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New Year message from APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka

It is my great pleasure to wish all *APO News* readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support for and cooperation with the APO over the past year. Our mission of creating a better tomorrow through productivity improvement today would not be possible without you.



The past year was a year of change for the APO. The Governing Body Meeting held in Mongolia in June endorsed a new biennial budgeting system that will significantly change the procedures of APO program planning and budgeting. The groundwork necessary for the transition was successfully laid thanks to the sage advice and wise counsel of member countries.

The Secretariat, having started 2007 by streamlining the organizational structure from six departments to four, has adapted well to the changes, with improved communication and coordination among departments. Charged with renewed energy and dynamism, not only has the Secretariat made great strides in improving its current services but also in developing new projects and new methods, identifying specific needs of member countries, and seeking out emerging areas of potential benefit. The fact-finding missions dispatched to other regions in early 2007 reflected the APO's determination to be at the forefront of productivity trends in the Asia-Pacific region. Closer cooperation with other world-renowned institutions will strengthen the APO's think tank role, bringing expertise and knowledge from all corners of the world to improve enterprises here in the Asia-Pacific. The introduction of new two-tiered approaches, extensive application of e-learning methods, and new modalities for the development of NPO programs increased our capability to assist the national productivity movements in member countries.

Efforts to create a better tomorrow based on productivity improvements today will continue in 2008. New concepts and areas will be thoroughly investigated and then incorporated as appropriate into project planning and design to benefit member countries. New methods and trials will be devised whenever a leadership initiative is required. All these resolutions and promises will become reality only with the active participation and support rendered by productivity experts, practitioners, and stakeholders within and beyond our member countries. With your full cooperation, the APO can be relentless in the pursuit of higher productivity, which is fundamental to economic progress, prosperity, and the well-being of the people in the region. I look forward to receiving your continued support in fulfilling our mission. 🌐

New Year message from the *APO News*

The *APO News* would like to wish all our readers a happy, healthy, and productive 2008. The monthly newsletter starts the year with a full-color format featuring new columns. We hope to deliver more informative and useful reports to assist productivity practitioners and stakeholders within and beyond the Asia-Pacific region in making a difference in the lives of all. Your suggestions and feedback are always welcomed and appreciated.



P-Leader—NPC, Malaysia

Leadership for national development

Dato' Nik Zainiah Nik Abdul Rahman
Director General, National Productivity Corporation

In an increasingly competitive environment driven by the demand for better, faster, cheaper, and more environmentally friendly products and services, the ability to lead is a critical factor for organizations. All changes, whether they are strategic, procedural, structural, or technological, need the right mix of leadership factors. There are several reasons why leadership is required to push organizations toward better performance:

- Organizations may become complacent, creating blind spots to internal weaknesses and external threats and challenges.
- Organizations may no longer explore new ideas, services, markets, and customers.
- New ideas may be stifled due to a lack of leadership in thinking and knowledge.
- Too much inbreeding of followers may occur, with no desire to encourage excellent performance.
- Organizations slow in the journey toward corporate excellence due to low productivity initiatives.

The challenge is greater for NPOs, which must lead, create change, and add value for the development of other organizations. The staff of NPOs must be role models for other organizations if they are to earn their respect. A creative mindset, positive attitude, and zeal for acquiring new knowledge are the essence of developing productive leadership.

NPC leadership initiatives in the public and private sectors

The National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia (NPC) has been serving the private sector and industry for the past 41 years (Figure). It has gained the confidence and trust of that sector, as evidenced by the receipt of accolades and recognition of higher productivity and competitiveness achieved. Now, new leadership qualities will be required as the NPC takes on the role of assisting the government in productivity and quality initiatives in the public sector.

The public sector in Malaysia must be an enabler for the business community. The efficiency of the public sector as a facilitator in national development and as a service agency is reflected



in the nation's competitiveness measurement. With capable, competitive human resources, the public sector acts as a catalyst and pacesetter for the private sector. Furthermore, levels of service delivery in the public sector are becoming more important. Therefore, to build on past success and remain competitive, the public sector in Malaysia must continuously internalize such excellent mechanisms promoted by the government as public-private-sector collaboration, performance measurement, and innovation through teamwork.

