

2017 Asia Declaration

With an unprecedented global population of 1.8 billion people between 15 and 30 years old, engaging young people in civic and political processes is more important than ever. Imbued with passion, dynamism and optimism, this generation is poised to become the agents of democratic change around the world.

Generation Democracy supports this process by facilitating, educating and connecting young leaders around the world. This global coalition comprises more than 400 youth organizations from 75 countries united in the desire to amplify the voices of young people and ensure that they are better served by local and national institutions. To this end, 36 young leaders from 13 countries across Asia came together at the April 2017 Youth Leadership Academy in Bangkok, Thailand. This diverse group recommended the following actions to promote democratic engagement by youth in the region.

We, youth leaders from 13 countries across Asia dedicated to advancing the voices of youth in the civic and political processes, have gathered together to:

- *Condemn corruption and nepotism;*
- *Emphasize that while social media is a powerful tool capable of inspiring positive change, it is also often used irresponsibly to spread disinformation, hateful propaganda and a disengaged online population;*
- *Recognize that quality civic education remains inaccessible to many and detached from the needs of local communities;*
- *Acknowledge that apathy towards political and civic activities corrodes democratic institutions and threatens the future prospects of young people; and*
- *Affirm that lack of representation and systematic discrimination have marginalized a significant number of vulnerable and minority groups.*

We call upon political and civil society leaders to:

- *Defend* transparency and accountability by fighting corruption and nepotism, building and respecting the rule of law, and pursuing policies tailored to the needs of citizens;
- *Create* youth-led mechanisms and centers of excellence to audit, assess, rate, evaluate, and rank perceptions of corruption and nepotism within institutions;
- *Urge* elected leaders to protect freedom of speech and expression while advocating for the active engagement of key stakeholders to fight against hateful propaganda, particularly on social media;
- *Guarantee* more equitable and reliable access to information, to supplement citizen awareness and engagement in decision-making;
- *Recommend* stronger partnerships between government, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to incorporate equality studies into school curricula; and
- *Encourage* the establishment and/or strengthening of Equal Opportunities Commissions in our home countries.

Further, we pledge to:

- *Champion* good governance. We will dedicate ourselves to living graft-free lives and mobilizing our peers to invest in civic engagement and political participation;
- *Constantly advocate* and lobby for policies, frameworks, and programs that promote the creation of spaces for youth to participate in decision-making regardless of their backgrounds; and
- *Lead* by example by serving as engaged and educated citizens in our local communities and on the national level.

*Positive change for a greater quality of government starts with us. We are the generation to solve these challenges.
We are Generation Democracy!*