The Economic Growth Centre in the Division of Economics School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU cordially invites you to a seminar by Professor Hal Hill

**Speaker:** Professor Hal Hill  
*Australian National University*

**Topic:** "The Dynamics of Regional Development: The Philippines in East Asia"

**Chairperson:** Assoc Prof Joseph Alba  
*Division of Economics  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences*

**Date:** Wednesday, 12 April 2006

**Time:** 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm

**Venue:**  
Executive Seminar Room 10 (S3.1-B2-11)  
Nanyang Business School (Southspine 3)  
Nanyang Technological University

**About the Speaker:**

Professor Hill is the H.W. Arndt Professor of Southeast Asian Economies in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. His main research interests are the economies of ASEAN, especially Indonesia and the Philippines; industrialization and foreign investment in East Asia; and Australia’s economic relations with the Asia-Pacific region. He has authored or co-authored about 110 academic papers and book chapters. He is also an occasional contributor to several Australian and Asian newspapers and magazines. He has worked as a consultant for the Australian Government, the Indonesian Government, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and several United Nations agencies, in addition to participating in conferences/seminars in some 25 countries. He has held visiting appointments at Gadjah Mada University, the University of the Philippines, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, the University of Oxford, the Tinbergen Institute, and Columbia University. He is also on the editorial board of nine academic journals.

**Abstract:**

After languishing for decades, regional science issues are now at the forefront of development economics. Two factors are driving this interest. The first, analytical driver is developing an understanding of regional (or sub-national) dynamics, especially as countries liberalize and open up to the global economy. Arguably, Paul Krugman’s (1991) contribution to the literature on the fusion between economics (trade in particular) and geography is the seminal work in this field. The second driver is a policy one, and it stems from the worldwide trend to devolve power from the centre.

Among the key questions/motivations in thinking about decentralization in the context of globalizing economies are the following: Why do some regions grow faster than others; are the factors similar to those explaining inter-country differences? What determines trends in sub-national inequality; why does regional inequality vary so greatly, within countries and over time; is it a cause for concern; what sorts of policies need to be developed for by-passed regions? Why is the spatial location of economic activity so uneven in many countries? What is ‘regional policy’; what are the key issues and lessons in decentralization reforms; why are some programs more successful than others? As national boundaries become less important, will cross-border ‘natural economic zones’ become more important, perhaps in an ‘EU-type’ world? Is regional (sub-national) competition likely to improve local-level (and hence national) governance quality?
We address these issues with reference to a detailed study of the Philippines, in comparative East Asian context. This country is well suited to such a study owing to its geography and its policy history. It is the world’s second largest archipelagic state, and it features great regional diversity in its economy, natural resource endowment, ecology, demography and ethnicity. There are estimated to be 110 ethnic groups and 170 spoken languages. Moreover, it was one of the first developing countries to embark on a major decentralization experiment, commencing in 1991, and in the wake of its severe economic and political crises of the mid 1980s. As the World Bank (2005) observed in a comparative study, the country was among the East Asia’s ‘fast starters’, and it has the ‘strongest history of democratic decentralization’ in this region.

Successive sections of this paper examine the evolution of regional policy in the Philippines, current regional structures, regional development patterns, poverty and social indicators, the special case of Mindanao, demographics and migration, infrastructure and integration, regional-global dynamics, centre-region relations, and local institutions and governance quality.

The paper concludes with a discussion of key policy and analytical lessons, for the Philippines and other countries embarking on decentralization programs.

**Reservation:**

Admission is free. Please reply to Christina, mailto: achristina@ntu.edu.sg or Tel: 6790-5689 to confirm your attendance.