Foreword

... we reaffirm our shared vision of an Asia and Pacific free of poverty. ... Sustained, rapid growth is fundamental to achieving this vision. ... But growth alone is not enough. To fully realize our vision, I see us moving into a new era of development – more interdependent, more integrated and more inclusive.

(Haruhiko Kuroda, ADB Annual Meeting, 4 May 2005)

What should be done – what in practice *can* be done – to tackle effectively the enduring challenge of eliminating mass poverty in Asia? This volume is a contribution to the expanding literature searching for answers to this question.

In recent years, discussion of effective policy options for reducing mass poverty in developing countries has given increasing emphasis to a ‘growth plus’ approach. The essential idea underpinning a growth plus approach is that, as ADB President Kuroda emphasized at the ADB Annual Meeting in Istanbul in 2005, while rapid growth is fundamental to overcoming poverty, growth alone is not enough. Too often, policies of rapid economic growth have bypassed the poor. Too often, sensible policies that would have helped ensure that overall national growth was inclusive of the poor have not been adopted. The result is that in some developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, income gaps have widened markedly.

The articles in this book draw on recent research conducted in the Asian Development Bank Institute and elsewhere to examine a range of specific aspects of policy strategies designed to reduce poverty in Asia. The broad lesson that emerges is that there is quite a wide range of practical interventions that can be implemented to help improve the inclusiveness of economic growth. The effectiveness of these strategies can be expected to vary depending on local circumstances in different countries but overall, for governments that are committed to poverty reduction, the lessons from various programs across the Asia-Pacific region are encouraging.

This book is the second publication produced by Edward Elgar Publishing in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) in recent years. A third study on regional development in the Philippines is scheduled for publication later in 2006. Through the production of these and other studies, the ADBI is committed to a program of

research and capacity building that supports the Asian Development Bank's overarching goal of poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region.

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