Foreword

One aspect of climate change that has been studied with less detail so far is that related to its economic and social impacts. This is due, perhaps, to the intrinsic complexity that characterizes long-term social and economic predictions, because they involve unprecedented environmental situations; or maybe to the wide variety of material, organizational and cultural reactions from human society to climate change. The truth is that some communities will suffer severe shocks from the new climate conditions on Earth, such as isolated and underdeveloped island countries, whereas others will face global warming better informed and with more economic resources, and thus with greater possibilities to deal with extreme weather events.

We should worry more about people who have never enjoyed technological advances, and now see their way of life, their culture and even their very existence threatened by the climate change. For instance, people from sub-Saharan Africa have been fighting for years, in bloody political and military internal conflicts, for land that is increasingly less productive and dry, providing a testimony of what might happen in other parts of the world if the average temperature rises more than about 2–3°C. In all continents, migration of people is increasingly common because billions of them have seen their natural and economic resources nearly exhausted. What should prevail is not the law of the strongest, but instead a commitment from the international community to support their efforts to deal with adverse environmental conditions.

The impacts of climate change in terms of geography and time scale have diverse and difficult-to-understand consequences for the nations and societies of the entire world. In this book we find a very useful exploration of macroeconomic approximations connected to these consequences, as well as innovative ideas to measure vulnerability through numerical indicators and country resilience to climate risks. For sure, the new tools developed in this book will be extremely helpful for building an accurate economic diagnosis and to achieve a greater consensus among the nations of this planet, all of which face the long-term consequences of climate change.

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