, which was initially designed as a six-lane road directly connected to Misa Gangbyeon main road, being downscaled later to a four-lane road with bypass access.

At the same time, the number of civil complaints collected in the first week of November totaled 292,287, showing a 1.0% increase compared to the previous week (289,381).

With regard to the number of civil complaints compared to last week by regions, there was an increase in Sejong (8.9%), Gyeongnam (8.4%), etc., while a decrease was observed in Incheon (8.6%), Daegu (6.8%), etc.

By sectors, there was an increase in the welfare sector, such as requests for augmenting the number of national and public nurseries in △△ district of ○○-si, followed by the city sector, such as requests for implementing measures to address the alterations of use as living accommodations.

ACRC has been releasing diverse civil complaint analysis documents, including “Voices of the people,” which presents the trend of civil complaint big data, on its website (bigdata.epeople.go.kr) to ensure that all citizens have easy access to information whenever needed.