



PRESS STATEMENT

Asset Declaration: Public Scrutiny Essential for Political Integrity

11 July 2018

C4 Center refers to news reports stating that lawmakers including cabinet ministers are required to declare their assets to the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) in due course. This short-term measure was announced by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad after a meeting with the special cabinet committee on anti-corruption on 9 July 2018. In addition, he also affirmed that this requirement for asset declaration to be made to the MACC is also applicable to both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister.

C4 Center welcomes this positive step taken by the Pakatan Harapan government which is in consonance with the spirit of reform and democracy. We would like to thank the newly-formed National Centre for Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption (GIACC) for having heard and forwarded our proposals on asset declaration to members of the administration.

While we applaud the move, we would like to emphasize that asset declaration would be more effective and transparent if it is also made public. This can be done by making all relevant forms concerning asset declaration accessible to members of the public and machine-readable. The MACC itself in a meeting with C4 Center on 25 June 2018 affirmed that it could facilitate the process of making asset declaration public by uploading the relevant information on its website.

C4 Center would like to reiterate that it has authored a Public Asset Declaration Framework (PADF) with the assistance of the constitutional committee of the Bar Council prior to the 14th General Elections. With the PADF, C4 Center and other good governance civil society groups have been lobbying the government to eventually institutionalise a robust asset declaration law in Malaysia. The PADF outlines principles of best practice as well as a sample declaration form which is immensely comprehensive.

Given this recent development, C4 Center is encouraged to hear that the government is making progress on asset declaration. However, we hope that the details of an asset declaration framework can be strengthened with our proposals in mind and shared with all stakeholders, especially the process of drafting an asset declaration law and making asset declaration available publicly. A radical shift for a clean and accountable government can only be achieved by having, among others, a robust asset declaration law which provides for public scrutiny.

We would like to emphasize that people play an important role as a check and balance against kleptocratic tendencies at every level, for whichever government of the day holding power. It bears reminding that the people are the ones that voted out corruption and abuse of power in the last general elections. A comprehensive and effective asset declaration law which mandates public scrutiny is therefore key to ensuring that those who occupy positions of power discharge their duties with integrity.

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The Public Asset Declaration Framework can be found here:
<https://c4center.org/pledge-public-asset-declaration-framework>