



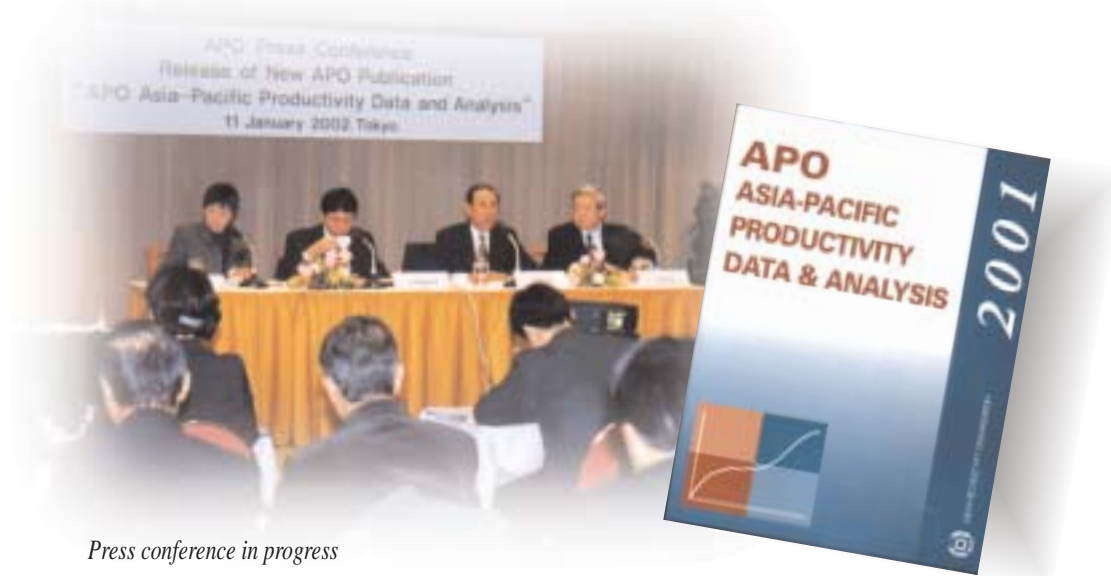
A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

APO Launches New Productivity Data and Analysis Book

On 11 January 2002, at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo, the APO held a press conference to announce the release of its new book *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*. Mr. Takashi Tajima, APO Secretary-General, gave the opening remarks, followed by the chief expert of the study behind the book, Dr. David Owyong, who spoke on the significance, scope, and results of the study, and the usefulness of the publication to policy-makers, business executives, workers, and productivity specialists. At the press conference were representatives from leading Japanese papers and journals, including the Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, International Development Journal, and JPC-SED News. Also in attendance were diplomats from the Tokyo embassies of Bangladesh, Fiji, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Sri Lanka.

Over the last 40 years, much has been done by APO member countries to promote and increase productivity. The scope of activities undertaken and the range of subjects covered by them are quite phenomenal. The productivity concept has also been expanded to embrace global and social concerns. The active promotion of productivity



Press conference in progress

and the huge investments in programs for its improvement inevitably have led to expectations for some clear evidence of the contributions of productivity to the socio-economic development of a country. Secretary-General Tajima, speaking at the press conference, said that the APO, out of a sense of duty as the apex productivity body in the region, decided to collect the relevant productivity data, including their analysis, by setting up a group of experts representing member countries to undertake this task. The book, *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*, is the fruit of their labor, after a year of intensive data collection, reviews, updating, and analysis.

In his Foreword to the book, Mr. Tajima said that the intention of publishing the book is to "provide all stakeholders and national policymakers with a set of vital, fundamental, and authoritative information to assist them in their strategic

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February 2002

"What is critical to the customer's success? Learning the answer to that question and then learning how to provide the solution is the only focus we need."

Jack Welch

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From 5S to Six Sigma: A Report on Mongolia

I had the pleasure and privilege to undertake, in September last year, an APO Technical Expert Service (TES) assignment in Mongolia to provide consultancy and training services on Business Process Management. I was able to visit several enterprises across a range of industries and locations. By utilizing the APO TES program and in encouraging its people to participate in other APO productivity improvement programs, the National Productivity and Development Center (NPDC), the national productivity organization of Mongolia, demonstrates the value it places on human resources development in the country.

“Mongolia is eager to learn new ways to improve productivity and the quality of life of its people.”

Mongolia is eager to learn new ways to improve productivity and the quality of life of its people. Over the past 10 years there has been an increasing search for world's best practices and experience by drawing on the expertise and wisdom of APO member countries and leading economies. The Mongolian press regularly reports on the investment interest shown by other countries and the aid they extend to the country. Both the investments and the aid are directed at infrastructure augmentation and the longer-term development of the workforce. There is a realization that English needs to be mastered quickly as it is the international language of business.

