UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT RESULTS
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
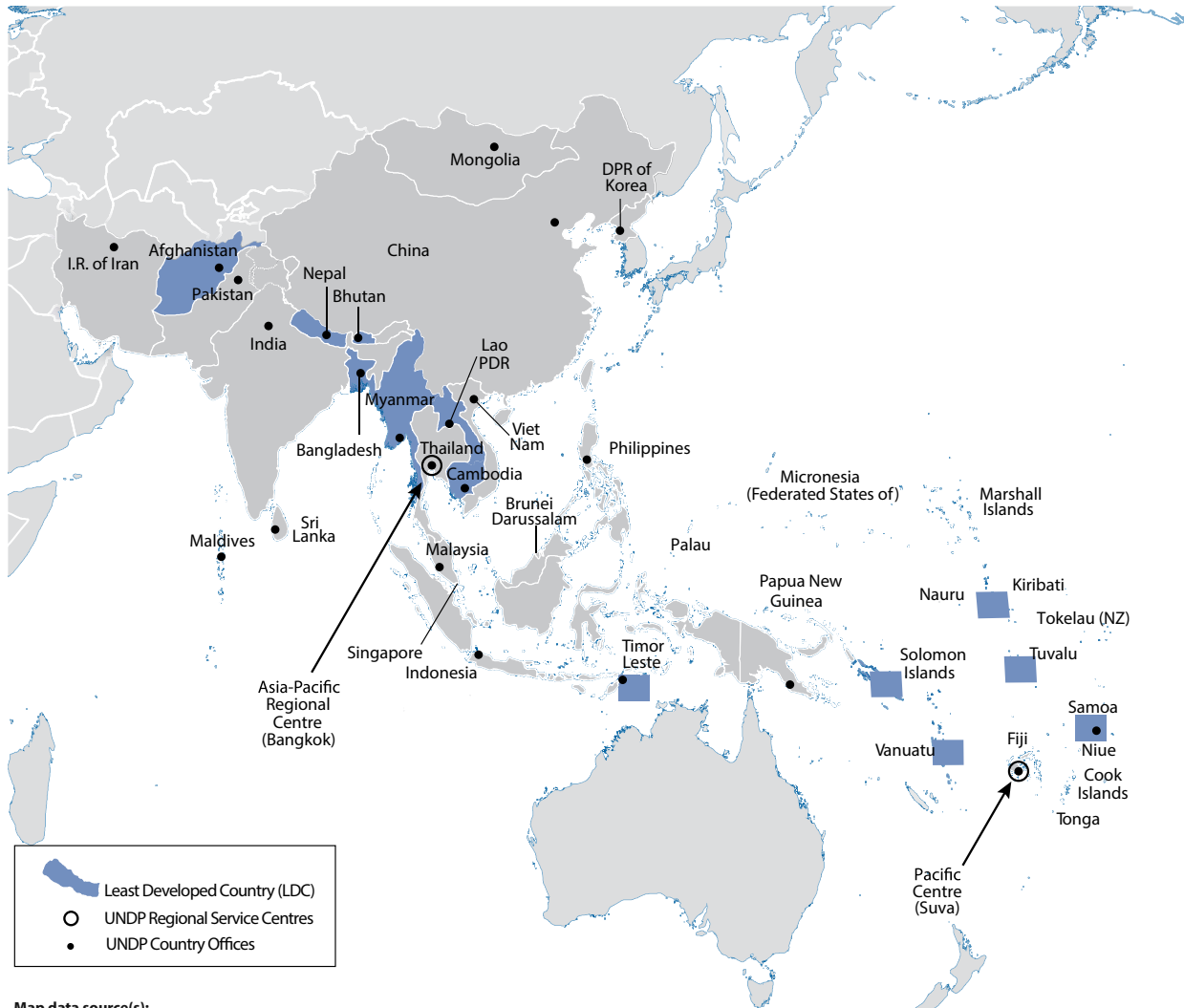
UN
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Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

2013-2014

▼

Figure 1: UNDP in the Asia-Pacific Region

Mongolia

DPR of Korea

China

I.R. of Iran

Afghanistan

Pakistan

Nepal

Bhutan

India

Lao PDR

Myanmar

Viet Nam

Bangladesh

Thailand

Cambodia

Philippines

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Marshall Islands

Brunei Darussalam

Palau

Sri Lanka

Maldives

Malaysia

Papua New Guinea

Nauru

Kiribati

Tokelau (NZ)

