

Three Thai Election Officials Visit NAMFREL



Three ranking officials from the **Election Commission of Thailand (ECT)**, Mr. Anucha Chansuriya, Ms. Patchara Katikul, and Mr. Kongyos Boonak met with NAMFREL Council Members and Secretariat, June 23, 2015 to explore areas and modes of cooperation between election management bodies (EMBs) and election monitoring organizations (EMOs). The three officials are in the country to attend the ASEAN Workshop on Election Observation, a conference of EMB officials being held at the Manila Peninsula Hotel.

The NAMFREL officials who received the guests were Edward Go, Damaso Magbual, Augusto Lagman, Maricor Akol, Lito Averia, Cora Ignacio, Eric Alvia, and Karel Galang.

The ECT is gearing to conduct a referendum on the Draft Constitution recently completed by the Constitution Drafting Committee formed by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha. The Draft Constitution is expected to redefine the political order in Thailand.

One of ECT's areas of concern not only for the referendum exercise but for future elections is strengthening EMOs or election watchdogs which in Thailand are dispersed, are fledgling organizations, and need support from the EMB itself.

The Thai officials expressed admiration on the independence and robustness of EMOs in the Philippines, particularly NAMFREL's. The NAMFREL officials gave an overview of its beginnings, its present programs, organization, volunteer base, funding strategy, and state of relations with COMELEC.