Public-private-sector collaboration

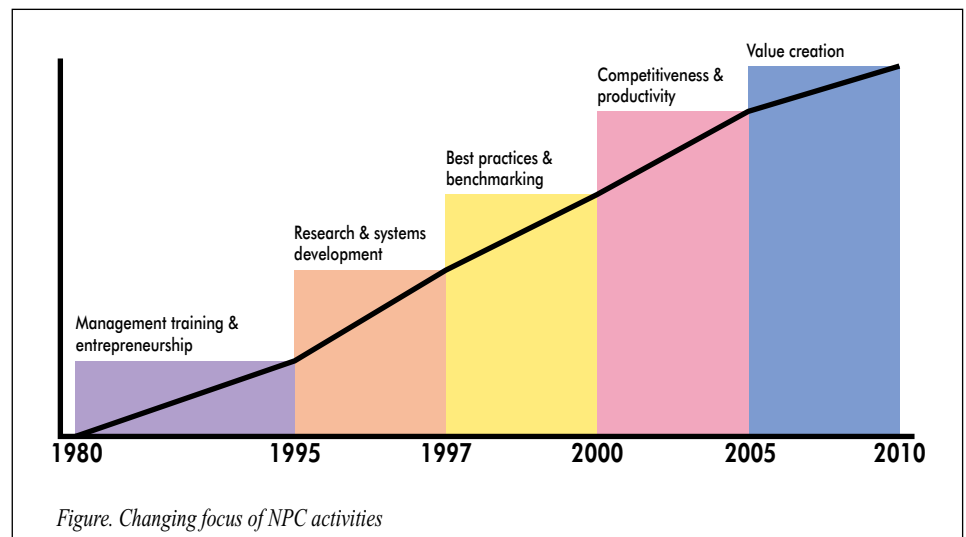
Based on the philosophy that public-private-sector collaboration is a key ingredient for successful national economic development, the rationale for seeking closer cooperation is the inherent interdependence between the two sectors. The private

sector is the commercial and economic arm of the nation, while the public sector provides the policy framework and direction to enable the private sector to perform at world-class level. The more successful the private sector, the more private businesses, greater employment opportunities, and higher government revenues. This in turn means that more is available to the public sector for financing socioeconomic development projects and public administration improvements.

Generally, public-private-sector collaboration promotes a better understanding of government strategies, policies, and procedures and gives the private sector a voice in their determination, which in turn results in democratic consent, transparency in government, and market efficiency through lower transaction costs. In addition, such collaboration leads to an appropriate balance between stability and change in government policies and allows effective reactions to external changes.

Consultative Panels

The public sector views the establishment of consultative panels as pivotal in promoting the Malaysia Incorporated concept. Interactions on collaborative panels generate networks allowing representation and participation from all economic sectors. Under Development Administrative Circular No. 9 of 1991, it is mandatory to establish consultative panels. The NPC set up 11 consulta-



tive panels on the hospitality industry, human resources development, financial institutions, agriculture, information technology, logistics and transport, manufacturing, healthcare, productivity measurement, construction, and energy and utilities. Outputs from the NPC's consultative panels include the National Human Resource Development Master Plan and Human Resource Framework, both incorporated into the Third Industrial Master Plan 2006–2020.

Dialogue Sessions

In addition to consultative panels, ministries and departments at the federal, state, and district levels hold regular dialogue sessions with the private sector aimed at stimulating open discussions of government policies, rules, regulations, and procedures that affect the performance of the business community. Those dialogues also provide useful feedback for future government policy planning and implementation. For example, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry holds annual dialogue sessions with private-sector representatives, and the proposals made and feedback obtained are used as inputs in policy formulation.

Jointly sponsored activities

The two sectors are also encouraged to organize activities jointly to promote cooperation and encourage the mutually beneficial sharing of knowledge and

experiences. A number of formal activities within the NPC have been organized jointly with the private sector, including seminars, training courses, and overseas trade missions. Such activities allow close relations between the NPC and private sector and foster congenial personal ties that facilitate work at the official level.