Singapore

Asia-Pacific Regional Centre (Bangkok)

Indonesia

Timor Leste

Solomon Islands

Tuvalu

Samoa

Niue

Vanuatu

Fiji

Cook Islands

Pacific Centre (Suva)

Tonga

Legend:
- Least Developed Country (LDC)
- UNDP Regional Service Centres
- UNDP Country Offices

Map data source(s):
Un Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Development Countries and small Island Developing Countries and small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), 2012

Map Source: United Nations Cartographic Section

Disclaimers:
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan.
The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

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LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

I am pleased to introduce 'Achieving Development Results in Asia and the Pacific 2013-2014', a synthesis of results achieved in the region as we close the last chapter of our former Strategic Plan (2008-2013) and embark on the implementation of UNDP's new Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The Asia-Pacific region is both dynamic and diverse, covering 36 countries and territories. Tremendous progress in economic and human development has been achieved in recent years. Ensuring that this progress continues and benefits all peoples will be critical to eliminating poverty and reducing inequality within the region.

UNDP has delivered US$2 billion in programmes in Asia and the Pacific during 2013-2014 to achieve the mutual aspirations of partner governments and donors in UNDP's three main areas of development: inclusive development pathways, inclusive and effective governance and resilience. Promoting gender equality is a cross-cutting theme of our work.

The achievements described in this publication illustrate the importance attributed in 2013-2014 to integrating into our programmes innovative solutions to stubborn development challenges in the region. It also shows how UNDP, in collaboration with its partners within the government, private sector and civil society, is scaling-up these solutions so that they have greater impact on people's lives. Through the results charted in data, maps and graphs, this publication is testament to the importance of focused and evidence-based programming aligned with the interests of the countries that UNDP serves.

Helen Clark
UNDP Administrator

FOREWORD BY THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Human development and poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region have been impressive in recent years, as the maps in this report show. However, the growth has not lifted all the boats. The levels of inequality and the lack of progress in reducing inequality are striking. In addition, the rapidity of development has brought with it high rates of urbanization, posing new challenges for governments relating to economic opportunity and access to public services.

The sustainability of the development gains in Asia and the Pacific are a further issue. The conference on the Small Island Developing States that took place in Samoa in September 2014 highlighted the extraordinary vulnerability of the Pacific to natural disasters and climate change. Likewise, the water and air pollution, disposal of waste and patterns of consumption in some of the region's countries are unsustainable. UNDP's work with Baidu, China's largest

Internet service provider, to develop a mobile application to aid responsible recycling of the growing volume of waste from electronic devices is an exciting innovation in this regard. This partnership has the potential to eliminate behavior that is damaging the environment, with possible application to other countries.

During my first year as Regional Director of Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), I have had the privilege of visiting almost all countries where we work in the region (Figure 1) as well as several donor capitals. It is clear from this experience that UNDP is at the center of national strategic policy debates and is supporting the achievement of development goals. At the national and regional levels, UNDP has led consultations on the post-2015 agenda. UNDP has helped establish links between countries and facilitated the transmittal and sharing of relevant experiences. The breadth and depth of UNDP's development

network allowed UNDP to facilitate, for example, bringing Indonesia's experience from the Indian Ocean tsunami recovery effort to Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013.

UNDP stands for *empowered lives and resilient nations*. We emphasize the need for resilience across the whole portfolio of our activities. For instance, UNDP has been supporting for over a decade the government of Odisha in India to strengthen systems for disaster risk reduction, helping reduce human casualties in the most recent super cyclone that struck in 2013 to fewer than 50. A cyclone of comparable intensity had caused more than 10,000 deaths in 1999.

UNDP's strength is its experience and know-how in state-building, and designing institutions which can plan and implement social change. Across Asia-Pacific, UNDP has developed a network of strong partnerships with government which allows us to support reforms

in a way that builds institutions not only in form but also in substance. In Nepal, more than 60,000 low-income women and youth have become micro-entrepreneurs through the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme. Initially implemented in 10 of the country's 75 districts, the Government has scaled up the model to 50 districts, with plans to reach all districts.

