

Preface

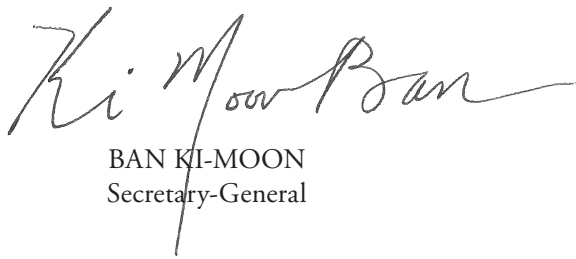
The present edition of the *World Economic and Social Survey* rightly focuses on the major issue of our time: sustainable development. As we work to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and shape a global vision for the period beyond, we must evaluate progress and look ahead to emerging challenges.

The global goal of halving poverty was achieved in 2010. We have seen remarkable gains in access to improved sources of water, the fight against malaria and tuberculosis, improved conditions for slum dwellers in cities, enrolment in primary education and the advancement of women.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that progress has been uneven and insufficient. Environmental sustainability is under threat, with accelerating growth in global greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. More than a billion people still live in extreme poverty. Nearly all of them suffer from hunger. Eradicating poverty must remain central to the international development agenda.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) reaffirmed commitment to sustainable development and adopted a framework for action and comprehensive follow-up. The *World Economic and Social Survey 2013* serves as a valuable resource as we look towards translating the outcome of Rio+20 into concrete actions. In particular, it offers in-depth analyses of some of the cross-sectoral issues identified at the Conference, notably urban sustainability, food and nutrition security and access to modern energy services for all.

Eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and managing the planet's natural resource base for the benefit of all are the overarching challenges of sustainable development. I commend the *World Economic and Social Survey 2013* and emphasize its value to all those seeking a solid understanding of these major issues which will underpin our progress towards the future we want.



BAN KI-MOON
Secretary-General