

2008

STATISTICAL YEARBOOK
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
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 between its 53 members and 9 associate members. ESCAP provides the strategic link between global and country-level programmes and issues. It supports Governments of the region in consolidating regional positions and advocates regional approaches to meeting the region's unique socio-economic challenges in a globalizing world. The ESCAP office is located in Bangkok, Thailand. Please visit our website at www.unescap.org for further information.



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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2008

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Preface

This is the second issue of the new *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*. The format was revised in 2007 and attracted encouraging feedback from readers. It is aimed at a non-specialized audience that is interested in this dynamic and diverse region and wishes to see how the economies, societies and environment of Asia and the Pacific are developing in comparison with other world regions.

Rich in information content, the *Yearbook* includes data, charts and a textual overview of well over 200 indicators, covering all spheres of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, as well as such cross-cutting issues as poverty and gender.

The baseline year for the data is 1990 – intentionally the same as that for the Millennium Development Goals, so the *Yearbook* can also be used for tracking progress towards the Goals. The *Yearbook* uses the internationally comparable data available at the time of publication. For more recent estimates and forecasts, readers can also consult another ESCAP publication, the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*.

The publication can be downloaded, as a whole or in parts, from the ESCAP website at: www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2008/. Bookmark the site for your future reference, not least because it has a link to the *Yearbook* database, which includes full-length time series, including those that were used to derive numerous indicators.

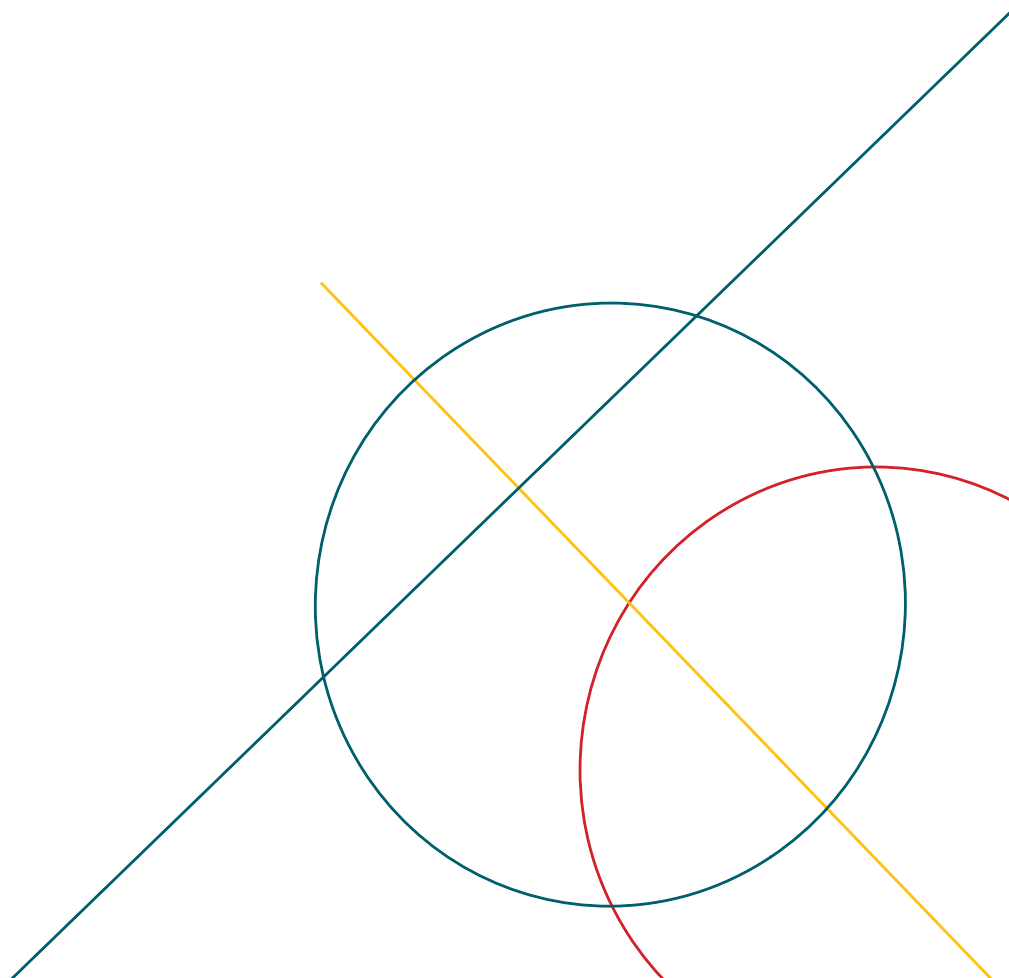
In an effort to keep the format user-friendly and readable, we have avoided some of the technical terms, complex charts and in-depth analysis that are a mainstay of some other ESCAP publications. But

the *Yearbook* compromises neither on statistical standards nor on methodologies.

In order to maximise the comparability of indicators across countries and regions and over time, the *Yearbook* uses annual data from the most respected international data sources. The countries of Asia and the Pacific, are defined as the 58 regional members and associate members of ESCAP. Because these countries are so diverse, the *Yearbook* publishes absolute numbers only for a limited number of series. Instead, it usually expresses indicators as ratios of two series, or in per capita terms, or by unit of land area or of output. Only then can economies as small as Niue be compared with such large ones as China or the Russian Federation.

Major improvements over last year include a wider and more balanced mix of indicators, fewer data gaps, more robust methods of aggregation and improved metadata. On the production side, additional subject-matter experts have contributed from within ESCAP and partner agencies, helping to improve the quality and focus of various chapters. Another major development, though invisible to readers, has been the implementation of a state-of-the-art database to host data for the *Yearbook*, along with other ESCAP statistical data and metadata.

