

SYNOPSIS

INDEPENDENT EXPERTS IN INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION - A CIVIL SOCIETY VIEW

This talk will cover some important areas that affect international corruption, how the proceeds of corruption can easily flow across borders, and the steps that respective countries (both developing countries and the West) can take to stem such outflows.

The first theme will explore how easy it is to set up bank accounts in western financial institutions where the true beneficial owner is not known or is kept private. This is the first tier in facilitating international corruption.

The second theme will discuss how in most developed economies the laws do not recognize crimes committed in other countries as crimes for anti-money laundering purposes. As a result proceeds of crime in other countries can easily be brought into the west, and deposited in accounts secretly arranged as mentioned in the first theme above.

The third theme will highlight how the opportunity for trade mis-pricing (through the over-pricing of exports and under-pricing of imports) is often used to shift both illicit business wealth and illicit political wealth across borders. Again, this ties to the first two themes above - illicit financial flows that have their origin in corrupt practices abroad find a safe haven in confidential bank accounts in the West and are not considered crimes for AML purposes.

The final theme will cover what can be done in both the developed countries and the developing countries about these three 'facilitators' of corruption. Clearly, it is within the power of legislative bodies, prosecutors, financial institutions, and intelligence units in the countries concerned to bring this important matter in control. Assuming that they have the political will to do so, the steps that can be taken in this regard will be covered in this final theme.