Conclusion

In accommodating both public- and private-sector interests, the NPC has found that meeting the challenges of global markets while achieving world-class leadership requires numerous questions to be resolved: Which management style is required? Does an outstanding civil service complement an outstanding NPO? Should NPOs be market driven? Can cost-effective centers of excellence be developed in NPOs? Should NPOs be probusiness or seek to become more competitive themselves? Competitive NPOs must address attitudes, mindsets, and passion for excellence in their role of assisting in national development. The NPC has come a long way from its beginnings as a training agency to an organization crucial in spurring human capital development and capacity building for national economic growth. More concerted efforts are needed from NPOs in all member countries to act as go-betweens for industry and government to achieve and sustain national competitiveness. 🌀



Comment board



Director Nina Maria B. Estudillo, Institute of Productivity and Quality, Graduate School of Public and Development Management, DAP, Philippines

Resource person, consultative review meeting on the APO DPS Program, 20–23 November 2007, Malaysia
“The meeting was characterized by an atmosphere of open and free-flowing exchanges between those

attending, the implementing NPOs of the Development of Productivity Specialists (DPS) courses, i.e., the Development Academy of the Philippines for the basic course and the National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia for the advanced course. It coincided with the second week of the training course on DPS: Advanced Program held in Malaysia, 12–23 November. Thus, part of the time was allocated to observing the course and noting both the strengths and opportunities for improvement. The DPS courses have generated positive feedback, and I believe that aligning the modules of the basic and advanced courses will bring about more effective implementation of the program.”

Deputy Director Harsh Thukral, Environment Group, NPC India

Participant, seminar on Eco-labeling, Vietnam, 5–9 November, 2007

“The seminar highlighted the growing concern for ecological sustainability against the backdrop of increasing global and local environmental problems in correlation with an expanded concept of sustainable development. It strengthened our belief that greater attention to environmental aspects by

both producers and consumers of goods and services will lead to an era of greater environmental consciousness and more production and consumption of eco-products. The interactions among participants, deliberations on country presentations, and diligent work on group exercises led to fruitful exchanges of ideas and perspectives on eco-labeling scenarios and possibilities and at the same time generated wonderful camaraderie and lasting friendships.”

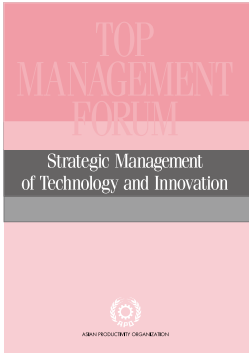
Scientist Vipin Kumar, National Institute of Science Technology and Development Studies, India

Participant, study meeting on Venture Business Support, 13–16 November 2007, Japan

“This study meeting program helped us to analyze Japanese examples of, and experience in, venture business support. Particularly, the presentation by Professor Noboru Maeda contained key lessons that may be applicable for the further development of venture business support in my country. The presentation given by Senior Investment Officer Susana Garcia-Robles, Inter-American Development Bank, also provided useful information on venture start-up support in Latin America. Field visits in Osaka enhanced our knowledge of the past, present, and future of venture businesses in Japan. However, the study meeting should have invested more time in discussions of how to improve venture business support systems among participants and resource persons, rather than allocating time for participating in Venture 2007 Kansai and a group discussion with the Asian Forum on Venture Business participants.”



New APO publication



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

APO 47 pp. December 2007
ISBN: 92-833-2379-3 (print edition)
ISBN: 92-833-7063-5 (e-edition)

The Top Management Forum, first held more than 20 years ago, is one of the longest-running APO project series. Since its inception, it has provided a useful platform for gaining practical insights into the business management strategies of successful Japanese companies. The Top Management Forum 2007 took up the theme “Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation” in the traditional venue of Kyoto, 26–28 February 2007.

This publication is a summary of the presentations made at the Top Management Forum 2007 which brought together 35 overseas participants from member countries and 20 local participants. *Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation* comprises a strategy paper and summaries of the presentations made by the distinguished resource speakers at the forum:

- Strategy Paper: The Importance of the Strategic Management of Technology and Innovation to APO Member Countries in the Current Asian Context and the Future, by Atsushi Sunami;
- Capturing the Value from Innovation—Introduction to Our Discussion at the Japan Research Center for TIM-Japan, by Kiyonori Sakakibara;
- Original and Without Compare: Zeon Management Strategy to Maximize Corporate Value, by Katsuhiko Nakano;
- Importance of Practical MOT Human Resources Development and Policy of METI, by Hidehiko Yamachika and Yoshito Goto;
- Working for the Benefit of Society, by Tsukasa Yamashita;
- Effective Collaboration between Major Corporations and Start-ups on Technology Development for Creating New Businesses, by Noboru Maeda;
- Effective and Efficient Technology Management, by Atsushi Abe;
- Denso R&D Management, by Yoshifumi Kato;
- Reforming Japan’s Innovation System, by Atsushi Sunami; and
- Panasonic Global R&D Strategy, by Yoshikuni Hirayama.

