



Photo 1: President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes to the Palace former Deputy Commissioner Tony Kwok of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption during a call on her October 5.

Press Release from Presidential Palace Malacanang 5th Oct. 2004

Gov't to convene anti-corruption workshop

To demonstrate top political will against graft and corruption, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will convene a summit workshop against dishonesty in government with no less than Tony Kwok, the renowned anti-corruption czar of Hong Kong, as resource person.

The workshop, its venue and schedule still to be arranged, will be undertaken with funding from European Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The decision to hold a summit workshop was reached during Kwok's courtesy call on the President at the Music Room in Malacanang this afternoon.

During the call, the President also officiated the oath of office of Constancia de Guzman and Atty. Nicasio Conti as chairperson and commissioner respectively of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC).

The two new officials completed the new set of three commissioners of the PAGC. Teresita Baltazar is the last one.

The former deputy commissioner of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) said that the summit workshop would enable public servants to find ways "to clean their own houses."

In a press briefing later, Kwok said he wants to emphasize that defeating corruption can be done.

He noted that corruption was a way of life in the former British crown colony, especially in the 60s and 70s.

In his fifth return to the Philippines, Kwok said he sees progress in the anti-corruption drive every time he comes back.

He noted that there is a political will from the President down to the professional anti-corruption agencies like the Office of the Ombudsman and PAGC, with the recognition that there is no single solution to the corruption problem and existing partnerships against such crime.

Also present, aside from Kwok, at the Malacanang meeting, were Emil Balangaita, USAid deputy chief; Daryl Veal, USAID Legal and Regional Administrator; and Stephen Edminister, USAID Governance Administrator.

Government officials present include Press Secretary Ignacio R. Bunye, Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, De Guzman and Atty. Conti.

For her part, De Guzman said the President's immediate orders to her were to find ways to strengthen the PAGC by maintaining an 80 to 20 personnel ratio of investigators and support staff.

De Guzman also revealed that the President directed her to focus on the top 20 high-impact cases that would be lodged in the commission.