

Executive Summary

After a succession of adverse shocks in recent years, the global economy is facing another substantial headwind, with increased trade tension and heightened policy uncertainty. This is contributing to a deterioration in prospects across most of the world's economies. For emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs), the ability to narrow per capita income gaps with richer countries, boost job creation, and reduce extreme poverty remains insufficient. Downside risks to the outlook predominate, including an escalation of trade barriers, persistent policy uncertainty, rising geopolitical tensions, and an increased incidence of extreme climate events. Conversely, policy uncertainty and trade tensions may ease if major economies succeed in reaching lasting agreements that address ongoing trade disputes. The challenging global context faced by EMDEs is compounded by the fact that foreign direct investment inflows into these economies have fallen to less than half of their peak level in 2008 and are likely to remain subdued. Global cooperation is needed to restore a more stable and transparent global trade environment and scale up support for vulnerable countries grappling with conflict, debt burdens, and climate change. Across EMDEs, domestic policy action is also critical to contain inflation risks, strengthen fiscal resilience through improved revenue mobilization, and reprioritize spending. To unlock job creation and long-term growth, structural reforms must focus on raising institutional quality, attracting private investment, and strengthening human capital and labor markets. In particular, countries in fragile and conflict situations (FCS) face daunting development challenges that will require tailored domestic policy reforms, underpinned by well-coordinated multilateral support.

Global Outlook. Global growth is slowing due to a substantial rise in trade barriers and the pervasive effects of an uncertain global policy environment. Growth is expected to weaken to 2.3 percent in 2025, with deceleration in most economies relative to last year. This would mark the slowest rate of global growth since 2008, aside from outright global recessions. In 2026-27, a

tepid recovery is expected, leaving global output materially below January projections. Progress by emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs) in closing per capita income gaps with advanced economies and reducing extreme poverty is anticipated to remain insufficient. The outlook largely hinges on the evolution of trade policy globally. Growth could turn out to be lower if trade restrictions escalate or if policy uncertainty persists, which could also result in a build-up of financial stress. Other downside risks include weaker-than-expected growth in major economies with adverse global spillovers, worsening conflicts, and extreme weather events. On the upside, uncertainty and trade barriers could diminish if major economies reach lasting agreements that address trade tensions. The ongoing global headwinds underscore the need for determined multilateral policy efforts to foster a more predictable and transparent environment for resolving trade tensions, some of which stem from macroeconomic imbalances. Global policy efforts are also needed to confront the deteriorating circumstances of vulnerable EMDEs amid prevalent conflict and debt distress, while addressing long-standing challenges, including the effects of climate change. National policy makers need to contain risks related to inflation as well as strengthen their fiscal positions by raising additional domestic revenues and reprioritizing spending. To facilitate job creation and boost long-term growth prospects in EMDEs, reforms are essential to enhance institutional quality, stimulate private investment growth, develop human capital, and improve labor market functioning.

Regional Prospects. All EMDE regions face a challenging outlook amid the rise in trade tensions and heightened global uncertainty. In 2025, growth is projected to slow in East Asia and Pacific as well as in Europe and Central Asia—both regions that are highly reliant on global trade—and, to a lesser extent, in South Asia. In Latin America and the Caribbean, growth is projected to be the lowest among

EMDE regions over the forecast horizon, as activity is held back by high trade barriers and long-standing structural weaknesses. In regions with a large number of commodity exporters, including in the Middle East and North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, growth is anticipated to

face drags from the weakening outlook for external commodity demand. Against the backdrop of a deteriorating global environment, growth forecasts for 2025 have been downgraded in all EMDE regions relative to January projections.