

Conclusion

Though this is the first Human Development Report for Latvia, it is to be hoped that others will be produced in the coming years. The exercise of preparing the Report revealed certain weaknesses in Latvia's statistical base. While many of these weaknesses are currently being addressed through ongoing reforms, there is an urgent need for various national, bilateral, and multilateral efforts in this realm to be coordinated. Preparation of the Report took place under severe time constraints (6 months) so that the analyses and proposals contained within it could serve as an input to the policy dialogue in Latvia. It is to be hoped that the lack of comprehensiveness is compensated by timely publication of the document.

During preparation of various chapters and a series of meetings, contributors raised a num-

ber of issues that deserve more detailed treatment in subsequent reports. Among important topics touched on in this Report but inadequately investigated are education, the environment, and issues related to decentralisation and the division of labour between the national and local governments. The latter issues are particularly important, as they touch on both the democratic transition and the manner in which social welfare is provided.

This Report invites discussion and commentary not only because the issues raised are important for Latvia's development, but also because the very process of dialogue will further Latvia's democratic transition. If the Report spurs debate, criticism and alternative proposals for putting and keeping people at the centre of Latvia's development process, all the better.