In the two years covered by this report, UNDP focused on innovation and scaling up as important components to improving programme quality and achieving impact. UNDP experience has shown that partnerships are the most critical factor necessary for identifying innovative solutions and scaling them up. To name one example, the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme brought financial services to 500,000 people in six Pacific Island countries by allowing people in remote or marginalized communities to access finance without leaving the village. This initiative would not have been

possible without the partnership between private sector, local authorities and UNDP. The role and contribution of each partner has been indispensable. This successful experience was then shared and applied to the emergency response mobile phone cash notification system developed in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan.
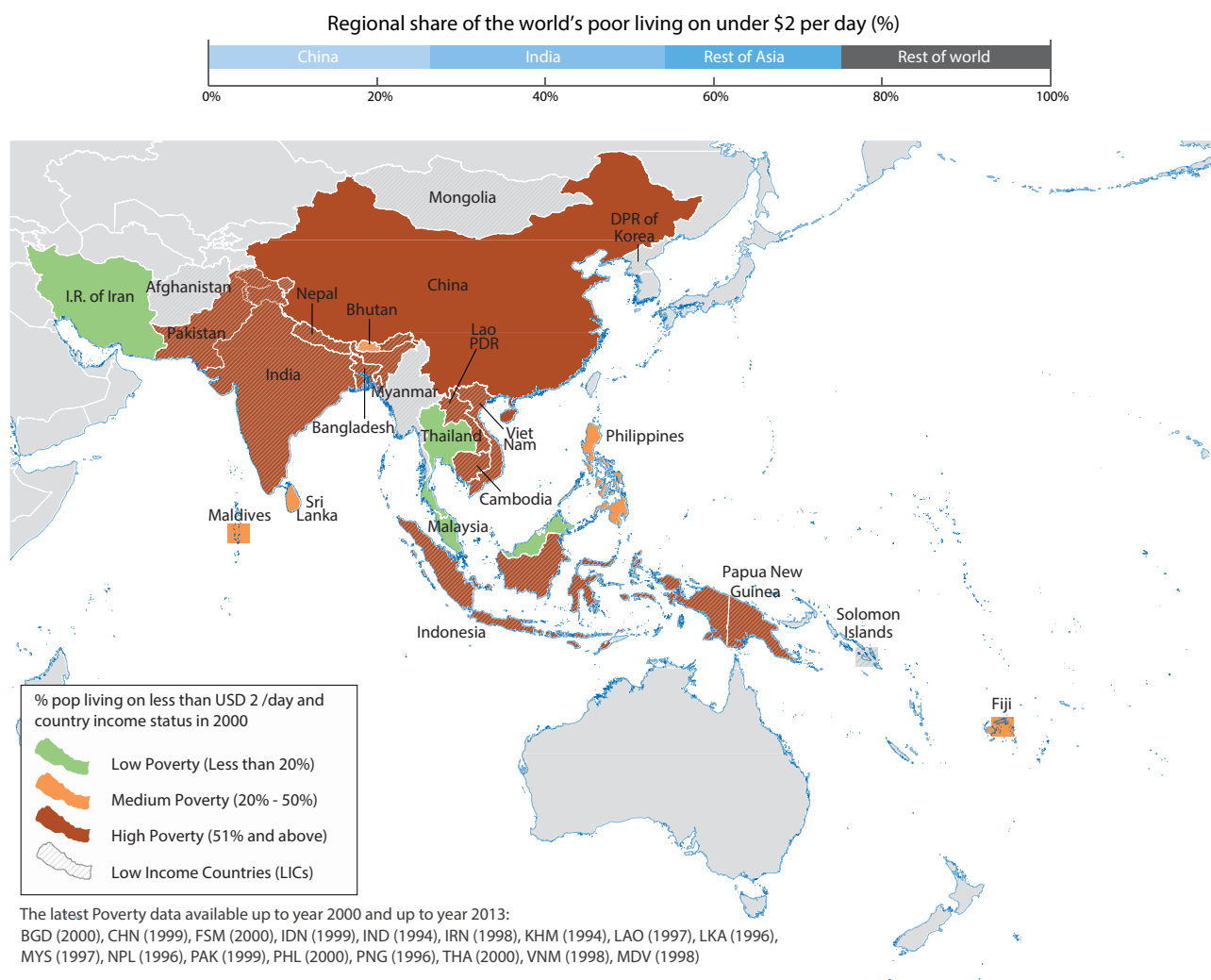
In this publication you will find a selection of development results from UNDP's programmes and projects in Asia and the Pacific. Although much remains to be done, these examples illustrate that together, we can eradicate poverty in our lifetime.

