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SPECIAL CHAPTER
Comparing Poverty Across Countries: The Role of Purchasing Power Parities



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Foreword

Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2008 or *Key Indicators 2008* is the 39th edition of this series, a statistical data book presenting economic, financial, social, and environmental indicators for regional members of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In this edition, the content and presentation of statistical information have been significantly revised in a manner that will help users understand the trends behind the numbers through analytical commentaries. This comes at an opportune moment, especially as this year, we pass the midterm of the timetable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which target 2015 for the attainment of the goals on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child mortality, and ensuring environmental sustainability, among others.

Assessing progress in the Asia and Pacific region is hindered by the lack of data for many countries. Helping regional members strengthen their statistical capabilities remains a priority task for ADB. In this regard, I am pleased to report one significant success in this area with the publication in December 2007 of a new set of purchasing power parities (PPPs) for the Asia and Pacific region under the 2005 International Comparison Program (ICP). These PPP indicators, benchmarked to 2005, are adopted for the first time in *Key Indicators 2008*. Twenty-one regional members and two nonmember economies participated in the 2005 ICP Asia-Pacific coordinated by ADB. A further 10 ADB regional members also participated in price comparisons organized by other regional agencies. With the inclusion of PPP indicators in *Key Indicators 2008*, it is now possible to compare real gross domestic product both within the Asia and Pacific region and with other regions in the world, since these price comparisons are linked to PPPs calculated for other regions.

The use of PPPs for poverty measurement is the subject of the Special Chapter in Part I. This chapter explains why PPPs are an essential tool for generating internationally comparable estimates of poverty, and shows how national PPPs can be adapted to reflect the living conditions of the poorest segments of society. These PPPs—referred to as poverty PPPs, to distinguish them from the more standard consumption PPPs commonly used for generating internationally comparable estimates of poverty, such as “\$1 a day” poverty—involve the calculation of weights reflecting the expenditure patterns of the poor. They may also involve the identification and pricing of goods and services of particular relevance to the poor. The chapter shows that the use of poverty PPPs instead of consumption PPPs can lead to significant changes in estimates of poverty. This is particularly so for poverty PPPs that are based on the pricing of goods and services prevalent in the consumption basket of the poor.

Other innovations in this edition include a broader coverage with the inclusion of three developed regional members—Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Other new statistical indicators in this edition include transport indicators related to roads and railways, and governance indicators that measure the ease of doing business and the extent of perceived corruption. The country tables, previously printed as Part IV in previous editions, will now just continue in CD-ROM format provided with this publication; they can also be accessed online through ADB’s website at www.adb.org/statistics. Country data are also available for downloading from ADB’s Statistical Database System at sdb.adb.org.

Finally, short, nontechnical commentaries have been added to Part II: Millennium Development Goals, and Part III: Regional Tables. The commentaries in Part II assess each economy’s progress toward achieving the targets specified under the eight MDGs. The Regional Tables in Part III have been grouped into seven themes, namely “People”, “Economy and Output”, “Money, Finance, and Prices”, “International Flows”, “Infrastructure”, “Government and Governance”, and “Energy and Environment.” This thematic approach will facilitate identification of key trends within the region.

We appreciate the cooperation of the governments and international agencies in providing data to ADB and, in the process, enhancing this year’s issue of *Key Indicators*. We hope that *Key Indicators* will continue to be a valuable resource for monitoring the progress and addressing the development challenges in the region.



Haruhiko Kuroda
President

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Statistical Partners

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New Zealand	Reserve Bank of New Zealand Statistics New Zealand The Treasury
Pakistan	Federal Bureau of Statistics Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs State Bank of Pakistan
Palau	Office of Planning and Statistics, Bureau of Budget and Planning
Papua New Guinea	Bank of Papua New Guinea National Statistical Office
Philippines	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Bureau of the Treasury National Statistical Coordination Board National Statistics Office
Samoa	Central Bank of Samoa Government of Western Samoa Samoa Treasury Department, Ministry of Finance Statistical Services Division
Singapore	Economic Development Board International Enterprise Singapore Ministry of Finance Ministry of Manpower Monetary Authority of Singapore Singapore Department of Statistics
Solomon Islands	Central Bank of Solomon Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning National Statistics Office
Sri Lanka	Central Bank of Statistics Department of Census and Statistics
Taipei, China	Central Bank of China Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics Ministry of Education Ministry of Finance

Tajikistan	National Bank of Tajikistan State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan (Goskomstat)
Thailand	Bank of Thailand National Economic and Social Development Board National Statistical Office
Timor-Leste	Banking and Payments Authority of Timor-Leste National Statistics Directorate
Tonga	Department of Statistics Ministry of Finance National Reserve Bank of Tonga
Turkmenistan	National Institute of State Statistics and Information (Turkmenmillihasabat)
Tuvalu	Central Statistics Division
Uzbekistan	Cabinet of Ministers, Government of Uzbekistan Center for Effective Economic Policy, Ministry of Economy of Uzbekistan Central Bank of Uzbekistan Ministry of Finance State Committee on Statistics
Vanuatu	Department of Finance Reserve Bank of Vanuatu Vanuatu National Statistics Office
Viet Nam	General Statistics Office Ministry of Finance State Bank of Viet Nam

INTERNATIONAL, PRIVATE, AND NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

CEIC Data Company Ltd.
Energy Information Administration
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Food and Agriculture Organization
German Agency for Technical Cooperation
International Energy Agency
International Labour Organization
International Monetary Fund
International Telecommunication Union
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Secretariat of the Pacific Community
Transparency International
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Population Division
United Nations Statistics Division
United States Department of Energy
World Bank
World Health Organization
World Resources Institute

Guide for Users

The *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific* has the following structure. Part I contains a special chapter that varies every year and deals with a special topic on policy issues, measurement issues, or development challenges. This year's special chapter is measurement of poverty rates in selected developing member countries using purchasing power parities.

