One of the challenges of the United Nations has been to provide shelter of good quality to all the inhabitants of the world. This has been encapsulated the Millennium Development Goals 7: Ensure environmental sustainability and 8: Develop global partnership for development. Taking into consideration the fact that slums areas cover 80 to 90% of the cities in developing countries and given that in less than fifty years more than 50% of the rural population will migrate to cities, it is imperative to act in order to curb down the uprising of poor town planning and housing in developing countries. This book titled: “Decision support for construction cost control in developing countries” could not have been timely than now. It is a significant step towards assuring in a very near future, the production of affordable and viable houses to meet the demands from citizens of developing countries. The authors Pr. Pettang, Dr. Manjia, and Dr. Abanda deserve praises for producing this very first book that contains innovative tools applied on Cameroonian case studies. The content of this piece of work will definitely contribute to bringing solutions in tackling the problem of poor housing and town planning issues in developing countries. They have revealed the poor link between the formal and the informal sectors, where the latter are self constructors who constitute small and medium size enterprises and often subcontractors of large privates companies. The authors demonstrated the necessity to feed the decision support for construction cost control with advanced and efficient modern scientific theories and practices. Furthermore, the authors raised the application of a few but relevant decision support systems (matrix-based, Markov decision process) with a great emphasis on rule-based ontology decision support systems. The software used in this book for the implementation of case studies is Protégé-OWL, one of the most popular ontology engineering software. I deeply think that the authors have achieved their aim and objectives which by and large support the following ideals:

- Organization and modernization of the informal construction sector by orienting it in an industrial engineering construction process;
The design of a judicious regulation of labor by a computational system that manages and organizes the schedules of workers by task;

One should adopt an integrated manufacturing process of the building, which is to create and organize the workshops of design and construction in the rules of art, building components, pre-fabricated. These mini workshops will be controlled so that construction elements meet the standard norms create the artisanal mini workshops making some semi-finished or intermediate construction material, enrolled in a normative approach, etc.

This book is suitable for housing and town planning decision makers, for civil and town planning engineers, for teachers and students of advanced schools of civil engineering in Africa and the rest of the world, for technical ministries in charge of housing and road constructions, etc.

I am personally proud and honoured that my former student, today full professor in Civil Engineering at the National Advanced School of Engineering, University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon, gave me the opportunity to preface this great book.

Amos Foudjet
University of Dschang, Cameroon