Haoliang Xu
UN Assistant Secretary-General,
UNDP Assistant Administrator and
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

2000

Figure 2a: Poverty Rate ($2 per day) and Income Status

Regional share of the world's poor living on under $2 per day (%)

China	India	Rest of Asia	Rest of world

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

% pop living on less than USD 2 /day and country income status in 2000

- Low Poverty (Less than 20%)
- Medium Poverty (20% - 50%)
- High Poverty (51% and above)
- Low Income Countries (LICs)

The latest Poverty data available up to year 2000 and up to year 2013:
BGD (2000), CHN (1999), FSM (2000), IDN (1999), IND (1994), IRN (1998), KHM (1994), LAO (1997), LKA (1996), MYS (1997), NPL (1996), PAK (1999), PHL (2000), PNG (1996), THA (2000), VNM (1998), MDV (1998)

Map data source(s):
World Bank, Development Research Group. Data are based on primary household survey data obtained from government statistical agencies and World Bank country departments. Data for high-income economies are from the Luxembourg Income Study database

Map Source: United Nations Cartographic Section

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Figure 2b: Poverty Rate ($2 per day) and Income Status

Regional share of the world's poor living on under $2 per day (%)

China	India	Rest of Asia	Rest of world

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

% pop living on less than USD 2 /day and country income status in 2000

- Low Poverty (Less than 20%)
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Map data source(s):
World Bank, Development Research Group. Data are based on primary household survey data obtained from government statistical agencies and World Bank country departments. Data for high-income economies are from the Luxembourg Income Study database
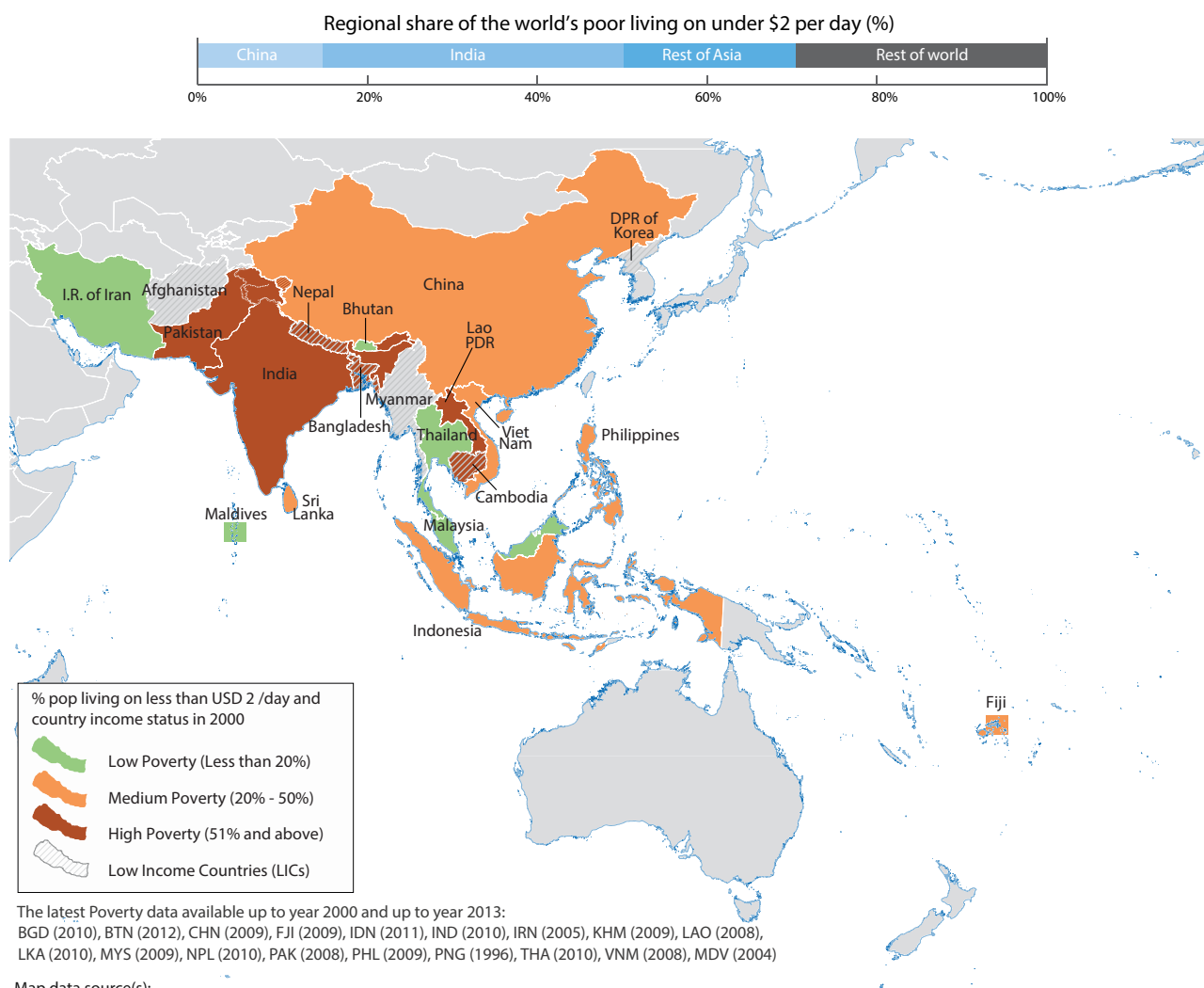
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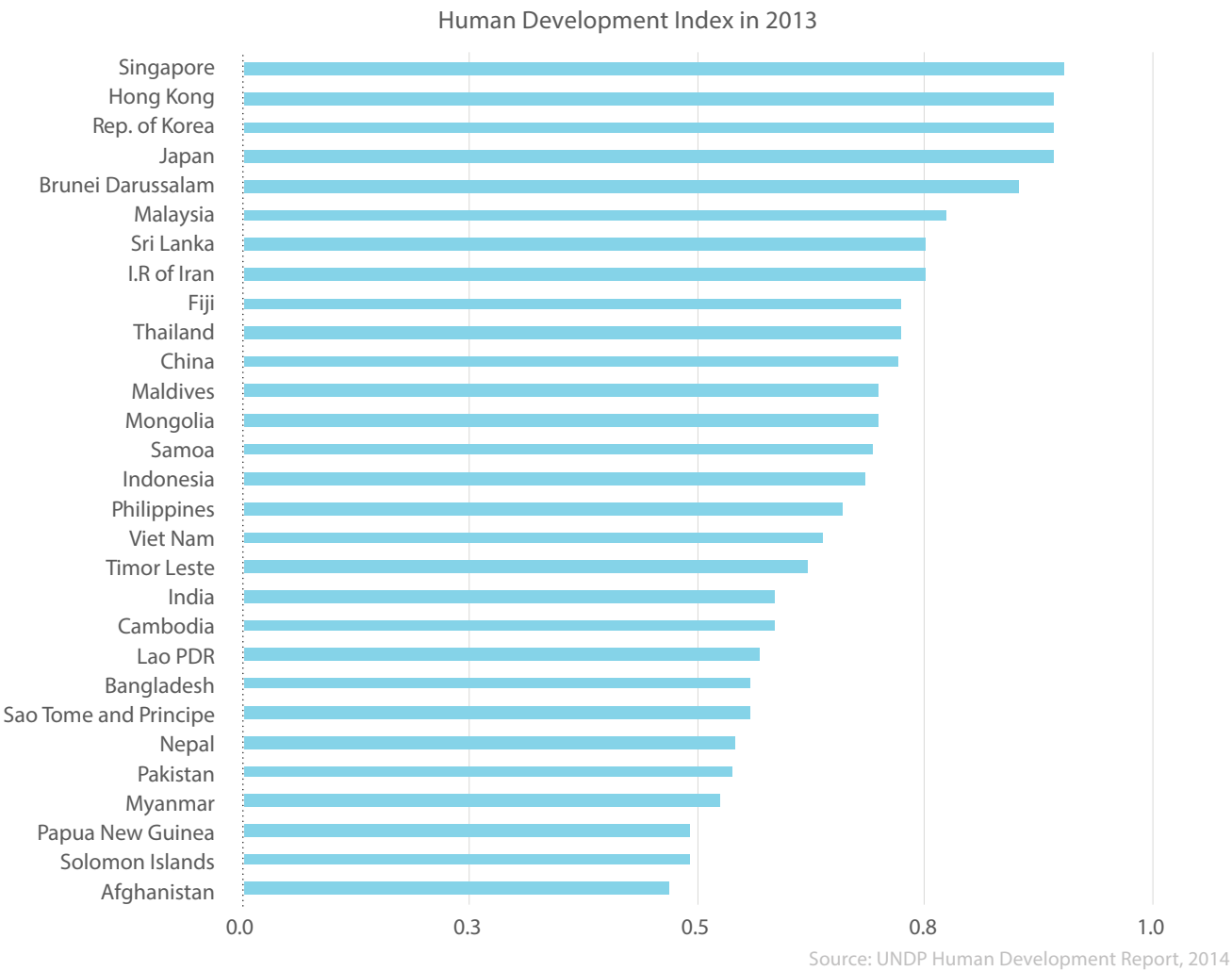
MAJOR DEVELOPMENT CHANGES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION IN 2013-2014

