


No stashing of money abroad: Party agency

 **HA NOI (VNS)— High-ranking Government and Party officials should be banned from keeping money in foreign bank accounts and owning property abroad, according to a proposal presented yesterday by the Central Internal Affairs Commission, an agency under the Party Politburo.**

The Commission held a conference yesterday to discuss ways to revoke property deals by corrupt officials.

According to a report presented at the conference, Vu Thu Hanh, deputy head of the Research Department under the Commission, banning high-ranking officials from keeping money in foreign bank accounts or owning property abroad was aimed at preventing them from creating bases to which they could flee.

The research group said unofficial statistics revealed that in 2013, only 10 per cent of money identified as being from corrupt practices was recovered. In 2014, the number was about 22 per cent.

All participants agreed that seizing money and property involved in corruption was critical in the fight against corruption and a strong measurement of the effectiveness of control efforts.

According to Pham Anh Tuan, deputy head of the Central Internal Affairs Commission, besides sentencing corrupt officials and individuals, Government agencies must improve ways of seizing the property of corrupt officials and putting the funds in the State budget or returning it to its legal owners.

However, Professor Le Hong Hanh, former head of the Legal Research Institute, expressed concerns that corruption could also mean things like helping others' children to get a desirable Government positions.

Hanh said the new proposal must be in line with the international convention on corruption fighting under the rules of ASEAN.

Pham Quy Ty, former deputy minister of the Justice Ministry, noted that the commission made an important point in revealing that no individual citizen had ever used a civil lawsuit to regain property taken by corrupt officials.

The Central Internal Affairs Commission of the Party Politburo has 23 members. In 2014, it announced that Viet Nam's former chief government inspector, Tran Van Truyen, abused his position to acquire huge real-estate holdings in various southern provinces.

In related news, the Finance Ministry has proposed to reduce the number of Government and State agencies that can sell and buy State assets from 100,000 to 107.

This is part of efforts to tighten the selling and buying of State assets and prevent corruption.

The Ministry of Finance estimates that, if implemented nationwide, the State budget can save about VND30,200 billion (US\$1.47 billion) a year. — VNS

