

## ***Shorter Notices***

**Kawai, Masahiro, Mario B. Lamberte, and Yung Chul Park (eds.).** *The Global Financial Crisis and Asia: Implications and Challenges*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 344 pages. £58.00.

Of the Black Swans hitting the world economy, Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2006-07 remains most significant, in both breadth and severity, the impact of which lasts until now. The lessons learned and policy responses to the crisis keep framing the future mitigation of the identical crises. The crisis of 2006-07 has had serious implications and repercussions for the world economy with varying magnitude. This book, as suggested by the title, studies the implications of GFC for Asia, a region already hit by Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-98 and, more importantly, a region likely to be the main driver of the world economic performance in future. The book, divided in four sections carrying 13 essays, provides a systematic study of the crisis triad: the causes, consequences and contagion in more of a qualitative manner. The book starts with the fact that Asia remains least hit by GFC and that the impact, having multi-channel transmission mechanism, operated primarily through declined exports rendering Asia a lower economic growth region. On transmission of the GFC, the book finds US housing and financial market development the chief operators. An insightful discussion on fundamental factors underlying the crisis is provided. The book confirms an aggressive policy response to the crisis of which monetary and fiscal policies remain the centre of response strategies. Successful revival of the Asian economies, according to the book, suggests lower vulnerability of the region to external shocks. The concluding part of the book, highlighting the role of Asia in global economy as the major driver, given the limited role for Europe and US economies, asks for the need for more inclusive growth policies to turn the achieved growth patterns sustainable. The book offers case studies and draws implications for major economies of Asia including, among others, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, China and India. The book further suggests that regional cooperation can be a good combating tool in tackling external shocks. (*Sajid Amin Javed*)

**CUTS International.** *Reforming Non-Tariff Barriers: Case for a Participatory Approach in South Asia*. Jaipur, India: CUTS International. 2013. xli+207 pages. \$25.00.

This book is about addressing the issue of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in South Asia, which stand in the way of realizing huge intra-regional trade potential present in South Asia. The main premise of the book is that although both tariff and non-tariff components hinder the intra-regional trade, the latter poses the bigger threat. According to the book, there are several reasons to reform the current NTB regime. To begin with, rapid regional trade integration in other parts of the world has forced the South Asian

countries to access those markets with their traditional exports. In addition, the indifference of the member countries has not only slowed trade liberalisation in the region but it has also rendered it less prepared than the other regions of the world to benefit from global trade liberalisation. To buttress the claim that there are several NTBs hindering trade liberalisation in South Asia, sector-specific case studies from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are also included in the book. The book argues that the measures taken, thus far, to remove NTBs are inadequate, which calls for a new strategy. The book finds that the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) does not possess satisfactory tools to deal with trade facilitation measures due to which the system cannot tackle NTBs adequately. Furthermore, the lack of clear definitions and unavailability of data, among other things, has exacerbated the situation. The book proposes a participatory approach to tackle NTBs in the South Asian region to overcome problems marring trade liberalisation in the region under the current approach. This approach is based on a comparative principle that compares current trade conditions to possible cheaper alternatives. The book argues that the proposed approach is better than the current approaches as it will solve the issues relating to definitions, data insufficiency and incentives. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Chambers of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI), which is the apex body of all national federations and chambers of industries in the SAARC region, can play an important role in realizing the participatory approach proposed in the study. Using the newly generated database on trade cost indicators developed by UNESCAP, the book shows that as much as 7.26 percent of value of the total intra-regional trade can be saved even if the minimum level of reforms proposed in the book are adopted. At the end of the book, a Business Plan for reforming NTBs in South Asia is presented which calls for more focused use of national trade policy instruments. It also advocates targeting selected products that have highest trade potential as a first step in implementing the proposed NTB reforms. (*Omer Siddique*)