The Asia-Pacific region has been the most economically dynamic region in the world in recent decades, with a number of Asia-Pacific countries reducing poverty (Figure 2), improving human development (Figure 3) and growing in geopolitical influence. The region's share in the world economy has increased from 14% in 2000 to 25% in 2012. Many countries in the region have graduated to middle-income status (MIC) in the last decade, and by 2030, the region will host about two-thirds of the world's middle class. Innovation is gaining ground particularly at the grassroots level, an important step in developing knowledge-based, productive economies and transcending the middle-income trap. In addition, the region is undergoing major demographic changes (Figure 4), such as growing youth populations in some countries and ageing populations in others, along with rapid urbanization overall.

The region continues to make progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in reducing income poverty, although hunger, health and

UNDP co-produced a film for Discovery Asia in 2014 which tells how tuna can be managed sustainably for the benefit of the world's oceans and local fishing communities in the Pacific whose livelihoods depend on this species. Tuna processing plant in Munda, Solomon Islands. Credit: Arrowhead Films.

Figure 3: The Human Development Index in the Asia-Pacific Region

Human Development Index in 2013

Country	
Singapore	
Hong Kong	
Rep. of Korea	
Japan	
Brunei Darussalam	
Malaysia	
Sri Lanka	
I.R of Iran	
Fiji	
Thailand	
China	
Maldives	
Mongolia	
Samoa	
Indonesia	
Philippines	
Viet Nam	
Timor Leste	
India	
Cambodia	
Lao PDR	
Bangladesh	
Sao Tome and Principe	
Nepal	
Pakistan	
Myanmar	
Papua New Guinea	
Solomon Islands	
Afghanistan	

0.0   0.3   0.5   0.8   1.0

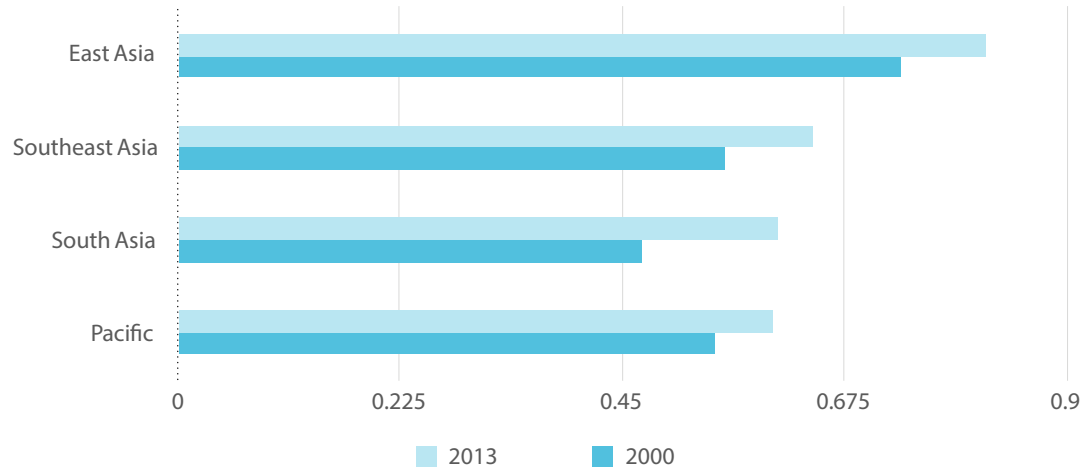Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2014

