Anti-Corruption Expert Highlights the Importance of Reliable Indicators and Verifiable Benchmarks in Controlling Corruption

July 23, 2009—Manila, Philippines— Michael Johnston, Charles A. Dana Professor of Political Science at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, gave a talk entitled “Beyond Perceptions: Measuring Vulnerabilities to Corruption” at a public seminar held at the AIM Conference Center. The seminar was jointly organized by The Asia Foundation and the Hills Program on Governance of the Asian Institute of Management. The event was attended by individuals from government, civil society, business, academe, and media.

In his talk, Professor Johnston highlighted the need to develop indicators to assess vulnerabilities to corruption by moving away from the usual perception-based indices. “To attack specific, embedded corruption problems, and to demonstrate the effects of controls to officials, political backers, citizens and possible malefactors, reform advocates need sensitive, unobtrusive, and easily understood assessment tools,” said Mr. Johnston. By using comparative examples from various countries, he emphasized how this specific strategy will provide opportunities for citizen’s participation and oversight in governance.

"The approach proposed by Professor Johnston would allow for a more meaningful assessment of what is and what is not working in the country's efforts to combat corruption and to improve governance generally," said Atty. Angela Garcia, Executive Director of Hills Program on Governance, AIM.

Dr. Steven Rood, Country Representative of The Asia Foundation noted how this effort will strengthen ongoing efforts in developing a fact-based approach towards constructing an anticorruption reform agenda. “We need to go beyond anecdotes and stories about particular scandals to have a more systematic approach to combating corruption.”
For over 30 years, Mr. Johnston has taught lecture-courses on political corruption, conducted research on corruption and development issues, and taken part in the implementation of various reform efforts in different countries. Professor Johnston’s recent book, *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy*, won the 2009 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

**About The Asia Foundation**

The Asia Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to the development of a peaceful, prosperous, just, and open Asia-Pacific region. The Foundation supports programs in Asia that help improve governance, law, and civil society; women's empowerment; economic reform and development; and international relations. Drawing on more than 50 years of experience in Asia, the Foundation collaborates with private and public partners to support leadership and institutional development, exchanges, and policy research.

With offices throughout Asia, an office in Washington, D.C., and its headquarters in San Francisco, the Foundation addresses these issues on both a country and regional level. In 2008, the Foundation provided more than $87 million in program support and distributed over one million books and educational materials valued at $41 million throughout Asia.

**About The Hills Program on Governance**

The central task of the Hills Program on Governance, which is part of the Ramon V. del Rosario, Sr. - C.V. Starr Center for Corporate Governance, is to develop an agenda that promotes good governance at the intersection of private and public sectors, confronting corruption and encouraging accountability.

Roderick M. Hills, the founder of the Hills Program is a former chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and a leading advocate of effective corporate governance. He also has held distinguished lecturer positions at the Harvard University School of Law, the Yale University School of Management, and the Stanford University School of Law.

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