Part II comprises the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The indicators are presented according to the United Nations revised MDG framework, which has been expanded to include new targets for full and productive employment and decent work for all, access to reproductive health, access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and protection of biodiversity, as agreed by member states at the 2005 World Summit. This year's *Key Indicators 2008* includes as many of the indicators for the new targets as possible. Tables in Part II represent an MDG target and contain indicators associated with that target.

Part III consists of regional tables, numbering 103, which are not part of the MDG framework. To help readers identify the indicators more easily, the regional tables are grouped into seven themes: People; Economy and Output; Money, Finance, and Prices; International Flows; Infrastructure; Government and Governance; and Energy and Environment. Each theme is further divided into subtopics. Accompanying tables in Part III contain indicators related to a subtopic.

The MDGs and themes in Parts II and III start with a short commentary with charts and boxes describing progress made by countries toward selected targets and key trends of selected indicators. Accompanying statistical tables are disaggregated into developing and developed member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The developing member countries are further divided into country groups aligned with those of ADB's regional departments.

Finally, Part IV defines the indicators in the MDGs and regional tables. The publication also has a CD-ROM containing Parts I, II, III, and IV, plus individual country tables for 48 regional members of ADB.

Data for the MDG indicators, regional tables, and country tables are mainly obtained from two sources: ADB's statistical partners in regional members, and international statistical agencies. Data obtained from the regional members are comparable to the extent that the regional members follow standard statistical concepts, definitions, and estimation methods recommended by the United Nations and other applicable international agencies. Nevertheless, regional members invariably develop and use their own concepts, definitions, and estimation methodologies to suit their individual circumstances; and these may not necessarily comply with the recommended international standards. Thus, even though attempts are made to present the data in a comparable and uniform format, they are subject to variations in the statistical methods used by regional members, such that full comparability of data may not be possible. These variations are reflected in the footnotes of the statistical tables.

General Guidelines

The data cut-off date for this issue is **July 2008**.

Twenty-four regional members have varying fiscal years not corresponding to the calendar year. Whenever the statistical series (for example, national accounts or government finance) are compiled on a fiscal year basis, these are presented under single year captions corresponding to the period in which most of the fiscal year falls, as follows:

Regional Members	Fiscal Year	Year Caption
Afghanistan	21 March 2007–20 March 2008	2007
Cook Islands (before 1990)	1 April 1990–31 March 1991	1990
Cook Islands (after 1990)	1 July 2006–30 June 2007	2007
Brunei Darussalam (after 2002)	1 April 2007–31 March 2008	2007
Hong Kong, China		
India		
Japan		
Myanmar		
New Zealand		
Singapore		
Indonesia (until 1999)	1 April 2000–31 March 2001	2000
Australia	1 July 2006–30 June 2007	2007
Bangladesh		
Bhutan		
Nauru		
Pakistan		
Samoa		
Timor-Leste		
Tonga		
Taipei, China (until 1999)	1 July 1999–30 June 2000	2000
Nepal	16 July 2006–15 July 2007	2007
Lao People's Democratic Republic (after 1992)	1 October 2006–30 September 2007	2007
Marshall Islands		
Federated States of Micronesia		
Palau		

Key Symbols

...	Data not available at cut-off date
–	Magnitude equals zero
0 or 0.0	Magnitude is less than half of unit employed
*	Provisional/preliminary/estimate/budget figure
⊥	Marks break in series
>	Greater than
<	Less than
≥	Greater than or equal to
≤	Less than or equal to

Measurement Units

kg	kilogram
km	kilometer
kWh	kilowatt-hour
kt	kiloton
sq km	square kilometer

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BOP	balance of payments
BOD	biochemical oxygen demand
BPNG	Bank of Papua New Guinea
CFCs	chlorofluoro-carbons
cif	cost, insurance, and freight
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CPD	country-product-dummy
CPI	consumer price index
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DOTS	Directly Observed Treatment Short-Course
EKS	Eltető-Köves-Szulc
fob	free on board
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	foreign direct investment
GCF	gross capital formation
GDP	gross domestic product
GNI	gross national income
HDI	human development index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSC	harmonized system classification
ICP	International Comparison Program
ILO	International Labour Organization

IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LCU	local currency unit
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMF	money market funds
NSS	National Sample Survey
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ODP	ozone-depleting potential
PAG	Poverty Advisory Group
PEGR	poverty equivalent growth rate
PLI	price level index
PPP	purchasing power parity
PRC	People's Republic of China
PS	poverty survey
RBF	Reserve Bank of Fiji
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RM	Malaysian ringgit
Rs	Indian rupees
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
SITC	Standard International Trade Classification
SNA	System of National Accounts
T	taka
TB	tuberculosis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

Unless otherwise indicated, "\$" refers to United States dollars.