Although the rate of increase varies between countries, all the countries in the Asia-Pacific made significant progress in human development in the last decade. Both low-income countries (such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal) and middle-income countries (such as China and India) saw the greatest improvement. Seven of the ten countries that 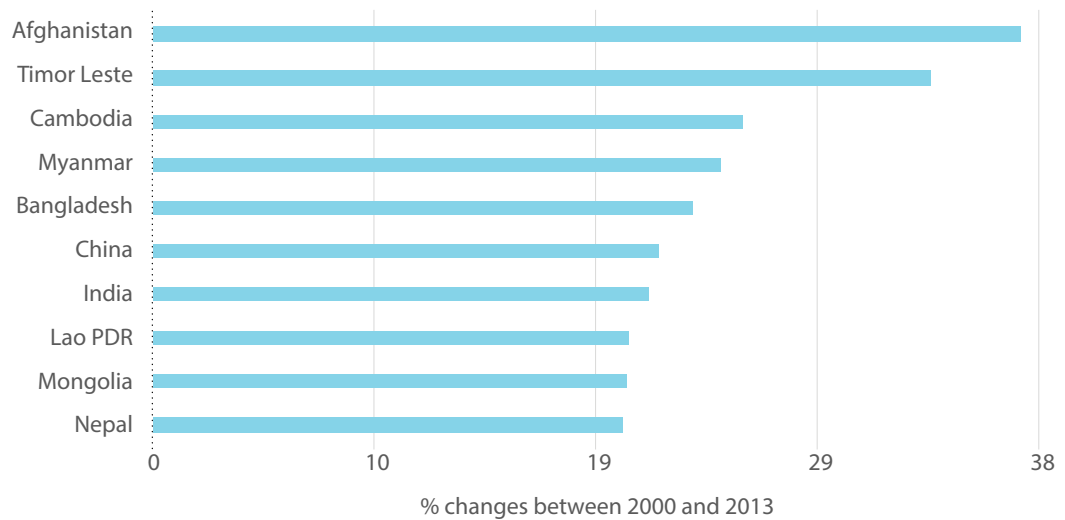have seen the greatest improvement in human development are among the least developed countries. East Asia has experienced the highest levels of human development while South Asia has experienced the greatest progress.
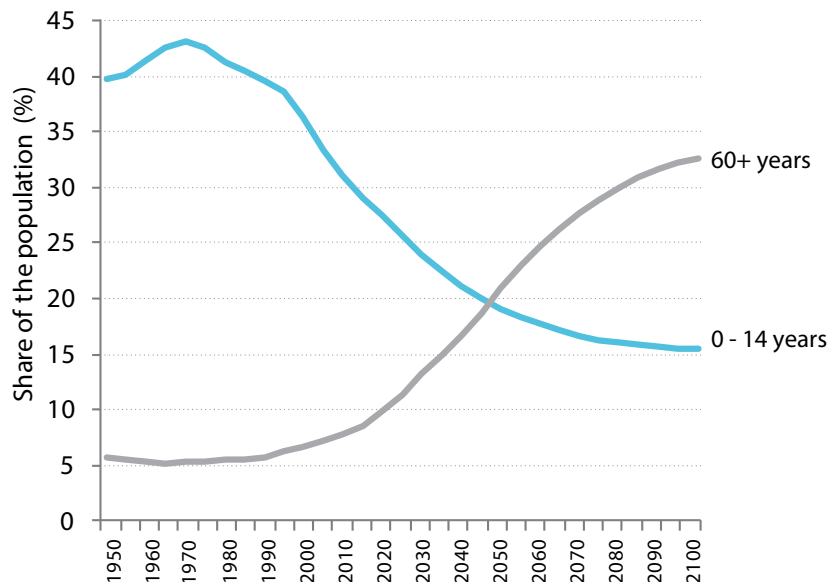
Sub-Regional Averages in HDI, 2000, 2013

