

56th APO Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organizations

20 – 22 October 2015, Singapore

Welcome Remarks

APO Director for Singapore

Chew Mok Lee

Parliamentary Secretary for Trade and Industry and Education Low Yen Ling,
APO Governing Body Chair Muhammed Arif Azim,
APO Secretary-General Mari Amano,
Fellow NPO Heads and Delegates,
Distinguished Guests, and
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning and a warm welcome to Singapore. On behalf of the APO, I would like to thank Parliamentary Secretary Low Yen Ling for gracing this 56th Session of the APO Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs (WSM). It is also a great privilege to address you for the first time as the APO Director for Singapore.

Since its inception 54 years ago, the APO has contributed significantly to the economic development of many countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It has also helped governments and NPOs to develop and drive productivity upgrading in their industries, enterprises, and people. Singapore too has benefited significantly from its involvement with the APO. Given our limited natural resources and small domestic market, Singapore's economic growth was premised on the continual need to make better use of what we have. Our productivity movement has been ongoing since 1981, with strategies evolving over the years in tandem with our economic development journey.

We appreciate the strong support we received from the APO and fellow NPOs, which took various forms ranging from training programs, seminars, workshops, and conferences to accessing and sharing technical expertise and resources. With the APO and fellow members' help, we have been able to share best practices; learn about the latest in productivity policies, methodologies, and tools; and, in the process, develop strong partnerships and friendships within the APO community. We are happy and honored to host the 56th Session of the WSM. We last hosted some of you in 2012 at the 54th Governing Body Meeting, and I am pleased to see some familiar faces today.

As NPOs, we play an important role in our nations' economic development to drive productivity growth effectively and sustainably. This meeting is an important one as we will be discussing and finalizing the activities that will constitute the APO plan for the 2017 to

2018 biennium. I hope to make good use of our time together in the next three days to exchange ideas and views on critical and strategic issues.

Collectively, the APO and fellow NPOs have a wealth of experience and knowledge in the areas of productivity, economic development, and policymaking. We should draw on such institutional knowledge to support each other in our roles as NPOs to meet the needs of our countries and the overall socioeconomic development of the Asia-Pacific. Ultimately, we hope to bring the ideas generated during these three days to fruition.

I would like to thank President and Chief Operations Officer Lisa Higgins of the American Productivity & Quality Center (APQC) for meeting us in Singapore this week. Established as an NPO since 1977, the APQC is one of the forerunners in the areas of business benchmarking and best practices for productivity and quality, having spearheaded the creation of the US-based Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The award recognizes organizations in the USA for performance excellence. She will conduct a master class for us to share the APQC's experience and best practices. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the APO for making her trip possible.

The stage is set for a fulfilling, productive three days ahead. Hard work at the meeting aside, I also hope that you can take some time to enjoy the latest attractions that Singapore has to offer. On the third day, we have specially arranged for a guided tour to the Singapore Botanic Gardens, Singapore's very first UNESCO World Heritage Site, a status we were proud to secure earlier this year.

I look forward to productive discussions over the next few days and wish all of you an enjoyable stay in Singapore. Should you need any assistance, my SPRING colleagues will be glad to help. Thank you.