

Opening Address by Siegfried Herzog

Regional Director for South Asia, Friedrich Naumann Foundation

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Mr Herzog began by recollecting his experiences of living abroad in India and Southeast Asia. He pointed out that the concepts of liberty and democracy are not unique to the West, for the roots of many liberty movements could be traced to significant events in Asia. The 1986 revolution in the Philippines is one such example. Today, the Philippines is among the leading countries in Asia with regards to civil freedoms.

Mr Herzog also noted many positive developments and trends in the region, such as the recent parliamentary elections in Myanmar that has advanced democracy there and of the greater freedom enjoyed by the people of Mongolia as a result of various political reforms.

“The chance to engage with new people, new concepts and new perspective is vital to the development of freedom.”

- Siegfried Herzog

Mr Herzog also highlighted the importance of network opportunities that events such as the Asia Liberty Forum provide. He noted that “networks are essential to driving the freedom movement forward ...to help individuals in the struggle for liberty. ALF is about sharing skills and experiences, and to strengthen, nurture and support new think tanks.”

To conclude, Mr Herzog encouraged delegates at the forum to seek out new encounters and forge meaningful partnerships. This, he said, is vital for the advancement of the freedom movement in Asia.