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BULLETIN ON ASIA-PACIFIC PERSPECTIVES

2004/05

**ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIES:
LIVING WITH HIGH OIL PRICES?**



UNITED NATIONS

ESCAP WORKS TOWARDS REDUCING POVERTY AND MANAGING GLOBALIZATION

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FOREWORD

This issue of the *Bulletin on Asia-Pacific Perspectives* provides a timely assessment of the confluence of several unfavourable trends in the global economy and their impact and implications for various economies or groups of economies within the ESCAP region. A more detailed review will be undertaken in the forthcoming edition of the annual *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*, to be published in April 2005. The assessment benefited greatly from the collective wisdom of eminent persons from 11 member countries of ESCAP as well as other international organizations.

The year 2004 has witnessed several adverse developments, including notably the oil price hike and the ongoing and geopolitical tensions in North-East and West Asia. Nevertheless, aided by an environment of exceptionally low interest rates and the dynamics of lower costs for finance, among other positive countervailing forces, global and regional economic activities have shown remarkable durability in 2004. Barring new negative shocks, growth in production and income in the ESCAP developing region in 2004 could be one half of a percentage point higher than the rate in 2003 as a whole.

Issues in global and regional interdependence and in the promotion of enterprise competitiveness and sustainable development remain the focus of the shorter articles in the *Bulletin*. These articles provide a perspective on some of the major policy challenges facing countries in fostering intellectual creativity and production efficiency and in managing stable and equitable economic and social development and integration against the backdrop of the Millennium Development Goals and intensified global and regional competition. This issue of the *Bulletin* therefore embodies the ongoing and concerted efforts that are being made to enhance the role and relevance of the secretariat in the ESCAP region.

Finally, I wish to put on record my deep appreciation to the eminent persons who so generously gave of their time in support of our work in the secretariat and to the high-level experts for their written thoughts and perspectives on major issues of concern to us all.

Kim Hak-Su
Executive Secretary

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Experts from outside the ESCAP secretariat contributed to the *Bulletin* in signed articles and in comments and suggestions at various stages of preparation. Chapter I, as the anchor article on international developments and regional implications, chapter VI, on food security: a development issue for Pacific island countries and chapter VII on poverty in countries of Central Asia, were discussed at a Meeting of Eminent Persons on Current and Prospective Economic and Social Performance in the ESCAP Region, held at ESCAP, Bangkok, on 14 and 15 October 2004. The Eminent Persons, who attended the Meeting in their personal capacities, and other participants were: Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh), Pingyao Lai (China), Djisman S. Simandjuntak (Indonesia), Shinichi Ichimura (Japan), Ragayah Haji Mat Zin (Malaysia), Yuba Raj Khatiwada (Nepal), Seung Jin Kim (Republic of Korea), Mikhail G. Nosov (Russian Federation), John Wong (Singapore), Pisit Leeahtam (Thailand) and Vo Tri Thanh (Viet Nam). J.K. Robert England (UNDP, Bangkok), Kazi Matin (World Bank, Bangkok) and Xianbin Yao (ADB, Manila) also participated in the Meeting.

ESCAP staff members contributed signed articles to the *Bulletin*. Poverty and Development Division staff – Shahid Ahmed, Amarakoon Bandara, Eugene Gherman, N.V. Lam, Muhammad Malik, Hiren Sarkar and Marin Yari also contributed signed articles as well as comments and suggestions during the preparation of the papers. Research assistance was provided by Somchai Congtavinsutti, Amornrut Supornsinchai and Kiatkanid Pongpanich. All graphics work and the cover design were done by Somchai Congtavinsutti. The logistics of processing and production, and the organization of the Meeting, were handled by Dusdeemala Kanittanon and Woranut Sompitayanurak.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPI	consumer price index
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FTA	free trade agreement
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
ICT	information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	intellectual property
IPRs	intellectual property rights
ITC	International Trade Centre UNCTAD/WTO
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PPP	purchasing power parity

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