



A FUTURE WITHIN REACH 2008



Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals
in Asia and the Pacific



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A Future Within Reach 2008

Regional Partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals in
Asia and the Pacific

Asia-Pacific MDG Study Series

A Future Within Reach 2008

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Foreword

A regional picture of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals must inevitably be painted with broad strokes. While each country prepares its own progress reports, regional overviews are constrained by the shortage of capacity and information, and by disaggregated data.

Yet there is value in these regional MDG reports. For all their diversity, many Asian and Pacific countries, particularly neighbours in subregions, share significant cultural ties and similar social and economic challenges in implementing their MDG plans. A regional report can highlight opportunities for joint and cooperative action, encouraging countries to build partnerships for greater progress. It can also demonstrate the large challenges that remain, requiring the continued assistance of international organizations, such as the United Nations agencies and funds, the regional development banks and bilateral donors.

This third MDG report for Asia and the Pacific attempts to shed light on questions that are difficult to answer. How many of the region's people are living in extreme poverty? How many children are going to school? How many women are dying at childbirth? As importantly, the report attempts to peer into the future: what will be the situation in 2015 – the target date for all of the MDG targets?

Building on previous editions, *A Future Within Reach 2008* takes stock of the significant achievements to date across Asia and the Pacific, and highlights the main gaps that remain. On the positive side, the region has an unparalleled singular record of freeing more than 350 million people from extreme poverty between 1990 and 2004. But the task of reducing and ultimately eliminating human, or non-income poverty is immense. The report therefore also includes recommendations for strengthening growth and implementation efforts, adopting suitable policies, and garnering the additional resources needed to fill the remaining gaps. Action is clearly required at the national level, but this will need to be supplemented with the information, advisory services and human and financial resources of international bodies. It is essential that development partners contribute according to their unique characteristics and strengths, yet uphold the spirit, principle and practice of uniting to 'deliver as one'.

This report is a tripartite initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). We are grateful for the active support of a number of other United Nations agencies. We hope that the report will serve as a useful source of information and ideas, and a stimulus for innovation, investment, and regional cooperation as countries strive to achieve the MDGs and build a brighter future for all.




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