Due to the rapidly changing nature of customers’ demand for new products/services and stiff competition in the global market, the management of technology is gaining strategic importance for the firms to lower production costs and maximize the benefits of technological advances, i.e., to achieve innovation. For this reason, many Japanese companies have initiated the practice of strategic management of technology and innovation. The summary presentations provide deep insight into the experience of Japanese enterprises that have been successfully carrying out innovation as an integral part of their corporate strategies and investing in human resources development and R&D to remain competitive in the rapidly changing global economy. This publication is expected to be beneficial to general readers, entrepreneurs interested in the strategic management of technology and innovation, and policymakers in developing countries.

Common sense talk



“It is becoming increasingly evident that the most severe impacts of climate change will be felt by poor nations.”

Rachmat Witoelar

“Security can only be achieved through constant change, through discarding old ideas that have outlived their usefulness and adapting others to current facts.”

William O. Douglas

“The question for each man to settle is not what he would do if he had the means, time, influence, and educational advantages, but what he will do with the things he has.”

Hamilton Wright Mabee

“To swear off making mistakes is very easy. All you have to do is swear off having ideas.”

Leo Burnett

“I try to differentiate between what I need and don’t need. I talk to my wife and children before buying things. But I think the samurai sensibility goes deeper: respect for others; using your time carefully; keeping promises. I think those are qualities that Japan used to have but that it is somehow forgetting. They’re important to me.”

Ken Watanabe

“As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.”

Nelson Mandela

“We must learn which ceremonies may be breached occasionally at our convenience and which ones may never be if we care to live pleasantly with our fellow man.”

Amy Vanderbilt

“Every quotation contributes something to the stability or enlargement of the language.”

Dr. Samuel Johnson

“Suppose we were able to share meanings freely without a compulsive urge to impose our view or conform to those of others and without distortion and self-deception. Would this not constitute a real revolution in culture?”

David Bohm

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Asian Productivity Organization, Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F, 1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan. Phone number: (81-3) 5226-3920, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950, e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org

Lending a helping hand to venture entrepreneurs

The APO understands the potential of small venture businesses for national economic development, and many projects provide support for venture businesses and SMEs. One such example was the eighth annual Asian Forum on Venture Business held concomitantly with Venture Kansai, 14–16 November, in collaboration with the Osaka Prefectural Government, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc., Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development, Kansai Council, and others. The forum provides a platform for the exchange of expertise and information among Asia's creative, risk-taking entrepreneurial leaders.

The forum was attended by 36 venture business entrepreneurs and top managers from 17 member countries, who also participated in Venture Kansai's Venture EXPO activities. One highlight was the symposium entitled A New Industrial Map of Asia—Women Entrepreneurs Are Gaining Momentum featuring three outstanding women entrepreneurs. Executive Vice Chairman Dato' Dr. Jannie Tay, The Hour Glass Limited, a Singaporean global watch retailer, stressed competence, flexibility, ability to adapt constantly, and responsiveness to change as important leadership attributes of successful women entrepreneurs. President Dr. Nalinee Paiboon, Giffarine Skyline Unity Company, Ltd., and Giffarine Skyline Laboratory & Health Care Co., Ltd., Thailand, emphasized the importance of brand differentiation and strategy and strong networks with customers. Chairperson, Representative Director, and CEO Junko Fukada, Stella Chemifa Corporation, Japan, spoke on difficulties overcome in making her company the market leader in chemical cleaners for semiconductors and liquid crystals.

In addition, Senior Investment Officer Susana Garcia-Robles, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), USA, gave a presentation on "The Current State of and the Issues Regarding SMEs in Latin America." Sales Director Angelia Tan, IDLink Systems Pte Ltd., Singapore, and Managing Director Matthew Tan Kim Chuan, SIF Technologies Pte Ltd., Singapore, gave business plan presentations at Venture EXPO and had meetings with local counterparts.

