

Message from Ajay Chhibber for the ESCAP-SIAP 40th Anniversary



On behalf of the United Nations Development Programme, I would like to congratulate the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP-ESCAP) on its fortieth anniversary, and take this opportunity to highlight the important work that they have spearheaded on strengthening national statistical capacity for the countries in the Asia-Pacific region. UNDP values this important relationship with ESCAP, and in particular, appreciates the role that SIAP has played in helping build statistical capacity of its national and regional partners. This collaboration has been particularly relevant for the preparation of the Regional MDG Reports, and in tracking the region's performance on critical indicators, including the MDGs.

UNDP has made persistent efforts to advance the concept of human development, not least by encouraging work on measurement methods so as to better take into account the economic, social, political and environmental dimensions of development. We have worked to shift the focus of conventional measurement systems from a primary emphasis on market production, to a system that focuses on people's well-being and on tracking improvement in human development over time. We have tried to do so particularly through the Human Development Reports at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels. In the Asia Pacific region, we have worked closely with partners engaged in building statistical capacity on the ground for disaggregated, high-quality data and statistics for improving available indicators that influence policy debates. UNDP is actively engaged in supporting the technical work on statistical capacity, and most recently sought to do so at the 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics in Busan, Republic of Korea, in October 2009, and in June 2010 through a technical capacity development workshop on "Measuring Human Development" in Hanoi, Vietnam.

UNDP seeks to advance the agenda on harmonization of concepts and methodologies, as well as consolidating the cooperation of all key players, particularly SIAP in doing so for the Asia-Pacific region. The importance of international comparability of data related to harmonization and standardization of definitions, classifications, questionnaires, processing and reporting is critical for comparability, and is particularly pressing for tracking progress towards the MDGs by 2015. UNDP's collaboration with SIAP-ESCAP is a critical step in achieving the above objective. On this 40th anniversary occasion, we reaffirm our common commitment to set priorities for the statistical agenda, including development of new measures and methods, in order to improve and enhance policy making, and we look forward to future collaboration with SIAP-ESCAP in our efforts to do so.

Our warmest felicitations again,

Ajay Chhibber

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