



ASIA-PACIFIC DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

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The secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (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 among its 53 members and 9 associate members. It provides the strategic link between global and country-level programmes 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.



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Editorial statement

The *Asia-Pacific Development Journal* is published twice a year by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Its primary objective is to provide a medium for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, ideas, information and data on various aspects of economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. The emphasis of the *Journal* is on the publication of empirically based, policy-oriented articles in the areas of development macroeconomics; reduction of poverty and mitigation of inequalities; and social cohesion and environment sustainability, with a particular focus on countries with special needs, such as the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States.

This special issue contains six selected papers, developed as a spin-off of the discussions at the second North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum, held in Tokyo on 31 October and 1 November 2015. The Forum is an initiative of ESCAP in which the Subregional Office of East and North-East Asia plays a catalytic role in bringing together researchers and practitioners of development cooperation in the four North-East Asian countries, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, to discuss subregional cooperation and to strengthen the effectiveness of subregion-wide initiatives. These countries are also major contributors of development assistance-related capacity-building activities. Specifically, the China International Development Research Network (CIDRN), the Japan Society for International Development (JASID), the Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC), and the Russian Association of Experts in International Development Assistance are partnering with ESCAP in this initiative. Since the first Forum in 2014, which was held in Seoul and organized in collaboration with KAIDEC, these associations have increasingly developed a strong sense of partnership, leading to this special issue as a joint product of the partners. The papers contained in this issue are submitted by the respective associations. The 2015 Forum, which was co-hosted by the ESCAP Subregional Office of East and North-East Asia, JASID and the JICA Research Institute, focused on development cooperation among North-East Asian countries as a key to the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We express our sincere appreciation for the generous support extended by the JICA Research Institute for the success of the Forum.

The papers in this issue give contrasting views on the Sustainable Development Goals and related development cooperation through the eyes of North-East Asian researchers. **Yamagata** critically views the shift of priority of development assistance given by Japan, as reflected in the revision of the ODA Charter and the renaming of it to the Development Cooperation Charter. The recently agreed upon 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is used as a justification for this. The

author argues that the combination of the new Charter and Sustainable Development Goals allows the Government of Japan to pursue national interest under the name of development cooperation, diluting the focus of overseas development assistance (ODA) given by “government” for “poverty reduction” in “poor countries”. He argues that Japanese development cooperation can now include participation from the private sector in dealing with non-poverty issues (serving national economic interest) in any country, which is akin to the time of heavily criticized tied aid. In addition, the scope of the 2030 Agenda of “leaving no one behind” is interpreted to include even Japanese companies as recipients of development cooperation.

On the other hand, **Huang** views the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as an opportunity initiated by China. The author compares AIIB with other multilateral development banks and analyses its potential advantages. While traditional multilateral development banks have extensive operational experiences that AIIB has yet to build, the latter can be proactive and avert many of the obstacles the multilateral development banks have been facing. The paper highlights the potential strengths of AIIB in international development assistance: specialization in infrastructure financing; a governance structure which includes balanced voting power to borrowing and non-borrowing members; an efficient operational scale and competitive interest rates, which reflect the high credit rating of the members; and depoliticized loan conditions based on the principles associated with South-South cooperation. For instance, the paper argues that the focus of AIIB on interconnectivity and regional economic cooperation can directly respond to the infrastructure investment needs of Asia. Notably, China has taken great interest in infrastructure investment in recent years, and, as a result, has gained extensive expertise in this area.

Degterev analyses the positions of countries, including the Russian Federation, based on statements made during meetings of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The paper illustrates the heterogeneity of their positions and divergence of their views on how to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Although heterogeneous, the positions of BRICS donors, which includes the Russian Federation, on a number of the Goals are close to those held by aid recipient countries. The analysis shows the contrasts between traditional donors of developed countries and new donors (BRICS and Arab countries). For instance, the dichotomy of views between developed and developing countries are notable in such areas as technology transfer, investments of developed countries in developing countries, ways to address poverty and approaches towards sustainability. The diversity of positions can also be observed among groups of aid recipients. For example, African as compared with Asian and Latin American countries on whether to view some areas as cultural issues rather than recognize them as development issues.

Past experiences in Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are drawn as lessons learned for development cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **Yamada** highlights an issue pertaining to domestic resources in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and analyses the role of ODA as a catalyst for strengthening capacity to mobilize domestic public finance. In this context, the example of the Japanese International Cooperation Assistance (JICA) of providing assistance in tax administration in Mongolia offers experiences and lessons in providing capacity-development assistance. The author reflects that the long-term commitment required to build capacity and the need for greater participation from stakeholders, such as the education sector providing tax education, could have been more effectively dealt with through better collaboration with other development partners. Ownership of the country is essential for the successful implementation of capacity-building initiatives.

Analysis of experiences of the Republic of Korea in community-level projects is provided by **Yang**. The paper emphasizes community participation as a core value of development cooperation, particularly in the light of the sustainability discourse, drawing case studies on both development experiences of rural development policy in the Republic of Korea, known as *Saemaul Undong* and the experiences of non-governmental organizations from the Republic of Korea in assisting developing countries. On one hand, the Republic of Korea needs to scrutinize past experiences and assess them in terms of “success” and sustainability, while developing countries that wish to learn from the Miracle on the Han River, a period of rapid growth in the Miracle on the Han River, Republic of Korea following the Korean War, should be selective in adopting the experiences to their own context. On the other hand, as the Republic of Korea is sending an increasing number of non-governmental organizations to work with various development partners, it should also pay more attention to the way those organizations work in and with local communities.

Katsuma examines the responses of the international community to health crises, such as the outbreak of Ebola, to draw lessons learned for global health governance in the context of means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The insufficient and inefficient responses to the outbreak by various parties, including those at national and local levels, and international organizations, led to a delayed response to the crisis. The experiences also exposed various issues in responding to health emergencies, such as those related to human resource capacity, communication, coordination and the institutions involved. The author discusses various options of coordination for health emergencies according to the severity and magnitude of the infectious diseases and capacity to respond in the area of the outbreak. International coordination on common concerns, such as health emergencies, provides a good case example in exploring potential areas of coordination and cooperation among North-East Asian countries

We believe that these six papers will stimulate further insightful discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals and development cooperation among North-East Asian countries.



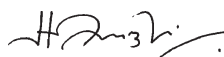
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Explanatory notes

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

References to “tons” are to metric tons, unless otherwise specified.

A solidus (/) between dates (e.g. 1980/81) indicates a financial year, a crop year or an academic year.

Use of a hyphen between dates (e.g. 1980-1985) indicates the full period involved, including the beginning and end years.

The following symbols have been used in the tables throughout the journal:

Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.

An em-dash (—) indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.

A hyphen (-) indicates that the item is not applicable.

A point (.) is used to indicate decimals.

A space is used to distinguish thousands and millions.

Totals may not add precisely because of rounding.

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