Potential APO-SINF collaboration on Eco-products Directory

Two Swedish delegates visited the APO Secretariat 12–14 December to explore the possibility of collaborating on the *Eco-products Directory*. The visit was jointly coordinated by the Research and Planning Department and Industry Department at the request of the Swedish Industry Association (SINF), which exhibited keen interest in the directory during the APO's study meeting on Eco-innovation held in Stockholm, 3–7 September. Managing Director Sven-Olof Ryding, Swedish Environmental Management Council, and Senior Advisor Lennart Piper, SINF, commented, "We were very impressed with the *Eco-products Directory*, which is simple and easy to understand." Ryding added that the APO's initiative to develop an online database sourced from the *Eco-products Directory* is a great advance ahead of European initiatives in this field. The delegates also met Prof. Ryoichi Yamamoto, University of Tokyo, Chair of the Committee for Establishment of an Eco-products Database and Vice Chair of the Green Productivity Advisory Committee (GPAC) to receive technical advice. Other GPAC members representing Nippon Steel Corporation, Teijin Limited, and Hitachi Co., Ltd. also met the Swedish delegates to discuss the compilation of the *Eco-products Directory*.



Invited women entrepreneur speakers (L-R: Tay, Paiboon, Fukada)

The joint discussions between the participants in the forum and the APO study meeting on Venture Business Support attended by venture capitalists and business incubators as well as government officials involved in venture business support programs were well received by participants in both projects. They shared views on the development of venture business and exchanged perspectives as recipients and support providers. Participants composed a wish list for a venture support system and emphasized the importance of mentoring for start-ups and flexible loan schemes that support eco-friendly products and women entrepreneurs.

In collaboration with the OCCI, the forum offered a matchmaking program of Virtual Business Talks, an on-line directory for SME matching, and face-to-face meetings. Participants also observed the entrepreneurial expertise and multifaceted support offered SMEs in Osaka during visits made to the Entrepreneurial Museum of Challenge and Innovation, OCCI, and Creation Core Higashi Osaka. 🌐

New officer at Secretariat

Starting 10 December, the APO Secretariat has a new officer in the Industry Department. The addition of Md. Zainuri Juri, formerly of the National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia (NPC), brings the number of officers in the department to six. After receiving a degree in political science in Malaysia, Zainuri worked for a brief stint in the banking sector, where he received an outstanding customer service certificate. During his years at the NPC, where he was appointed APO Liaison Officer in 2005, he was involved in projects covering 5S systems in SMEs, international technical cooperation, TQM consultancy, and the development of a TQM model company. Zainuri kept his own productivity and quality levels high by attending numerous training courses and seminars over the past seven years.



Zainuri describes himself as "a reliable person who enjoys the company of others and who works well within a team." Married with one child, he loves sports in general, especially football and bowling, and is fond of travel.

Entrepreneurship and incubators in Canada

The concept of business incubation started in the USA in the 1960s and expanded to Canada and elsewhere in the form of innovation centers, technology parks, science parks, and business support centers in the 1980s. Typically, business incubators support the entrepreneurial process by providing workspace, equipment and facilities, and other services to help increase survival rates for innovative start-ups. Worldwide, the USA, Canada, and Australia have taken the lead in setting up such incubators. In 2005, there were 83 business incubators in Canada, and the demand for their services exceeds their capacity. The high survival rate of new start-ups in Canada is largely due to the efficient support from state-owned, private, and university-affiliated technology incubators.



CRC Innovation Centre presentation

Many APO member countries have adopted the incubation concept and established such centers in recognition of the importance of SMEs, which start-ups invariably are, to economic development. However, those initiatives have not motivated effective participation by small businesses, hampering the contribution of incubators to entrepreneurial development and thus ultimately overall economic development. Therefore, the APO organized a study mission to Canada, 26–30 November, in collaboration with SENES Consultants Limited, a global company headquartered in Ontario. The mission aimed to learn from successful Canadian experiences in business incubation and entrepreneurship development, which has garnered wide support from the business community, universities, and the federal government while accelerating economic and industrial development.



