



## Asian Productivity Organization “IN THE NEWS”



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Representatives from Asian Productivity Organisation member countries pose at the 52nd Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organisations in Vientiane this week. The meeting is discussing the challenges of improving APO programmes and emerging needs for improving their framework.



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# Productivity body ponders changing future

## Times Reporters

The Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) is meeting to discuss the challenges of improving APO programmes and share their experiences of emerging needs to improve their framework.

The 52nd Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organisations is taking place in Vientiane from October 18-20.

APO acts as a think tank for consultation in the region, and provides a place where productivity information can be exchanged between members in areas such as human resource development. Productivity knowledge can also be exchanged in areas such as industry, agriculture and the service sector, which all contribute to the socio-economic development of member countries, according to Minister of Industry and Commerce Dr Nam Vinhaket.

The government has assigned the Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion and Development Office, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, to act as the Lao National Productivity Organisation. In this role, the office is a catalyst, regional adviser, institution builder and a clearinghouse for productivity information.

“Productivity is a critical ingredient for national development,” said Dr Nam.



Dr Nam Vinhaket.

In the past, he said, the APO has made significant contributions towards increasing productivity in member countries from the Asia-Pacific region and it is no exaggeration that the organisation is considered the spearhead of the productivity movement.

He said this has been greatly appreciated by all its members. The APO also provides a link to other non-member countries and international organisations.

The progressive integration of regional and global markets creates enormous challenges for Laos but also provides a number of opportunities.

Competition in domestic and regional markets will increase. Therefore concerted efforts are necessary to improve the conditions for sustaining and continuing productivity improvement, Dr Nam said.

He said productivity

movements vary from country to country as they have to address the specific situation and their own country's needs.

“The Lao government began decentralising control and encouraging the formation of private enterprises in 1986. The results were striking with robust Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth over the past few years averaging around 6 to 7 percent annually, despite the global recession,” said Dr Nam.

He added that a significant share of this growth can be attributed to foreign direct investments in hydropower and mining. The integration of these large investments into the local economies remains a challenge as is the need to encourage links between local companies and small to medium enterprises.

As the development of the world is changed by economic reform, globalisation and liberalisation have created greater compulsions for us to buy products and there is now more competition than ever before, said APO Alternate Director for Laos Mr Soutchay Sisouvong.

Therefore it was important to carefully review the member countries' contributions and to plan further discussions of the APO programmes in 2012 and to formulate new strategic directions for 2013 and 2014.

Laos became a member of the APO in 2002.