Dr. Ts Balhaajav, author of *My Mongolia*, is enthusiastic about the future of Mongolia. He poses key visionary questions: “Who do we want to be?” “What is our role in the modern world?” “What are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats?” Exploring these concerns can only be positive.

A large part of the country is populated by nomadic herdsman and their families involved in the animal husbandry of horses, cattle, camels, sheep, and goats which is unique, effective, and largely self-sustaining. Most natural resources can be found here. Extracting them efficiently and in an environmentally friendly way, however, presents many challenges. But their exploitation will offer opportunities for foreign income and transfer of skills and knowledge.

Mongolia is conscious of its potential for international tourism. Mongolians say the only way to appreciate the wonders of Mongolia is to visit. “A picture is worth a thousand words.” They are correct. They are aware of the need to provide quality training in the service area so as to build this growth industry and fulfill the expectations of tourists.

At the beginning of the 20th century, only 1% of the population were literate and only 1.5% of the estimated 80,000 children attended school. Today schooling is compulsory and most young people under 30 have some postschool formal qualifications. As well, training, education, and management development for adults are more accessible. While postschool qualifications are available and highly regarded, training and education for trade and technical

skill development need significant focus. An appropriate internationally accredited national training system will have to be established.

Mongolia is situated close to the huge markets of north and eastern Asia. Other small economies have capitalized on the proximity of larger economies to become significant case studies in economic growth and prosperity. Ireland and Singapore, and to some extent New Zealand, are examples. Twenty years ago Ireland's economy was in poor shape but investment in education and training has been rewarded. It is now in the top 3 of the world's growth economies. The Singapore success story is well known.

“When QCC's (quality control circles) are widely adopted and ISO 9000/2000 is fully embraced across both manufacturing and service sectors, substantial productivity growth will occur.”

On the journey from 5S to Six Sigma (i.e., from good housekeeping to quality excellence), some organizations, such as steel fabrication and construction, are making slow progress through 5S. These are typically old-generation plants. Investment in modern plant and management methods in beverage manufacturing and bottling is not a high priority, and imported products are adversely impacting local ones. Power generation and water services and distribution, the lifeblood of low-cost competitive manufacturing, are at the mid-point of pro-

..... by Richard Barton



ductivity improvement. At the leading edge, where some output is approaching Six Sigma, medical syringe manufacturing and garment and rug making have invested in contemporary management, staff development, and good leadership. When quality control circles are widely adopted and ISO 9000/2000 is fully embraced across both manufacturing and service sectors, substantial productivity growth will occur.

My lasting impression is that Mongolia is moving in the right direction. However there needs to be a national vision for the future to start addressing some of the questions posed by Dr. Balhaajav and to set new goals for inspirational leadership and long-term prosperity. Mongolia has some significant challenges ahead. However, the thirst for knowledge, the drive to excel, and pride in its unique cultural and national heritage combined with a young and enthusiastic population mean there is every chance Mongolia will emerge in the next 20-30 years as one of the notable small economy success stories. 🌀

Richard Barton was the Process Improvement and Quality Management Executive for IBM in Australia and New Zealand. Among previous distinguished positions he held was as a General Manager in the Australian Quality Council. In this capacity, he had a long and close associations with the APO. Mr. Barton writes this column regularly for the APO News.

From the SECRETARY-GENERAL'S Schedule

January 2002

11 January

APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima officiated at a press conference to launch the new landmark APO publication "APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis" at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo. He gave the introductory remarks, and took questions from the press representatives in attendance (see front page story).

17 and 18 January

Attended the Tokyo Top Management Seminar organized by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED). The seminar called for Japan to reform and to establish a new dynamism in management.

22 January

Delivered the welcome address at the opening session of the APO multi-country study mission on "Retailing of Agricultural Products in Urban Areas." The seminar, held in Tokyo on 22-29 January, was hosted by Japan (see page 5 for report on the study mission).

23 January

Paid a courtesy visit to Mr. Akira Saito, President of the Mainichi Newspapers Co., one of Japan's major media companies.

28 January

Hosted a welcome luncheon for participants of the APO seminar on e-commerce. The seminar was hosted by Japan in Tokyo from 28 January to 1 February, and implemented by JPC-SED. Twenty-one participants from 11 APO member countries took part.

29 January

Interviewed by Mr. Tayyab Aijaz Qureshi, Deputy Managing Editor of the monthly Urdu Digest of Pakistan.



