

January 15, 2010

Media Statement

Enact the Code on Conduct of Members of Parliament

We welcome the private member's bill on Code on Conduct for Members of Parliament (2010) placed in the parliament on January 14. If adopted, this will not only fulfill a key electoral pledge of the Bangladesh Awami League, but will also go a long distance in institutionalizing democracy, promoting democratic practice and meeting public expectation in Bangladesh.

The Awami League in its election manifesto made a specific commitment in this regard. That such an important bill has now been placed in the Parliament, though as a private member's bill, reflects the realization of the importance of upholding the highest ethical and parliamentary standards by the Parliament and Members of the Parliament. We are particularly encouraged that the bill provides for specific measures for enforcement and monitoring of observance of the proposed Code through self-regulation to be overseen by an Ethics Committee composed of all parties represented in the Parliament.

Several recent studies including an in-depth research by Transparency International Bangladesh showed that there is a huge public demand and expectation of such a code of conduct and its enforcement to prevent abuse of power and to promote transparent and accountable governance. Such codes of conduct have also been found to have made extremely important contributions in strengthening democracy and the national integrity system in many other countries of the world.

We urge upon all concerned, especially, the Members of the Parliament across the political spectrum, to take immediate necessary steps to enact the bill as a law as soon as possible, and meet public expectation.

Issued by:

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director of TIB on behalf and with the consent of:

M. Hafizuddin Khan, former Comptroller & Auditor General and Adviser to the Caretaker Government; **Prof Muzaffer Ahmad**, Chairman, Shujon; **Advocate Sultana Kamal**, former Adviser to the Caretaker Government; **A S M Shahjahan**, former Adviser to the Caretaker Government; **Selina Hossain**, Writer and Activist; **Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed**, Chairman Bishwo Shahityo Kendro; **Barrister Sara Hossain**; **Shaheen Anam**, Executive Director of MJ Foundation, **Dr Shahdeen Malik**; **Dr Badiul Alam Majumder** of Shujon; **Advocate Rizwana Hasan** of BELA; and **Dr. Iftekharuzzaman**, Executive Director of TIB.

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