Chartering the Path for a Presidential Transition

In 2010, Philippines president-elect Benigno Aquino III and the outgoing president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, crafted a way to transfer power in the midst of high political tension. Inadequate record keeping within the government complicated their efforts, but the work of a dedicated corps of career civil servants, a small but significant degree of cooperation between the two sides, and limited but effective planning by Aquino’s team ensured an effective, though bumpy, transition. The handover highlighted the importance of institutionalizing the transition process to minimize conflict and allow for uninterrupted governance.

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Listening to the Public to Improve the Civil Service

Petty corruption and inefficiency had plagued service delivery in the Philippines for decades, earning the country the nickname of the "Sick Man of Asia." In 2007, under pressure from civic groups and the private sector, the Congress passed the Anti-Red Tape Act to cut bureaucratic complexity and reduce opportunities for graft. The Act required all frontline government offices to post Citizen Charters, set up a public complaints desk, and process all citizen transactions on time. The Civil Service Commission, charged with monitoring compliance, initiated annual social audits in 2010 to measure public satisfaction with frontline services. During the survey's first four years, the commission used the social audit results to change how civil servants thought about their work and improve compliance with the Anti-Red Tape Act.

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