Mr. Takashi Tajima (left) being interviewed by Mr. Tayyab Aijaz Qureshi

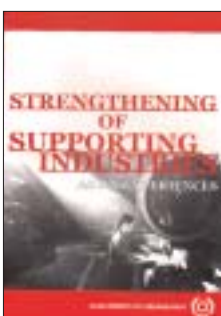


KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT A Key for Corporate Competitiveness

APO 118 pp. January 2002

Over the past years, the main source of profits for most major corporations has shifted from capital to invisible assets such as patents, know-how, ideas, and brand names, in other words, their workers' capabilities. Among the implications of this for business corporations are: 1) they have to convert themselves into knowledge centers capable of carving out new market niches through the creation of innovative products and services, and 2) they have to hone their ability to learn, transfer the learning throughout the organization, and act on the learning.

To help business corporations in its member countries be better acquainted with this paradigm shift, the APO chose "Knowledge Management: A Key for Corporate Competitiveness" as the theme of its 2001 Top Management Forum in Kyoto, Japan. This publication is a compilation of the nine resource papers presented at the forum, most of which were by top executives of leading Japanese corporations. They show the various ways top management could introduce knowledge management as an effective tool for corporate innovation for attaining world-class standards in productivity and competitiveness.



STRENGTHENING OF SUPPORTING INDUSTRIES Asian Experiences

APO 165 pp. January 2002

The business linkage between the largely foreign-owned big manufacturing plants and the local supporting industries has been recognized as an effective mechanism for the transfer of technology as well as an important contributor to the development and growth of small and medium enterprises. However, foreign business investors often experience the failure of local supporting firms to supply parts and services that meet their requirements. This has led many to import components from their own countries or elsewhere. This undermines the growth of the local supporting industries. There is, therefore, a great need to strengthen their capabilities to produce high-quality, reliable products and services, not only for the domestic market but also for export.

Recognizing this need, the APO in November 2000 organized a study meeting in Taipei, Republic of China, on the strengthening of supporting industry. The meeting highlights the experiences of the newly industrialized economies in the APO membership. This publication is a report on the proceedings of the meeting. It includes a report on the meeting and its findings, the six resource papers that were presented, and 11 country papers prepared by the participants. It is a useful reference text for those with responsibility for the development and growth of supporting industries.

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Information and Public Relations Department, 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) 5226-3927, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3957, E-mail: ipr@apo-tokyo.org

COMMON SENSE TALK



"What is critical to the customer's success? Learning the answer to that question and then learning how to provide the solution is the only focus we need."

Jack Welch

"We benchmark every day."

Lawrence A. Bossidy

"No company can change any faster than it can change the hearts and minds of its people, and the people who change fastest and best are those who have no choice."

Robert Frey

"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

Theodore Roosevelt

"First learn the meaning of what you say, and then only speak."

Epicurus

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

Thomas Edison

"You can look at product innovation, operational excellence, everything. But the real competitive advantage comes down to people and earning their trust every day."

Bill Hamman

"The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice."

Mary Ann Evans

"In a lot of people's minds, making the complex clear means you just dump information on everybody. That simply adds to the confusion."

Nigel Holmes

"As I reflect back on all the breakthroughs I've seen, one thing was always present — unbelievable clarity."

Mike O'Brien

Retailing Agricultural Products

“Retailing of Agricultural Products in Urban Areas” was the subject of a study mission organized by the APO in Tokyo on 22-29 January 2002. Retail distribution comprises the last stage in the marketing process before agricultural products reach the consumers. It has to ensure that the products are kept as fresh as possible, strategically presented/positioned, properly packaged and labeled, and reasonably priced. In this regard, retailers such as supermarkets, fruit and vegetable shops, and public markets, particularly those located in urban centers, play a critical role. In addition, they need to maintain an efficient system of purchasing so that spoilage/wastage is minimized and market requirements for specific items are adequately met.



Participants on a field trip

The mission’s objectives were: 1) to study the prevailing situation of retailing of agricultural products in urban areas of member countries, and 2) to exchange views and experiences on the subject with the view to improving such retailing activities. The study mission was hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and implemented by the Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry. Sixteen participants from 13 member countries took part.

Mission members were briefed by Mr. Atsuyuki Uebayashi, Assistant Director, Food Distribution and Market Division, General

Food Policy Bureau, MAFF, on “Current Status of Retailing of Agricultural Products in Japan,” Mr. Junichi Yano, Director, Daily Delivery Division, Life Corporation Inc., on “Present Situation of Food Distribution in Japan,” and Mr. Pieter Ypma, Associate Professional Officer Marketing, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, on “Development and Trends in Urban Food Retailing Systems in Asia.” The mission also made field visits to: 1) Nagoya Kinro Shimin Co-op (Meikin Co-op), 2) Seiyu Rakuichi Kasugai Store, 3) Yokoyama Farm, 4) Genki no Sato (Agricultural Park), and 5) JA Aichi Bitoh Green Center in Aichi Prefecture.

