

Foreword

In recent years, member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have come to increasingly recognize the negative economic and political effects of corruption. Corruption commonly affects both North and South, leaving as victims in its wake the citizens, institutions, and democratic processes in these countries. The need to combat corruption heads economic, social, and political agendas worldwide.

In late 1999 in Manila, the Philippines, an initiative to create a forum for the Asia-Pacific countries to foster greater regional cooperation in the fight against corruption started to take shape. At a conference on Fighting Corruption in Asian and Pacific Economies in December 2000 in Seoul, Korea, participants from more than 35 ADB and OECD member countries endorsed the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia-Pacific. The ADB/OECD Initiative is a unique partnership between various stakeholders of Asian and Pacific countries and the international community. Its objective is to provide a supporting framework for the countries in the region in setting up and implementing efficient national and regional anti-corruption strategies.

The Seoul conference identified a number of priority areas for a successful fight against corruption, including promoting good governance through legal, institutional, and administrative reforms; strengthening the rule of law; promoting integrity in business operations; and developing proactive strategies to promote citizens' participation in anti-corruption efforts. Against this background, this publication covers a broad set of issues, ranging from the bribery of public officials, the challenge corruption poses to good governance and economic development, the analysis of areas particularly prone to corruption, and the actions taken at different levels and by different actors to combat corruption. It provides policymakers, businesses, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders with a review of successful anti-corruption strategies already in place and explores and analyses new approaches. Moreover, it aims to foster the sharing of information and experience and to strengthen coordination and cooperation among key players in the fight against corruption.

The ADB and OECD believe that this publication will contribute to the ongoing debate on anti-corruption issues in Asia and the Pacific and will help strengthen initiatives to improve integrity and transparency in public governance

and corporate ethics. We wish to express our gratitude to the authors and conference participants for their excellent contributions. We also wish to express our thanks to the partner organizations and associated partners: the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Pacific Basin Economic Council, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United States Agency for International Development, the Transparency International, and the World Bank. These key players in the international fight against corruption contributed valuable insights gained from practical, hands-on experience in helping countries develop credible anti-corruption programs.

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