On the road again: discussing issues and plans in Canada

Twenty professionals from 10 Asian countries representing business and scientific organizations, government departments, incubation centers, and would-be entrepreneurs gathered in icy Toronto on 26 November to visit the Canada-Ontario Business Service Center, which is jointly managed by Industry Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. Ontario's small business community benefits from this easy

access to government programs, services, and regulatory authorities. The next visit was to the Markham Innovation Synergy Center, supported by the town of Markham, National Research Council, and Ontario Ministry of Innovation. Since its inception, it has become the first stop for business information in Ontario including diagnostic services, business mentoring, review of financial resources, networking among peers, market intelligence research, etc.

On the second day, participants had the opportunity to visit the Ontario Centre of Excellence (OCE), founded in 1987, which is the preeminent research-to-commercialization vehicle in the province. The OCE assists emerging entrepreneurs by facilitating networking and encouraging partnerships among individuals and institutional researchers. It also assists researchers in accessing sources of funding and business expertise to achieve commercialization. Delegates then took a long trip to Ottawa.

The mission visited the Communication Research Canada (CRC) Innovation Centre on 28 November. The CRC Innovation Center helps dynamic young Canadian companies develop their business potential through on-site technology incubation and assisting high-tech SMEs. On 29 November, before traveling back to Toronto, the delegates observed incubating companies in information technology, multimedia, manufacturing technologies, and life sciences located at Centre d'Entreprises et d'Innovation de Montreal (CEIM) in Quebec province. The visit to the CEIM showcased an excellent example of how incubators can help small businesses during the initial years.

On the final day, three visits were made to the MaRS Centre, Centre for Business Entrepreneurship and Technology (CBET) of the University of Waterloo, and the Accelerator Incubation Centre, Waterloo, in Toronto. The delegates were exposed to the CBET's Master of Business, Entrepreneurship, and Technology flagship program for turning entrepreneurial-minded students into actual entrepreneurs. Participants were fortunate to observe the "(business) pitch competition" of budding entrepreneurs at the Accelerator Incubation Centre.

The study mission provided comprehensive, informative insights into business incubation and entrepreneurship development in Canada through the numerous site visits and presentations. The crammed schedule with long travel times did not hinder communication and exchanges of information among the enthusiastic participants. Group discussions and presentations were managed mostly on the road and during breaks and meals. Comaraderie and a passion for learning shielded participants from the icy blasts of the Canadian deep winter. ☺

Program calendar

March

Japan

Top Management Forum: Innovative Corporate Strategy in Global Competition, 3–5 March 2008.

► Objectives: To examine the significance of innovative corporate strategy in the global business environment; understand the leadership role in creating a competitive organizational structure; and discuss how to innovate corporate strategies.

► Participants: Top managers, high-ranking officials, and NPO heads and executive officers.

Malaysia

Forum on Innovation and Competitiveness, 4–6 March 2008.

► Objectives: To share the outcome of APO expert roundtable meetings on innovation; suggest the roles of NPOs and other partners; and agree on implementation of the APO Innovation Framework.

► Participants: Senior NPO staff, CEOs, industry associates, senior researchers, and policymakers.

Republic of Korea

Multicountry observational study mission on Best Cases of Green Supply Chains for Agribusiness SMEs, 10–14 March 2008.

► Objectives: To observe current supply chain systems in agribusiness; review salient features of green supply chains in the ROK; and formulate green supply chain strategies.

► Participants: Senior government officers and representatives of industrial associations involved in green supply chains.

Pakistan

Training course on Organic Farming: Organic Production and Inspection, 10–14 March 2008.

► Objectives: To familiarize participants with current trends in and key principles and practices of organic farming; and enhance knowledge of organic production and inspection regulations.

► Participants: Middle-level officers in the public and private sectors and NGO and NPO staff involved in organic agriculture and produce inspection.

April

The Netherlands

Study mission on Building Reliable, Safe, Green Food Supply Chains, 1–5 April.

► Objectives: To study the latest developments and current practices in managing fruit and vegetable chains in the Netherlands; and benchmark against best practices.

► Participants: Executives or senior managers from the public and private sectors, high-level policymakers, relevant NPO staff, and leaders in the food industry and of producers'/traders' associations involved in promoting safe production and marketing of fruit and vegetables.

Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. The project details along with the address of your NPO are available from the APO Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.



*Developing a common approach to KM measurement
Study meeting on Methodologies for Knowledge Management Measurement, Philippines, 23–26 October 2007.*



*Collecting predators and insects from vegetable fields
Training course on Biological Control of Insect Pests of Tropical Crops, Indonesia, 30 October–7 November 2007.*



*Prof. Tsuyoshi Fujita explaining the composting process
Workshop on Eco-towns, Indonesia, 23–27 October 2007.*

For project details, please see the APO Web site.

