

**Professor Peter Eigen speaking on 'The role of civil society in promoting just global governance: the case of anti-corruption efforts'**

**German Lecture 17 March 2011**

**Rhodes House, Oxford**

This year's German Lecture was delivered to a capacity audience in the Beit Room of Rhodes House. The speaker was Professor Peter Eigen, the founder of Transparency International, a global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. In his introduction, the Warden of Rhodes House, Dr Donald Markwell gave a brief history of the German Rhodes Scholarships, touching on some of the prominent Scholars to have come from Germany, from members of the opposition against Hitler to the current head of the Boston Consulting Group, and also the previous speakers for this Lecture series, which included Albert Einstein. Professor Eigen was then introduced by a German Rhodes Scholar, Liza Herzog.

Professor Eigen spoke engagingly about how to promote just global practices and the need for a new paradigm for governance. He suggested that global governance should no longer be purely determined by sovereign states, nor indeed by the private sector as some have suggested, but increasingly by organised civil society. He outlined his career to date and described how wide-spread corruption had been earlier in his career when he left the World Bank after 25 years to launch Transparency International. At that time, bribery in developing countries was widely accepted within many governments and international corporations and was defended on grounds of business interest and even a liberal reluctance to 'impose' supposedly Western values on other cultures. People were not yet aware of the devastating effects that "perverted decision making" has on development particularly of poor countries. Rather than to merely criticize businesses for their practices, Professor Eigen chose to actively engage leading corporations and to develop pragmatic mechanisms to fight corruption. One such mechanism are 'islands of integrity' where there is agreement between competitors that none of them will engage in bribery on a particular bid. Another is the international corruption perceptions index which generates awareness and helps mobilise political will to reduce corruption. Throughout his talk, the tripartite relationship between civil societies, governments and companies was comprehensively examined, as was the requirement for positive leadership and, of course, transparency.

The talk was followed by enthusiastic and wide-ranging questions from Rhodes Scholars, including on themes such as how to define corruption, the role of the World Bank and discussions about specific case studies. After the end of the formal proceedings, Professor Eigen joined Scholars and guest for drinks and a buffet dinner in the Warden's lodgings where conversations continued until late in the evening.