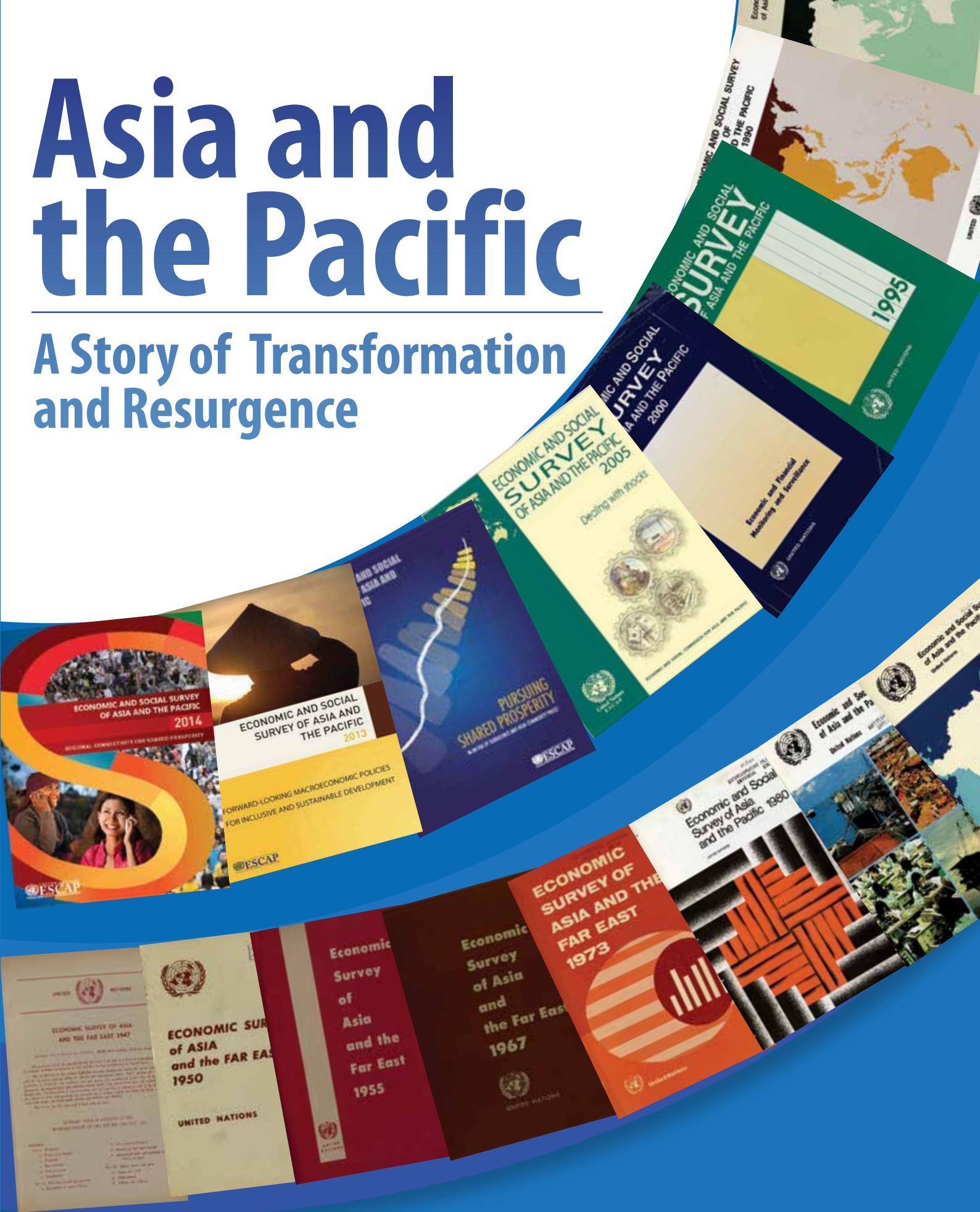


Asia and the Pacific

A Story of Transformation and Resurgence



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SURVEY OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 1947-2014

ESCAP is the regional development arm of the United Nations and serves as the main economic and social development centre for the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific. Its mandate is to foster cooperation between its 53 members and 9 associate members. ESCAP provides the strategic link between global and country-level programme and issues. It supports Governments of countries in the region in consolidating regional positions and advocates regional approaches to meeting the region's unique socioeconomic challenges in a globalizing world. The ESCAP secretariat is in Bangkok. Please visit the ESCAP website at www.unescap.org for further information.



