

Call for promoting integrity pledge for ensuring accountable and participatory governance at local level

Dhaka, 11 April 2010: Speakers here today underscored the need for promotion of integrity pledge as social accountability tool for ensuring accountable and participatory governance at local level.

"The government is fully committed to improving quality of public services at the community level and would very much welcome voluntary engagement of all stakeholders for promoting accountability and transparency at local level in vital sectors such as health, education and local government", Dr. Alauddin Ahmed, Advisor to the Honourable Prime Minister for Education, Social Development and Political Affairs said during an international seminar here, organized by Transparency International Bangladesh.

The seminar titled 'Integrity Pledge: Participatory Governance through Social Accountability' was presided over by M. Hafizuddin Khan, Chair, TIB Trustee Board. Professor Muzaffer Ahmad, a TIB Trustee, also spoke while Professor Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman of Dhaka University commented on the seminar paper, co-authored by Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director and M. Sajjad Hussein, Senior Programme Manager, TIB.

A total of 22 international participants from 12 TI chapters from Asia, Africa and Europe, including TI Secretariat, Berlin participated in this seminar. Members of Parliament Alhaj Momtaz Begum, Ashraf Ali Khan, Nilufar Chowdhury, Zobeda Khatun, Shammi Akhter also spoke while TI Zambia Executive Director Goodwell Lungo, TI Indonesia Secretary General Teten Masduki, TI Senior Advisor Hansjörg Elshorst also participated during the discussion.

TIB introduced the Integrity Pledge (IP) that involves voluntary engagement of the local level public representatives, officials, and service providers with the service recipients and other citizens to promote transparency and accountability at the delivery of services in vital sectors such as education, health and local government.

The IP is a micro-level social accountability tool for partnership between all stakeholders, especially service providers and service recipients from the perspective of the latter as a stakeholder rather than only beneficiary. It involves empowerment of people through raising voices, asking questions and raising demands—all leading to accountability in a participatory process. It is also a process that mobilizes the community to participate in monitoring the quality of delivery of public services.

Speakers emphasized the importance of favorable political will and administrative support for successful implementation of public commitments made by three parties. They also underscored the need for creating supportive policy and institutional changes for generating further interest for up-scaling the replication of this new initiative.

Presenting salient features of integrity pledge, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said a total of 18 local institutions, nine each from both education and local government sectors, have so far signed IP, facilitated by TIB-inspired volunteer networks: the Committees of Concerned Citizens and youth volunteers and cultural activists from Youth Engagement and Support (YES).

IP is a voluntary tripartite written commitment where service providers, service recipients and citizens committees- make key pledges that include: prevent and control abuse of power for private gains; eliminate all forms of unauthorized payments, including bribery for services rendered; ensure and promote participation of service recipients in decisions that affect the content and quality of services; ensure transparency in public contracts and implementing work under such contract and promote disclosure and transparency and accountability in all related actions.

It may be mentioned here that for the last few years TIB has been using key elements of integrity pledge: such as citizens' report cards, advice and information desks, participatory budget and face-the-public, which created a conducive climate for signing of the integrity pledge with the respective authorities for ensuring quality public services at the local level.

Media Contact

S. M. Rezwan-Ul-Alam

Director, Outreach & Communication

Phone: 01713-065012, e-mail: rezwan@ti-bangladesh.org