



(28 September 2007) MANILA, PHILIPPINES – Influential policy makers and experts will gather in Manila on 8-9 October to discuss how inclusive growth and poverty reduction efforts in Asia and the Pacific should move forward from now until 2020.

The discussions are timely as ADB is currently engaged in strategic debate over how it can become more responsive to the evolving context and needs of developing countries across the region, towards a new long-term strategic framework.

Over 70 experts from government, the academe, civil society, and international and bilateral aid organizations will tackle issues such as geographical targeting, inequality based on social exclusion, environmental poverty, and the financing and delivery of social services. They will also discuss the changing role of bilateral and multilateral development institutions in addressing these.

The forum will also serve as the venue for ADB, UN-ESCAP, and UNDP to jointly launch the annual update on the region's progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. This will be followed by an international press conference on Monday, 8 October 2007, 11:45 AM, at ADB's headquarters in Manila.

As more Asian economies are moving from low-income to middle-income country status, the forum will debate issues such as whether or not it makes sense to continue using the extreme poverty line of the \$1 a day in targeting the poor in the new Asia, or if we should use the \$2 a day poverty line to target the vulnerable groups.

Despite strong economic growth over the past two decades, Asia and the Pacific still houses two-thirds of the world's poor. Some of the region's social indicators are abysmal, especially in maternal and child health. Inequality is also increasing across the region, within countries, and between urban and rural areas, which can result in social conflicts.

Increasing environmental poverty poses new challenges as well. Asia's rural and urban poor are increasingly affected by degraded water and soil resources, and congestion, bad shelter, and air pollution in the cities.

Focusing on strategic recommendations, the forum will tackle topics such as social protection, which is emerging as a new instrument to address inequalities, improve access of the poor to social services, and further stabilize economic growth and political development.

The forum marks the imminent closing of two poverty reduction trust funds in ADB: the Cooperation Fund in Support of the Formulation and Implementation of National Poverty Reduction Strategies contributed by the Government of the Netherlands, and the Poverty Reduction Cooperation Fund from by the Government of the United Kingdom. Innovative approaches to poverty reduction supported by these funds will be showcased during the forum.

The outcome of the conference may also contribute to ongoing discussions among ADB donor countries over the next phase of the Asian Development Fund, an endowment used to provide grants and low-interest loans to some of the region's poorest nations.

See the conference website for more information: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2007/Inclusive-Growth-Poverty-Reduction/>