APO/NPO update

New APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia

Mrs. Safniwari Jasri, Consultant of Business Unit, NPC Malaysia, was appointed APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia w.e.f. 10 December 2007.

New Phone and Fax Numbers for NPO of Pakistan

The phone and fax numbers for the NPO of Pakistan have been changed to: phone: 92-51-9262882; fax: 92-51-9262886.

Japan's productivity support expands to Africa

The efficiency and high level of productivity awareness of Japan's labor is recognized as an important component of the nation's industrial success.

This productivity awareness is the result of the human focus of the Japanese Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED). Established in 1955 as the JPC, the body launched a nationwide productivity movement centered on industrialization. In 1994, the JPC merged with the Social and Economic Congress of Japan (SECJ), becoming the JPC-SED and fusing the productivity know-how of the JPC with the think tank capability of the SECJ. Currently the JPC-SED, in cooperation with its 10,000 members from corporations, labor unions, and other organizations, plays a leading role in productivity improvement in Japan.

The seeds of the JPC-SED's productivity movement have blossomed in various countries in the Asian region and beyond. In the 1960s, Asian leaders recognized the role of the productivity movement in the dramatic recovery of Japan's post-war economy and requested the JPC's assistance in acquiring productivity know-how. The Japanese government, in collaboration with the JPC and seven other signatory nations, created the APO. The JPC-SED has since transferred Japanese technology and know-how in productivity improvement not only to Asia but also to Latin America and Eastern Europe. In 2006, the JPC-SED's international cooperation expanded to include Africa in line with government plans to initiate strategic productivity partnerships with that continent.

On behalf of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, the JPC-SED provided technical assistance to the NPOs of South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, and Mauritius, with APO regional support. Technical assistance included an observational study mission to Japan on Productivity Promotion and Facilitation, 13–28 October 2007. Four productivity promotion specialists from each of the four NPOs participated. The two-week program comprised presentations by the JPC-SED on productivity improvement activities and tools in Japan, several site visits, and numerous group discussions and hands-on exercises supported by JPC-SED experts.



Hands-on exercise in printer assembly

Portfolio Manager Rembulwani Justice Tshifularo, Productivity South Africa, and his three colleagues explained that the majority of productivity tools had been introduced to South African companies by multinationals operating there. "But we were so impressed by the culture of working together here in Japanese companies, the efficiency in optimizing limited resources, and the humanity of managers, including top managers," said Mr. Tshifularo.

Deputy Director of Industries Engineering Martin Mutuku Nzomo, Productivity Center of Kenya, speaking on behalf of the African delegation, thanked his Japanese hosts, saying, "We have obtained hands-on experience and were inspired by the software of Japan's productivity activities." Sayaka Nakai, who was in charge of the mission at the JPC-SED, commented that, "While the APO's Africa project is at the regional level, the JPC-SED's support is more at the national level. Some challenges remain, including the physical distances between Japan and Africa. However, we strongly believe in mutual benefits and global prosperity through close cooperation in productivity endeavors." 🌀

Vietnam to host EPIF 2008

The largest international environmental fair in Asia, the APO's Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) will be held in Vietnam, 1–4 March 2008, with the theme "Sustainable Development for a Better Life." The fourth such mega event, the EPIF 2008 will be jointly organized by the Vietnam Productivity Centre—Directorate for Standards and Quality, Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment, and APO at the National Convention Center in Hanoi.

The EPIF, a key event in the APO's calendar, has expanded every year since its launch in 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Increasing



APO booth at Eco-Products 2007, Tokyo Big Sight

numbers of exhibitors and visitors then flocked to the fair held in Bangkok, Thailand, and the subsequent one in Singapore. Hanoi is now preparing to receive exhibitors and individuals interested in learning how they can help to preserve the environment. The EPIF 2008 will feature a range of environment-related items from the latest environmental technologies to manufactured goods, equipment, systems, and services. It is expected to attract visitors from a variety of disciplines, including the general public, students, and representatives of corporations, associations, and government agencies. The official Web site of the EPIF 2008 is: www.epif2008.vn. 🌀