



PREFACE

I am pleased to present the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2015* - facts and trends at the outset of the 2030 Development Agenda, which provides a first snapshot overview of development trends aligned with the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This information will help to ensure better, more informed decision-making and will directly support the efforts of governments, development partners, and the people of Asia and the Pacific to successfully implement the ambitious goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

The Yearbook quantifies the significant progress in poverty reduction made across the region over the past 15 years, as well as the development disparities that persist across the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It reveals that there is an urgent need to improve data sources and strengthen national statistical institutions if the transformative aspirations of the 2030 Agenda are to be met in our region.

For each of the 17 SDGs, concise analyses of major achievements and challenges for the 58 ESCAP member States and the five Asia-Pacific subregions are provided, supported by the most up-to-date and comparable data for more than 300 indicators, including 40 indicators presented in the *Yearbook* for the first time. Indicators presented in the *Yearbook* have been selected based on their relevance to the SDGs, and the availability of data and statistics that follow international statistical standards. In identifying indicators for inclusion in the *Yearbook*, the set of indicators under consideration for global monitoring of the 2030 Development Agenda were also taken into account.

These analyses are presented as a series of headline messages, supported by data-driven facts, charts and text boxes. The *Yearbook* also presents data issues and challenges which are likely to affect follow-up and review of SDGs 1 through 16, and is accompanied by a series of products including: time series tables of indicators, country fact sheets, a database containing more than 800 indicators, and data visualization options.

This publication would not have been possible without the collaboration of a large number of individuals and international organizations, and we thank all of these key partners for their important contributions. Asia-Pacific leadership on sustainable development will only be possible when supported by the best, most relevant and most accessible statistics. The 2015 edition of the *Yearbook* is, therefore, a keystone element in ensuring the future we want for the people of our region.

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