



NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR FREE ELECTIONS (NAMFREL)

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Transparency a Major Concern in Elections worldwide

Electoral Transparency was the biggest theme in the recently-concluded conference on Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation hosted by the **National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL)** and the **Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)** held at the Dusit Thani Manila on November 12-14. The participants agreed that transparent elections must meet two basic criteria: 1) Each step is open to scrutiny; and 2) Stakeholders can independently verify whether every process is conducted honestly and accurately.

Experiences on electoral transparency in Tunisia and Mozambique were presented by external monitors who observed the elections in these countries. Applying established benchmarks on election observation, the body arrived at the following findings regarding the state of transparency in elections worldwide: 1) There is too much emphasis on election day observation, where it should ideally cover most if not the entire election period; 2) Countries with human rights issues are likely evasive of transparent elections; and 3) Country Election Management Bodies include major political parties but exclude smaller parties in their policies and implementation of elections.

Election Observers can help promote transparent elections through management of election data. They must ensure that they are using primary data which are timely, relevant, freely available to all stakeholders, complete, and most of all, analyzable.

The conference on the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation was attended by 28 election experts coming from various international election bodies such as the **UN Electoral Assistance Division**, the **International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)**, **The Carter Center**, the **National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)**, the **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)**, the **Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)**, the **Election Observation & Democratic Support of the European Community**, the **European Union External Action Service**, **International IDEA**, **Organization of American States (OAS)**, **ANFREL** and **NAMFREL**.