Preface and acknowledgements

This volume is a collection of papers presented at the conference which celebrated 5th anniversary of the establishment of Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT). The conference took place in November 2009 as the global economy and the Asian region in particular were already starting to taste some traces of recovery in both trade flows and GDP growth. At that time it was too early to declare crisis over, and from today’s perspective this was a right call. While trade flows, at least of most of the Asian economies as well as of commodity producers around the world returned by the pre-crisis monthly values by mid 2010, escalating financial problems in Euro zone economies and no return of growth to the United States, couple with economic disasters in Japan and some other countries, caused for halting of trade growth towards the end of 2011. While it is too early to comment on the duration and characteristics of this slow-down (could it be a second recession bottom – tracing the famous W shape of the crisis?) the fact that it again has the most direct implications for the trade-dependent economies comforts the editors of this volume. Namely “trade-led growth in times of crisis” has not disappear from the agendas of researchers, analysts, practitioners and development strategists as it seems that “crisis”, understood as a short-fall in a global demand, will remain a characteristics of a medium term of development for developing countries of the Asia and the Pacific region.

One hundred and fifty trade researchers from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond who participated in the Conference discussed the origins of the global economic and crisis and its implications for the region’s trade-led growth model. A summary of the discussions prepared by the ARTNeT secretariat is added in Part six of the book, together with the text from the Conference rapporteur, Dr. Simon J. Evenett. From both of these reports it is obvious that, based on the collective knowledge and wisdom at the Conference, the region is prepared to discuss the premise and components of its development strategy but is not willing to part ways from utilizing trade as the main support to development. the chapters in this volume therefore really are further exploration how trade could remain the major power of the engine of growth.

The authors of the chapters are well known experts and thinkers in their respective fields and we are most grateful for their contributions. The chapters were peer reviewed and thus the versions appearing in this book differ more or less from the papers presented at the conference. While editors tried to group the papers according to some common themes or messages, there is still a diversity which is impossible to eliminate in a volume like this. Thus it should be noted that views expressed in the chapters are to be attributed strictly to their respective authors, and not the editors of the volume.

There are many other people that we need to thank, without implicating them in the views expressed in this volume, for assisting with the process of getting the book ready for publication. Mr. Martin Wermelinger, Research Assistant with ARTNeT secretariat and doctorate candidate at St. Gallen University worked with authors on the revision of chapters. Mr. Robert Oliver, external copy and style editor of ARTNeT, undertook the painful task of harmonizing style and presentation of the material throughout the book. As this book was
conceived as one of the objective for the Conference, we need to thank many people who assisted in organization of the event. Trade and Investment Division staff, in particular Ms. Melanie Ramjoue, Ms. Panjai Limchupong and Ms. Pradtana Limkrailassiri for logistic support in organization of the Conference. We wish to thank IDRC, the core partner of ARTNeT in providing sponsorship to the conference and to Dr. Evan Due from the IDRC for his substantive contributions during the Conference and also in the operation of the network. ARTNeT member institutions, partners and associate partners took active interest and contributed papers and discussions. Last, but not the least, we would like to express appreciation to Dr. Noeleen Hayzer, the Undersecretary General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the ESCAP for inaugurating and attending the conference.

Simon J. Evenett
Mia Mikic
Ravi Ratnayake