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## Workshop Calls for Bold Measures in ADB's Openness Policy

Today, 24 January 2011, the Global Transparency Initiative (GTI) hosted a Workshop with key stakeholders, including senior ADB representatives, to discuss the second draft Public Communications Policy (PCP) prepared by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Workshop provided a chance for civil society and ADB representatives to discuss the further changes that are needed to bring the draft PCP fully into line with international standards on information disclosure, ahead of the 16 February discussion by the Board of Directors on the draft Policy.

At the Workshop the GTI provided ADB representatives with a document entitled *Proposed Amendments by the GTI to the Second Consultation Draft of the PCP*. The Proposed Amendments, prepared by Toby Mendel of CLD and Nepomuceno Malaluan of the Philippine Access to Information Network, presents in track changes the specific amendments GTI is proposing for the new policy.

*"We welcome the positive changes that the ADB is proposing in its new draft Policy,"* said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD. *"But if the ADB wants to do more than just keep pace with other international financial institutions, it needs to adopt a bolder vision. It should, in particular, show leadership by heralding in greater Board openness and limiting the third party exception to sensitive business information."*

Other key demands presented at the Workshop included:

- Removing the proposed power of the Board and President to trump disclosure, even when information is not covered by an exception.
- Broadening the powers of the Independent Appeals Panel to at least make recommendations in cases involving a refusal by the Board or President to disclose information.
- Taking more direct responsibility for ensuring effective access by affected people, including through a commitment to develop project communication plans jointly with implementing partners.

When it adopted its new policy in 2005, the ADB was at the forefront of IFI transparency but it has now fallen behind. We call on the ADB to take the initiative and once again adopt an information disclosure policy that breaks new ground.

The Proposed Amendments are available at: <http://www.law-democracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/11.01.ADB-PCP.pdf>.

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