Foreword

The activities of international financial institutions exact a profound influence on the enjoyment of human rights. In recent years, research and legal scholarship has made significant progress in developing a better understanding of the human rights impact of these institutions, as well as their obligations under international law. The focus, however, has been on the roles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund due to the reach and scope of their activities. The regional development banks have not been subject to comparable, rigorous, in-depth academic scrutiny through a human rights 'lens'. In examining the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this book takes an important, timely and welcome step towards addressing this omission.

Transparency, participation and accountability are crucial to the realisation of other human rights. The human rights community has been slow to move from espousing such human rights to proposing practical measures through which development practitioners and international financial institutions may implement them. In the development context, human rights are often seen as without practical application and Dr. Sanae Fujita responds to this compelling criticism. Drawing on jurisprudence, and analysing the work of development institutions, she offers standards on the applicability of transparency, participation and accountability to the day-to-day operations of the World Bank and ADB; illustrates how these norms can enhance the Banks' activities; and suggests how they might be achieved in practice, for example, by inclusion in operational manuals. By using World Bank and ADB case studies, Dr. Fujita describes how human rights standards would enhance the Banks' operational activities. Adopting a human rights perspective, she considers some of the controversial projects implemented by these Banks and explains how the application of human rights standards could have prevented, or at least mitigated, some of the problems generated by these initiatives.

From its inception, the ADB has been significantly influenced by Japan, with a majority of its high-level staff, including all presidents, being Japanese. As a native Japanese speaker, Dr. Fujita was able to interview ADB personnel whose views are rarely examined in the

existing English literature. She also conducted face-to-face interviews with World Bank staff, consultants to international financial institutions and representatives of key civil society organisations. Through her extensive interviews, Dr. Fujita obtained valuable information much of which has not previously been seen in the public domain. The author was also involved in the review processes of some of these Banks' policies. The insights gained from these experiences deepens her understanding and analysis, enabling readers to more fully appreciate and comprehend the complexity of protecting human rights with donor countries, borrowing countries, bank management and civil society organisations having different interests and priorities. Dr. Fujita reminds us of the critically important role that human rights can play.

Opening up new perspectives, this book is a major and original contribution to the literature.

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