

ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AN ERA OF GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY



ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL REPORT 2009/10

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) promotes regional cooperation for inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, a dynamic region characterized by growing wealth, diversity and change, but also challenged with persistent poverty, environmental degradation, inequality and insecurity. ESCAP supports member States with sound strategic analysis, policy options and technical cooperation activities to address key development challenges and to implement innovative solutions for region-wide economic prosperity, social progress and environmental sustainability. ESCAP, through its conference structure, assists member States in forging a stronger, coordinated regional voice on global issues by building capacities to dialogue, negotiate and shape development agenda in an age of globalization, decentralization and problems that transcend borders. A key modality for this strategy is the promotion of intraregional connectivity and regional integration.

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries substantially reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two-thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than \$2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than \$1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

UNDP is the UN's global development network, an organization advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. UNDP's network links and coordinates global and national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the overarching goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015. UNDP helps developing countries in building national capacities and sharing solutions to the challenges of: Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Environment and Energy, and HIV/AIDS. UNDP also helps developing countries attract and use aid effectively.



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foreword

This is the latest in a series of reports for Asia and the Pacific on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Coming in the midst of the global financial and economic turmoil, it should offer a unique opportunity to redress the information balance – to register the impact on the poor and the implications for the achievement of the Goals. However, it is difficult to offer a fully up-to-date report since reality has been moving too fast for the MDG data to keep pace. Judgements about whether countries across the region are on or off track to meet the Goals must be based on longer-term trends. This report therefore supplements these trend data with a close analysis of the most recent information and uses this to signal how the crisis is playing out – who is likely to suffer and why.

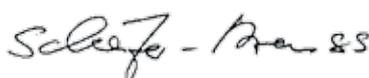
Just as important, it tries to identify opportunities for action – showing how the countries of Asia and the Pacific can better protect their people from this and future crises. It identifies the most vulnerable countries and the MDGs at greatest risk. As a starting point for action it considers current fiscal stimulus packages and how these could be reshaped so as not just to boost growth but also better benefit the poor. It also considers the types of social protection that countries of the region could use to protect their most vulnerable people. And it looks at ways of rebalancing Asia's economies to make them more self-reliant and resilient – and serve as sturdier platforms for inclusive and sustainable development.

Above all, it emphasizes the importance of stronger regional cooperation. This is the world's most dynamic region. Indeed in the next few years Asia and the Pacific may have to serve as the engine that pulls the global economy out of recession. But as this report shows, hundreds of millions of people are still being left far behind – living on less than \$1.25 a day, lacking clean water and sanitation, their families devastated by the tragic and needless deaths of mothers and children. This need not happen. Between them, the countries of Asia and the Pacific have the skills, the capacity and the resources to fulfil the rights of all their people and meet the Millennium Development Goals – and to work together to deal with any future storm that threatens to blow us off course.

In a corresponding spirit of cooperation, this publication is once again a joint effort by three agencies – the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme – each of which has contributed its own particular expertise. We trust that readers will find this a useful and stimulating source of information and ideas.



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Acknowledgements

This is the fourth report that has been prepared under the ESCAP/ADB/UNDP regional partnership programme on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific region.

The report has been prepared under the direct supervision and guidance of Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, Ms. Ursula Schaeffer-Preuss, Vice-President, Asian Development Bank and Dr. Ajay Chhibber, UN Assistant Secretary-General and UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director for Asia and the Pacific.

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The report team met periodically to review the draft chapters and engaged in wider consultations with the members of the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Poverty and Hunger and the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender and Empowerment of Women under the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

The report team thanks the following for their support and technical inputs: David Abbott, Artur Andrysiak, Rene Bastiaans, Aniruddha Bonnerjee, Krisana Boonpriroje, C.P. Chandrasekhar, Margaret Chung, Kevin Coffey, Edgar Dante, Michelle N. Domingo, Bart Edes, Carol Flore-Smerezniak, Ruth Francisco, Saad Ahmad Gulzar, Sri Wening Handayani, Rana Hasan, Nongnuch Hiranyapaisansakul, Aina Iyambo, William James, Jacques Jeugmans, Thelma Kay, Taimur Khilji, Nanda Krairiksh, Huck-Ju Kwon, Marisa Limawongpranee, Nixie Mabanag, Iosefa Maiava, Sanath Manage, Romana Mary Margaret, Elvira Mynbayeva, Cuong Minh Nguyen, Omar Noman, Panyasri Phuvakirivivat, Chiara Romano, Hiren Sarkar, Jouko Sarvi, Indunil De Silva, Christian Stoff, Erik Strong, Panpaka Supakalin, Hirohito Toda, Yuqing Xing, Xianbin Yao and Marin Yari.

The team's appreciation goes to ILO, UNIFEM, UNESCO, UNICEF and WHO for their valuable and substantive inputs for the preparation of the report.

The report was edited by Peter Stalker. It was designed by Marie Ange Holmgren-Sylvain. Wannaporn Sridama provided all administrative support.

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