



New Year message from APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki

I take great pleasure in wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and productive New Year. It is a hopeful time as we celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of another. The APO turned 50 last year, proudly commemorating the achievements of the past five decades and overcoming various challenges that not only strengthened its position from the heart of Asia, but also underlined its resolve to promote the socioeconomic development of member economies.

At the same time, we are reminded that several APO member economies are still recovering from the aftermath of natural disasters. We have lost dear ones and livelihoods have been impacted by the terrible catastrophes. My deepest condolences go to the victims. Despite the unfortunate events, the mission of the APO must continue. The 53rd Governing Body Meeting (GBM) that was to take place in Tokyo was instead moved to Kuala Lumpur in April after the Malaysian government graciously agreed to host it. The new strategic plan approved by the GBM was discussed and developed into a program of action at the annual Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Vientiane last October. Other APO-related highlights included the 7th Eco-products International Fair (New Delhi), Top Management Forum (Kyoto), and International Productivity Congress (Islamabad), to name just a few.

The debt crisis in the eurozone and USA exacerbated the slowdown of the global economy in 2011. Despite this, the silver lining for Asia is that it should be able to navigate through this crisis and be less affected, largely due to its greater reliance on regional trade and economic cooperation. The current global economic scenario emphasizes the relevance of APO-NPO collaboration and mutual cooperation that allow us to explore new frontiers of productivity and competitiveness through the implementation of projects with significant multiplier effects. e-Learning in particular will feature as one effective way to extend the reach of APO productivity projects, as shown by the overwhelming enrollment of 1,900 participants in the pilot program carried out last June.

The APO would like to extend its deepest appreciation to the Republic of China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Thailand for giving special grants for projects in 2011, an acknowledgment and recognition of the role of the APO as the beacon of the Asia-Pacific in its quest to assist member economies become more productive and competitive by 2020. To demonstrate its commitment to that goal, the APO will continue to support members guided by the three strategic directions set in April last year at the GBM: promote the development of SMEs and communities; catalyze innovation-led productivity growth; and promote Green Productivity. Also, against the current unpredictable, volatile economic backdrop, the APO has been striving to improve its operational cost-effectiveness and deliver even better projects for its members.

The APO must seek to offer more in 2012. The special APO 50th anniversary publication will debut at an international conference in Taipei. I also look forward to further collaboration with the UN, Colombo Plan, and Asian Development Bank Institute as well as with other international organizations. Let us continue to work together to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the Asia-Pacific through productivity enhancement. Let us stay united in the circle of innovative ideas and collaboration to realize our aspirations for our nations and the region. It has indeed been a rewarding 50 years, and here is to another 50! 



Secretary-General Yamazaki

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