If we are to continue to publish the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*, we need to be sure that it is useful to readers. For this purpose, it is important to have feedback. If you find the current issue useful or have suggestions for improvements, please complete the readership survey form, inserted or online, and return it to ESCAP. Thank you.



Acknowledgements

The *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific* was prepared under the overall guidance of Pietro Gennari. Ilpo Survo managed the interdivisional project and acted as editor in chief. Substantive Divisions of ESCAP drafted most of the chapters based on data compiled by the Statistics Division.

The Statistical Information Services Section was responsible for compiling the data, calculating the indicators and most of the regional aggregates, for preparing the charts and tables, and compiling and pre-editing the manuscript. Eric Hermouet led the technical data compilation and output preparation, for which the team included Nongnuch Hiranyapaisansakul, Panyasri Phuvakirivivat, Krisana Boonpriroje, Panpaka Supakalin, Supharat Kaewkhonkaen, Nixie Mabanag and Marisa Limawongpranee. Artur Andrysiak, Joel Jere, Andres Montes and Christian Stoff, of the Statistics Division, drafted substantive inputs and assisted in the review of the chapters. Pornrat Lertyosthanavath and Varaphorn Prapatsakdi provided administrative support.

ESCAP Divisions were represented in the Interdivisional Project Team by Adnan Aliani, Sophie Bonjour, Kelly Hayden, Yu Kanosue, Muhammad Malik, Miguel Perez-Ludena, John Moon, Marco Roncarati, Alexander Roehrl, Jean-Michel Sadoul, Vanessa Steinmayer and Ram S. Tiwaree. They coordinated indicator selection, reviewed inputs and organized the review of the manuscript in their respective areas of expertise.

The following colleagues drafted the text (chapter number): Adnan Aliani (2), Artur Andrysiak (22, 23), Sophie Bonjour (26), Kelly Hayden (28), Jerry Huguet (1, 3-5, 7-10), Joel Jere and Marit Nilses (20), Christopher Kuonqui,

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ESCAP gratefully acknowledges the contribution of all other agencies that compile and make available internationally comparable statistics on their websites. Without their substantial efforts the *Yearbook* would not have been possible. We hope that the *Yearbook* increases the use of their data and the original data, the sources of which are almost always national statistical systems. The individual data sources used in the *Yearbook* are mentioned after the text for each chapter among the respective indicator definitions and in a separate list of online data sources.

Peter Stalker drafted the overview and edited the whole manuscript, and Marie-Ange Sylvain Holmgren provided the cover and layout design.

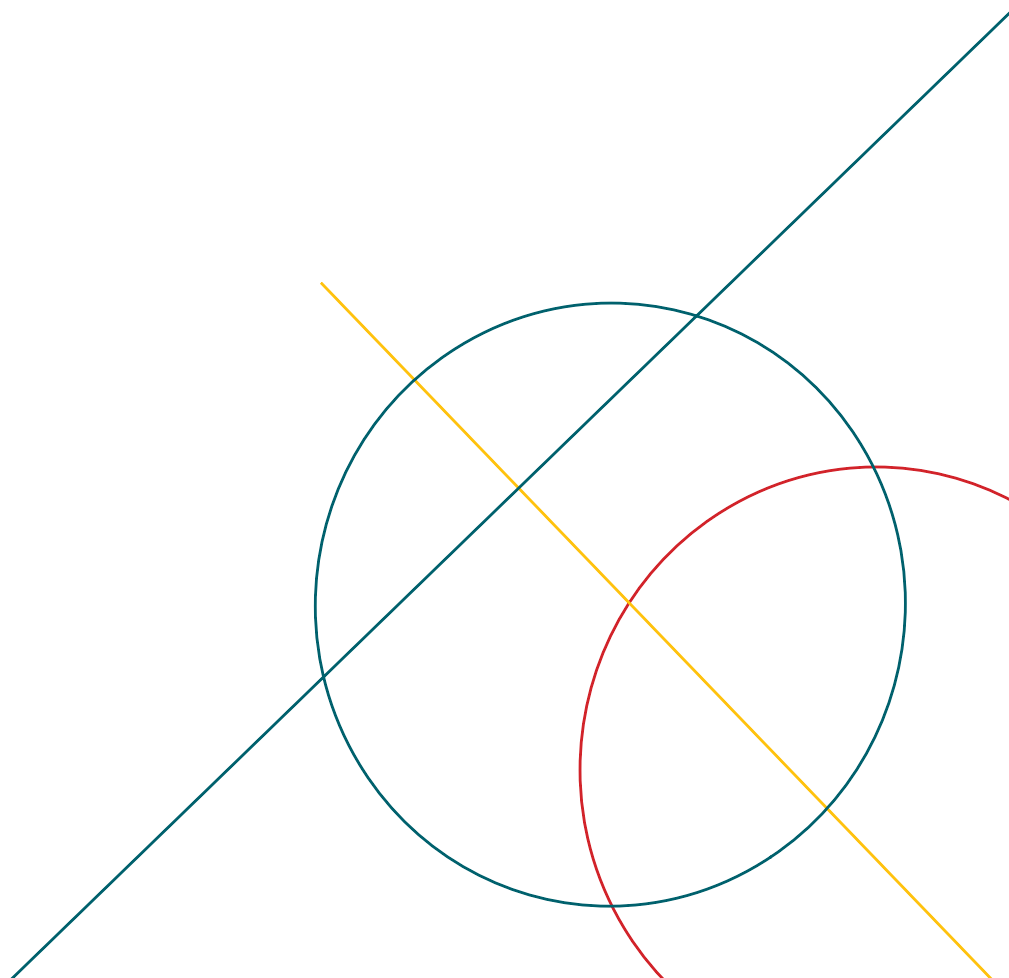


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