East Asia

Southeast Asia

South Asia

Pacific

| 0 | 0.225 | 0.45 | 0.675 | 0.9 |

2013   2000

Top Ten Countries with Greatest Progress in HDI between 2000 and 2013

Afghanistan

Timor Leste

Cambodia

Myanmar

Bangladesh

China

India

Lao PDR

Mongolia

Nepal

| 0 | 10 | 19 | 29 | 38 |

% changes between 2000 and 2013

Figure 4: Demographic Changes in the Asia-Pacific Region

sanitation targets remain off-track. Despite the huge decline over the last decade, poverty – in terms of the proportion of people living on under US$2 per day – continues to affect 1.7 billion in the region, where 63% of the world's poor reside. Critically, gender and income disparities are increasing in some parts of the region (Figure 9).[1] Average GDP growth in developing Asia[2] appeared relatively robust in 2013-2014 by global standards but nonetheless represented an economic slowdown for the region, with prospects of unemployment rising.

Despite some progress in environmental protection, the Asia-Pacific region is depleting its natural resources at an unsustainable rate. While air pollution in the region's megacities is one of the most dramatic examples of environmental degradation, deforestation in Southeast Asia and water scarcity in South Asia reveal much deeper problems. Most countries in the region suffer low levels of water security, and 60% of households are without a safe water supply and improved sanitation, according to the Asian Development Bank's Asia Water Development Outlook 2013.

Some of the biggest threats are related to climate change. Several medium- and high-intensity disasters, including Typhoon Haiyan in Philippines and Cyclone Phailin in India, hit in 2013. Haiyan resulted in a large-scale humanitarian response, while Phailin was a testament to the work done on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and early warning, with hundreds of thousands of people safely evacuated. The Pacific is particularly vulnerable to extreme weather events, and in April 2014, torrential rain in the Solomon Islands caused widespread flooding, damages and displacement, affecting 10% of the population.

CASE STUDY 1

From the Mountains to the Sea, UNDP Offers Simple Solutions to Help Communities Keep Governments 'On Their Toes'

To combat a key problem faced by remote Maldivian island communities, a big idea is beginning to connect community members to their municipal councils for better delivery of public services. Drawing inspiration from the United Kingdom's award-winning Fix My Street initiative, UNDP Maldives leveraged the high levels of mobile technology penetration in Maldives to create Make My Island in concert with Fixmystreet.com, which developed the technical solution for free.

It's simple: Community members use either their mobile phones or log on to a website to report or discuss their complaints, whether it's a broken street light or uncollected waste. The relevant island council has a short time in which to resolve the complaint, which also is tracked on the website. While the Maldivian prototype has focused on municipal issues at first, communities have already shared further challenges they would like to tackle. Recently, the prototype has gone live, with local council representatives and community members both actively participating in the testing phase.

Meanwhile, Bhutan's remote, mountainous terrain and low road connectivity pose challenges for parliamentarians wishing to communicate frequently with their constituents; for many parliamentarians, it may take more than a week to visit constituents in more remote areas. These limitations mean that representation by parliamentarians, as well as the ability of citizens to hold officials to account between elections, can be compromised; local community groups have noted the difficulty of having their "voice" heard at the national level. Likewise, some parliamentarians have expressed frustration at the situation, and hoped that there could be a better education of parliamentary functions and responsibilities.

To address this combination of challenges, UNDP Bhutan conceived of the idea of a "Virtual Zomdu" (virtual parliament) that brings the communities face to face with their parliamentarians, albeit virtually, to help connect Government and constituents. The idea was prototyped, and the Speaker of the National Assembly was the first parliamentarian to field-test it; Bhutan's largest newspaper, Kuensel, quoted the Speaker as saying that the effort would be important for improving governance and "keep[ing] them on their toes."

The success of the prototype testing lends itself well to Bhutan, which embraced a constitutional democratic system only in 2008. Further developing practices and methods for interaction, consultation and representation is critical at this early phase of Bhutan's parliamentary development, and the lawmakers' enthusiasm for the innovation presents an important possibility for nationwide adoption.

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In 2014, UNDP Bhutan, together with government partners, developed a Virtual Zomdu based on video conferencing technology, to connect parliamentarians and citizens across the mountainous terrains of the country. Credit: UNDP Bhutan