The shaded areas of the map indicate ESCAP members and associate members in 2014.



The shaded areas of the map indicated the geographical scope of the ECAFE in 1948.

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Foreword

While the Asia-Pacific region has become the world's growth pole and is poised to reclaim global economic leadership in the twenty-first century, there remains an important question on addressing the challenges of shared prosperity and sustainable development. Will the growth of the Asia-Pacific region positively transform the lives of all people from Bangkok to Beijing, from Ankara to Almaty and from Suva to Seoul?

ESCAP – and its predecessor – ECAFE – has long been ahead of the curve in answering that question and in shaping ideas about economic and social development in the region, primarily through its annual *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, and by facilitating the creation of a development consensus for the region.

The role of the secretariat in that regard had an early genesis. At the second session of the Commission, held in Bangkok from 24 November to 6 December 1947, member States requested the secretariat “to publish a comprehensive annual survey of economic conditions and problems of the countries within the scope of ECAFE”.

The present publication is aimed at providing a first-hand account of what has been happening from that time until today – a period of unprecedented economic and social transformation in the Asia-Pacific region – as reflected in the findings and analysis contained in individual issues of the *Survey* since 1947.

As the flagship publication of ESCAP, the annual issues of the *Survey* chronicle how understanding of complicated issues has been improved and how policy choices and the trade-offs in advancing social equity and development have been effected in fulfilment of the core United Nations principles in support of member States.

Initially, the *Survey* contained a detailed narration of Asian reconstruction efforts and needs following the end of the Second World War, as well as a description of regional development aspirations and endeavours. As the region continued to chart out the development discourse, the *Survey's* analytical narrative shows how the region was transformed from one typified by pervasive hunger and deprivation to what is often called the “Asian Miracle”, which lifted billions of people out of extreme poverty and greatly improved their health and livelihoods. The *Survey* also underscored several powerful arguments about how the region shifted from being at the geopolitical periphery to become a centre of gravity for the global economy. In short, the *Survey* presents a compelling analytical story about the unfolding Asian drama.

This publication showcases the ways in which ESCAP research and analysis have offered a balanced view of the changing development paradigms, such as the relative roles of the State versus the market, export promotion versus import substitution and the “trickle-down theory” versus growth with equity, all of which aspects have influenced the choreography of the Asian drama.

In particular, this publication highlights issues which are crucial in contemporary policymaking discussions in the corridors of capitals in the Asia-Pacific region, namely (a) realizing the vision of the founding fathers in the service of peoples in the region; (b) regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration; (c) challenges and policy options for economies in

transition and countries with special needs; (d) the quest for sustainable development, especially regarding the relinking and rebalancing of economies, societies and habitats; and (e) lessons in policymaking and learning from the experiences of ESCAP member States.

Given the emerging development priorities and strategies for the next phase of global and regional development beyond 2015, this is a very timely publication, allowing as it does, for comprehensive reflection on these traditions and the vision of the United Nations secretariat for the future development of the Asia-Pacific region.

It is my sincere hope that readers will find the publication interesting, informative and useful.



Shamshad Akhtar
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and
Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social
Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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The publication of the present volume is part of the “intellectual history of ESCAP” project for celebrating the seventieth session the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The project also included digitization of all past issues of the flagship publication of ESCAP, entitled *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* (and its predecessor publication, *Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East*). The “intellectual history of ESCAP” project was initiated and led by Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Executive Secretary of ESCAP (August 2007 - January 2014). The project received constant encouragement from Shun-ichi Murata Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

The lead consultant for this volume was Emeritus Professor Amiya Kumar Bagchi of the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, India. The project, involving digitization of past issues of the *Survey* and the publication of the present volume, was accomplished within the Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division of ESCAP under the substantive research supervision of Anisuzzaman Chowdhury, Director, Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division, with the support of Aynul Hasan, Muhammad Hussian Malik and Syed Nuruzzaman. Sudip Ranjan Basu provided overall project coordination.

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