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Half a decade since the onset of the Great Recession, the Asia-Pacific region continues to anchor the global economy, but its rate of economic growth remains subdued compared to the pre-global financial crisis period. It is also showing signs of strain, as uncertainty and crisis deepen in the United States and the euro zone. More importantly, the Asia-Pacific region's growth path continues to leave behind hundreds of millions and to put unsustainable pressure on the natural resource base.

The 2013 edition of the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* argues that macroeconomic policies can play a key role not only in supporting the economies of the region in the short term, but also in reorienting the region towards a more inclusive and sustainable pattern of development. By carefully designing short-term support measures, it is possible to sustain growth as well as address long-term structural issues.

As an illustrative example, the *Survey 2013* estimates, for a number of Asia-Pacific countries, the public investment needs required to deliver a package of policies to sustain growth and to promote inclusive and sustainable development. The policy package comprises a job guarantee programme, a universal pension scheme, disability benefits, increased public health spending, universal school enrolment and universal access to modern energy.

The *Survey* finds that most countries can finance such a package without jeopardizing macroeconomic stability, although least developed countries would also require global partnership and development cooperation. The analysis underlines the need to move forward the regional development agenda from a discussion on the future we want to the means of implementation to realize that future.

“At the (...) Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, world leaders pledged to adopt forward-looking macroeconomic policies that promote sustainable development and lead to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth (...) *The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013* makes it clear that such investments are not only essential but also affordable.”

BAN Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations

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