



aeswatch 2010

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Political parties join citizens' groups in a call for genuine source code review

Political parties, including the Nationalista Party, PDP-Laban, Ang Kapatiran Party, the office of Senator Jamby Madrigal and Makabayan Coalition today joined hands with citizens' groups Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG) and AES Watch to demand for a genuine source code review.

The common stand on the source code was taken despite political differences.

In a joint statement, political parties and citizens' groups announced their intention not to participate in the "source code review as scheduled by Comelec".

They agreed that the guidelines set by Comelec "impose restrictive conditions that will make the exercise so impractical as to limit it to a 'walkthrough' of the source codes" which, according to the statement, is entirely different from a source code review.

A source code walkthrough will "not help erase public doubts cast on the integrity of the automated election system arising from the lack of a real source code review," the statement read.

Moreover, with just 2-1/2 months remaining before election day, "not much time is left to do a proper and thorough review."

In comparison, Colorado-based SysTest Labs, which was paid more than P70 million, had four months (from October 2009) to do a source code review and "had a much greater latitude" for the review it performed as "it did not have to work under the same restrictions now being imposed by Comelec."

The signatories called on the Comelec to allow a real source code review by Filipino IT code reviewers of interested political parties and groups as provided by Section 12 of RA 9369 and "under the same guidelines and conditions given to SysTest Labs."

They also called for vigilance in protecting the Filipino voters' rights and encouraged other political parties and interested groups who have similar concerns about the lack of a real source code review to "come out with their own public statement". At the same time, they clarified that the joint statement was issued "not as an endorsement of any move for a return to the manual election system but as an exception to Comelec's restrictions".

Ernesto R. Del Rosario, IT specialist and signatory for PDP-Laban, said he "is happy to see that the normally contentious political parties put aside their daily verbal clashes to band together for a higher and nobler cause of protecting our democracy."

The signatories include Eric B. Manalang, president of Ang Kapatiran Party; Atty. J. Gary T.G. Jimenez for the office of Senator Jamby Madrigal; Jose Fornier II for Nacionalista Party; IT specialist Ernesto R. del Rosario and Atty. Koko Pimentel for PDP-Laban; Maita Gomez, co-chairperson of Makabayan Coalition; Dr. Pablo Manalastas, senior fellow and IT consultant of the Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG); and Alfredo E. Pascual, convenor of AES Watch.

aesWatch Conveners' shared concern: Transparent and Credible Elections

... includes University of the Philippines Alumni Association (UPAA), National Secretariat for Social Action-Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), Bishop Broderick Pabillo and Bishop Deogracias Yniguez of the Commission on Public Affairs of the CBCP, Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG), Ecumenical Bishops Forum, National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), Dr. Rachel Roxas, dean of the De La Salle University- College of Computer Studies (DLSU-CCS), Dr. Reena Estuar, chair of the Ateneo de Manila University- Department of Information Communications System, Dr. Jaime Caro, chair of the UP Department of Computer Science, CAUCUS- Philippine Computer Society, Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), Computer Professionals Union, Solidarity Philippines, Philippine Computer Emergency Response Team (PhCERT), National Union of Students in the Philippines (NUSP), Engr. Rodolfo Lozada, Dilaab-Hearts Foundation, Senior Catholic Citizens Organization, Coordinating Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG), Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), Transparent Elections.org, Concerned Citizens' Movement (CCM), Association of Schools of Public Administrators in the Philippines (ASPAP), Transparency International-Philippines, Pagbabago (Movement for Social Change), Council for Health and Development (CHD), Movement for Good Governance (MGG), Alyansa Agrikultura, and others.