Preface

Development is an arduous, complex and unwieldy process. The move from an unsatisfactory social, economic and environmental condition to a more desirable position can be challenging unless sound policies and strategies are framed and efficiently implemented. With declining state intervention in economic and social affairs and the growing influence of market forces in an era of globalized neoliberalism, development policies are being recalibrated to respond to both changing domestic demands and external pressures. The policy process requires reconfiguration to factor in the simultaneous concerns for economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability. Thus, it is gradually becoming more open, wide-ranging and inclusive. It can no longer remain the captive of domestic political/bureaucratic elites or entrapped in the hegemonic influence of global institutions and the international political economy.

The complexity of development policymaking derives from the intricate interplay of actors, institutions, networks and social/political/economic forces, as policies address a myriad of issues relating to poverty reduction, sustained well-being, human capability enhancement, climate change and environmental protection, infrastructure building, empowerment and access, and so on. With the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) scheduled to be attained by 2030, governments worldwide, especially in developing countries, are hard-pressed to design policies by employing state instruments and engaging in collaborations and partnerships with stakeholding non-state entities. Indeed, the SDGs agenda and the preceding Millennium Development Goals added new dimensions to development policymaking to obtain the correct balance between growth-directed and people-centred approaches to development. While the SDGs agenda is a universal call for action, the question of contextualization becomes critical, and national policymakers need to be aware of their country's overall development strategy. It is also essential for them to be sensitive to domestic demands, resources and restraints, but not oblivious to global imperatives, especially in areas such as climate change and ecosystems management, infrastructure building transcending national and regional boundaries, international trade and commerce, and global communications networks.

The purpose of this *Handbook* is to put together discourse on development policy from both scholarly and practical perspectives on a range of development sectors – economic, social, political, technological and environmental. The role of institutions, both state and non-state, in contributing to policy development, execution and evaluation have been covered. The ideas and research presented here provide critical analyses of complex and often perplexing issues relating to the areas addressed. Overall, the book covers a wide range of cases, issues, challenges and prospects for development policy ideas and applications. Each area of concern has considered policy development and execution, outcome and impact and presented fresh insights into development policy praxis. A diverse group of scholars and practitioners with experience in research and administration of development projects contributed chapters to the book.

Despite sincere efforts, it remains beyond the scope of a single book to capture the essence of development policy and offer insight into and explanations for changes in approaches, conceptualization, application and assessment of efforts undertaken by an array of governments

who subscribe to different ideological orientations. Nevertheless, the expectation is that this book will add to the discourse of development policy.

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