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**Panel abstract**

The Politics of Public Goods Provision in Urban Southeast Asia: Evolving Patterns in

Malaysia and Indonesia

The rapid urbanization of developing economies is dramatically in evidence across Southeast Asia, where the where the proportion of the population living in urban areas is now a majority in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Examination of the quality of governance in these countries, therefore, rests to a significant extent on the quality of urban governance. The papers in this double session panel explore the evolution in the politics of local government and local public service provision in municipalities across Southeast Asia. The panel brings together scholars from the region studying how local government operates across the Southeast Asia. Each session includes three papers looking at politics in a distinct, local municipality, and fourth paper which takes broader comparative view, along with a discussant tasked with pulling out broader themes, debates, and questions. The sessions are organized as follows:

Session A: Chair and Discussant: Edward Aspinall

Through a detailed analysis of participation patterns and the system of public goods and services delivery across three mayoral regimes Mary Joyce Bulao explores how Naga City’s (Philippines) status as paragon of good governance has evolved and shifted over time. Azmil Tayeb looks at patterns of public goods distribution in Kota Bahru, Malaysia where an overwhelmingly dominant ruling party combines programmatic attention to its development agenda with clientelistic practices that systematically exclude those outside the party fold. Weena Gera investigates the ways in which mayors in Cebu, Philippines have attempted to create local satellite offices, bypassing bureaucratic agencies and barangay organizations. Her paper explores the political and public service implications of these parallel structures. Finally, Edward Aspinall draws on field research in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand to discuss a new modal pattern of urban political reform that is becoming increasingly visible across Southeast Asia, analyzing the nature, origins, and spread of this new mode of urban governance, and the implications for democratic politics.

Session B: Chair and Discussant: Mary Joyce Bulao

Rosalie Arcala Hall examines how stable political leadership in Iloilo, Philippines, underpinned by uncompetitive local elections, has enabled long-term economic planning and development. The paper explores the ways in which marginal sectors have access to and voice in this policy planning process. Viengrat Nethipo studies the politics of health care in Chiangmai, Thailand, demonstrating how community-driven healthy initiatives have helped bridge the gap between politicians and grassroots leaders, and between community leaders and the wider citizenry, fostering a more inclusive and participatory governance landscape, and deepening local democracy. Cleo Calimbahin looks at the consequences of inter-elite conflict (old families v. new elite, local politicians v. national interests) in Manila in a bid to recapture its past glory and deal with new challenges and demands.