

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and  
International Relations Department  
Present

**Lead Practitioners in Political and Economic Development Lecture Series**

**Decentralizing Service Delivery:  
Benefits, Costs, Implications**

A Lecture by Junaid Ahmad

Dissatisfied with centralized approaches to delivering local public services, a large number of countries are decentralizing responsibility for these services to lower-level, locally elected governments. The results have been mixed. The presentation provides a framework for evaluating the benefits and costs, in terms of service delivery, of different approaches to decentralization, based on relationships of accountability between different actors in the delivery chain. Moving from a model of central provision to that of decentralization to local governments introduces a new relationship of accountability—between national and local policymakers—while altering existing relationships, such as that between citizens and elected politicians. In particular, the various instruments of decentralization—fiscal, administrative, regulatory, market, and financial—can affect the incentives facing service providers, even though they relate only to local policymakers. Likewise, and perhaps more significantly, the incentives facing local and national politicians can have a profound effect on the provision of local services. Finally, the process of implementing decentralization can be as important as the design of the system in influencing service delivery outcomes.

**February 26, 2009**

**6:00 pm**

**Fisher – Bennett Hall, Room 401  
Building at the intersection of 34th St. and Walnut St.**



Junaid Ahmad is Sector Manager of Social Development in the World Bank's South Asia Region. Mr. Ahmad, a Bangladeshi national, joined the Bank in February 1991 as a Young Professional. He has since held various positions, his most recent assignment being Regional Team Leader for the Water and Sanitation Program in New Delhi. Drawing on his cross-sectoral experience of public finance, local government, and infrastructure, Junaid's priorities are to consolidate and implement the Regional Social Development Strategy, to support the Region's focus on scaling up services to the local and community levels, and to assist the Country Teams to address the challenges of social inclusion and conflict. and numerous articles in leading economic journals on governance, federalism and climate change issues. His most recent edited/authored books include *Fiscal Federalism* (with Robin Boadway), forthcoming by the Cambridge University Press, *Macro Federalism and Local Finance*, published by the World Bank in 2008 and *The Practice of Fiscal Federalism: Comparative Perspectives*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press in 2007.