

## **A REVOLUTION IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDONESIA'S ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY**

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In theory, anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) play a key role in public management, particularly in oversight and accountability functions, because they increase the risks that fraud and corruption are detected, investigated, and prosecuted. In practice, only a few ACAs in the world have been effective in making corruption a high-risk and low-reward activity. Virtually all ACAs in developing countries are unwitting (and, in some cases, even witting) abettors of corruption due to their abysmally poor record in catching and convicting “big fish”. However, in recent years, the *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi* (KPK) or Corruption Eradication Commission appears to have become a compelling exception. Prior to the KPK’s emergence, Indonesia during and before the Suharto regime was seen as riddled with unmitigated petty and grand corruption. But since the KPK began its painstaking work in 2003, it has successfully investigated and prosecuted over two hundred cases against top officials across all branches of government and throughout the political spectrum. With a 100% conviction rate to date, it has caused unprecedented political tremors in Indonesia’s political and economic establishment. It has also recovered sizable state assets from convicted officials and fostered corruption prevention reforms in government agencies. Moreover, the work of KPK is widely seen as helping drive Indonesia’s improving business environment and investment climate. Can the KPK’s success be substantiated and explained, and if so, can it replicated? Comparing the KPK and other ACAs (notably the Philippines’ Ombudsman), the speaker will discuss the *institutional*, *managerial*, and *operational* factors behind the KPK’s continuing effectiveness despite growing hostile resistance from disaffected sectors in Indonesia’s political economy. An analysis of these factors provides guidance on when, where, and how the ACAs of other countries can be strengthened to help overcome what the World Bank and others have called “the single greatest obstacle to development”.

### About the Speaker

Emil P. Bolongaita is a Public Management Specialist in the Public Management, Financial Sector and Trade Division, South Asia Regional Department of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Prior to joining ADB in 2010, he was a Technical Director of Management Systems International (MSI), where he led international development projects. From 2007 to 2010, he was the Director of the Enhancing Government Effectiveness Project, a USAID-funded initiative that assisted public sector reforms of select government agencies in different countries, namely Indonesia, Vietnam, Morocco, Jordan, and Yemen. He was also the Team Leader of the USAID-funded Rule of Law Effectiveness Project in the Philippines from 2004-2006. He has been an Adjunct Faculty at Carnegie Mellon University, Australia; a Visiting Professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University; an Assistant Professor of Public Policy, National University of Singapore; and an Assistant Professor of Development Management, Asian Institute of Management. He received his PhD in Government and International Studies from the University of Notre Dame.