



## Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

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### 60 Per Cent Of Workforce In SME Sector



From left: Nguyen Nam of Vietnam, Rajapuksha Priyantha and Ponsuge Thisera of Sri Lanka at the APO Productivity Measurements workshop at Tanoa International Hotel, Nadi, on September 3, 2018. Photo: Charles Chambers

Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Fiji provide 60 percent employment and account for 12 percent of GDP.

This was revealed during an Asia-Pacific workshop on Productivity Measurement in SMEs at the Tanoa International in Nadi yesterday.

Director of the National Training and Productivity Centre in Fiji, Isimeli Tagi-cakiverata, said productivity and the stimulation of productivity were crucial to the economic future of any country.

The workshop began yesterday and ends on September 7. It is being organised by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in partnership with NTPC with 22 participants from Fiji and around the Asia Pacific region.

“I think it’s important to note here that every time we talk about SMEs we need to keep in mind the different definitions and scales of SMEs in our member countries,” he said.

“Which means that what some may consider to be a SME in one country may not be in another country.

“SMEs such as those we have here in Fiji have benefited from various productivity improvements and Government initiatives.

“This has allowed them to raise their quality; diversify their products, expand their customer base and increase profitability.

“As representatives of member countries we must continue to develop our human assets so that they become compatible with the new technologies and business strategies.”

### **Productivity**

He said productivity was about efficiency, and the effective use of resources and that is was everyone’s business, the Government, the Public sector and private sector, and the ordinary people.

“Measuring productivity is key to understanding where we were in the past, where we are today and where we want to go in the future, and how we can strategise towards those goals of the future.”

“Technology has also enabled massive individual productivity gains — computers, email, social media and other advances have made it possible for workers to produce more in a day than was previously possible in a year.

“It is time to start shifting to an organizational mind-set and set of tools that can provide full visibility into our systems of work, to determine where it does or doesn’t create value.”

“The Fijian government has provided extensive avenues for training, counselling, provision of grants, loans and market access for our SMEs.”

He said the objective was to make the Fijian-Made brand a byword for quality and consistency the world over.

Meanwhile APO Programme Officer Jose Elvinia said small and medium enterprises or SMEs played an increasingly important role in Asian economies in terms of their contributions to GDP and employment, and remain as one of the core engines of productivity and economic growth.

“SMEs must have a strong focus on productivity and we, the stakeholders, must help in nurturing a strong productivity mindset and embrace continuous productivity improvement of the sector especially at the firm level.

“The APO, through this workshop, will try to enhance your understanding on productivity concepts and measurements for SMEs by reviewing existing tools, approaches, and techniques, and demonstrate the

use of online/IT-based platforms so that monitoring, analysing, and benchmarking will be possible despite those challenges.

“I believe the principles and theories on productivity are universal. It is just the tool that is changing or improving as we now have IT platform that offers a lot of help.”