



**ICP Asia Pacific
Meeting of Heads of National Implementing Agencies
30 July 2007
ADB Headquarters, Manila, Philippines**



Welcome Address
by
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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is an honor and great pleasure for me to welcome you all today to this very important Meeting of Heads of ICP National Implementing Agencies of the ICP Asia Pacific participating countries. The ICP Asia Pacific is the largest statistical undertaking of the Asian Development Bank. This project was initiated almost five years ago, and officially launched at Bangkok in June 2003 in the presence of all Heads of the NSOs. After more than four years hard work, and through your concerted efforts and cooperation, we have now again assembled here in ADB Headquarters at Manila to consider the preliminary results of the ICP Asia Pacific, which will be officially launched tomorrow in your presence. The successful outcome of the ICP Asia Pacific has been truly rewarding and satisfying specially for me, who has been involved in this project from the very beginning.

The road to reaching our objective of compiling robust PPPs has not, however, been very smooth. Several problems were encountered along the way. But with your assistance, all these problems were sorted out one by one. You are aware of the stringent procedures that was adopted for improving the quality of ICP data- starting from the participation in the development of SPDs; finalization of regional product list; conducting the price surveys and collection of data as per the ICP guidelines; and the validation of data through a series of regional and sub-regional data review workshops. You will certainly appreciate that the Regional Office has left no stone turned in exerting best efforts to ensure that only quality and reliable data are used in the computations of robust PPPs. The ICP Regional Office has tried its best to be open and transparent. Whatever steps taken in respect of products for PPP computation, they were referred for your comments and confirmation.

No doubt the release of PPPs for our region tomorrow is a major output of the ICP Asia Pacific, but in my opinion the capacity building has been a single most important achievement of this round of ICP. Most of you will agree that the program has contributed substantially not only in improving capacity in conducting price surveys, but also in the development of national accounts statistics by harmonizing the 2005 GDP estimates with the requirements of 1993 Systems of National Accounts. The experiences, knowledges and statistical capacities that has been created in the countries can be an asset for the next round of ICP if it is initiated within a reasonable time frame.

The 2005 ICP Asia Pacific project is also expected to assist the participating countries in integrating ICP with national statistical work, specially with the national accounts and CPI. In this direction, I am pleased to inform you that ADB is already in the process of initiating a pilot study on the harmonization of ICP and CPI in selected ICP participating countries. The results and experiences gained should be useful for all countries when they participate in the future rounds of ICP.

In the implementation of ICP, the ICP Regional Office has benefited from the guidance and advise of the members of the ICP Asia Pacific Regional Advisory Board (RAB), which consists of heads of selected DMC statistical agencies and statistical departments of the regional and multilateral institutions. I would like to thank all of them for their continued support and assistance.

The ICP Asia Pacific has benefited a lot from the technical, methodological and other support of the ICP Global Office. I would specially like to acknowledge the assistance provided by Yonas Biru, the ICP Global Deputy Coordinator, who has been instrumental in helping the ICP Asia Pacific Regional Office from the conceptualization of the project until now. I am also grateful for the continued support and assistance provided by Fred Vogel, ICP Global Coordinator, Yuri Dikhanov and Vilas Mandlekar.

I would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to all of you for unflinching support, without which we would not have arrived to this stage. Our special thanks goes to all the national coordinators, price statisticians, national accounts experts, the construction and equipment domestic experts as well as the consultants who unselfishly worked hard towards successful completion of 2005 round of ICP Asia Pacific. I would like to acknowledge our thanks to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which has provided continued support throughout the project period by providing a team of experts namely Paul McCarthy, Keith Blackburn, Mark King, Timothy Lo and Matt Burger as well as by actively participating in the RAB meetings. Likewise, I would also like to express our sincere thanks for all other consultants specially Dr. Prasada Rao and Derek Blades who have played important role in providing expert technical advise and in guiding the regional office. Dr. Prasada Rao, in spite of his busy schedule, has always found time to help us and provide technical guidance as needed.

I would be failing my duty if I do not acknowledge the person without whose support, guidance and advise the project would have ever taken off. He is no other than the Chief Economist of the Asian Development Bank. Dr. Ali took personal interest in making sure that the project does not die immaturely and guided us in every aspect of project implementation. Finally, I would like to express my utmost thanks to the ICP Asia Pacific team led by Dr. Vaskar Saha, Regional Coordinator and ably assisted by his team members, namely, Vicklylu Labios, Eileen Capilit, Virginia Ganac and Gaye Parcon who worked extremely hard to bring the project to this stage. Vaskar joined the ICP Asia Pacific in a crucial time when the data collection was about to start in the countries and guided it to its successful outcome. I would specially like to acknowledge the contribution of Vickylu, who has been associated with the program from day one to the end. Ginn Ganac also deserves special thanks for assisting the ICP Asia Pacific from the early on.

Before concluding I would like to thank all of you, once again, not only for participating in the program, but also for your continued support- both financial and in-kind, throughout the project period.

I wish you all successful and productive meeting and a pleasant stay in Manila.

Thank you.