Specific issues highlighted during the study mission included: 1) farmers are not organized; 2) limited value addition is being done, especially in the sorting, grading, and packaging of products; 3) lack of consistency in volume and quality; 4) high wastage and losses caused by poor market infrastructures such as cold storage, packaging, and transport facilities; 5) poor hygiene and sanitation; 6) indiscriminate establishment of retail outlets; 7) shortage of distributors of perishables/fresh products; and 8) limited availability of information on markets and food safety regulations.

As remedial measures, the mission members suggested that efforts should be made to organize and train the farmers to handle marketing functions, and that incentives be provided to encourage more private-sector investment in value-adding activities and marketing facilities including technology development and transfer. The government, on its part, would need to upgrade marketing-related infrastructure, provide adequate credit facilities, and enforce implementation of food safety regulations. ☺

FTPI Establishes Center of Excellence on Benchmarking Continued from page 8

the FTPI staff have on their own initiated benchmarking projects in the following industries: automobile, sugar, drug manufacturing, food canning, and parawood furniture. Each industry group has about 8-10 companies participating. A book, *Benchmarking: A Shortcut to Business Excellence*, written by two FTPI staff, Dr. Boondee Bunyagidj and Ms.

Kamolwan Siripanich, was released in January this year.

A significant outcome of the FTPI benchmarking program was the establishment of the Center of Excellence on Benchmarking in October 2000. The center has the mission of: 1) promoting and facilitating information sharing among organizations, 2) assisting organiza-

tions to implement benchmarking programs, and 3) developing and providing access to a best practice database. The center is expected to play a leading role in establishing benchmarking networks with key organizations, associations, and educational institutions, both within and outside the country, to facilitate the implementation of benchmarking in Thailand. ☺

APO to Develop Model NPOs

The development of the national productivity organizations (NPOs) of its member countries has long been a major thrust area of the APO. A host of special activities was organized under the Development of NPOs (DON) program to build their service capacity and their professional capability to drive the productivity movement in their respective countries. These include country-specific roundtable conferences, workshops on development of productivity specialists, deputations of experts to strengthen NPOs' services, and workshops on enhancing NPOs' core competence. In January this year, the APO introduced yet another DON activity. This time it is meant specially for the further development of the NPOs of the following ten APO member countries: Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

Under this new activity, called the Member Country Support Program, two NPOs will be selected each time to receive special assistance from the APO and the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) for the upgrading of their functions and capabilities. This undertaking will be for two years, during which time the participating NPOs will be guided to become model NPOs. The APO is expected to announce the names of the first two NPOs chosen to pioneer the program in early March.

The modus operandi of the program is quite simple. In consultation with the JPC-SED, which is also the implementing agency of the program, a detailed work plan will be developed for the two selected NPOs. Experts will then be dispatched under the APO Technical Expert Services (TES) program to help identify the priority areas of the NPOs that require special assistance, to train the NPOs' facilitators, trainers, and consultants in these priority areas, and to provide advisory support in projects undertaken by the NPOs that attempt to apply the lessons learned in the training sessions, including checking on their progress. The two participating NPOs will each depute a study mission to Japan to understudy the JPC-SED model. Upon the conclusion of the two-year undertaking, the experiences and lessons gained by the two NPOs, which are then considered model examples, will be documented for dissemination to other NPOs for their benefit and learning.

As part of the Member Country Support Program, the JPC-SED will conduct three training courses in Japan for the ten countries for which this program was designed. The course syllabus will cover subjects like Value-added Analysis and Corporate Management for SMEs, Quality Management of the NPOs' Services, and HRD for Stable Labor-Management Cooperation.

APO Launches Data Book Continued from page 1


thinking, policy formulation, and action taking." For this reason, APO member countries which participated in the study will find it useful for: 1) comparing results achieved in the productivity drive with planned targets and with those of other countries, 2) checking progress made, 3) identifying areas where productivity remains weak, and 4) formulating effective policies to give the movement further support and impetus.

The national experts identified 42 indicators for data collection, and they were grouped under six categories, namely, Domestic Economy, Internationalization, Infrastructure, Science and Technology, Management, and People. Apart from the 16 APO countries covered in the study, four "benchmark countries," Australia, Germany, the UK, and USA, were also included. They were selected based on their different geographical locations and their representativeness among developed nations.

The *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis* book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of a country-by-country analysis of productivity data. Part two contains tables of data by country, as well as graphic charts of every indicator for each country. The tables are for intercountry comparison, whilst the charts are solely for use by the participating countries to study the progress they have made under each indicator over the time period 1990-1999. The final part gives the data sources of the indicators by country.

Dr. David Owyong, chief expert of the study behind the publication and formerly an associate professor at the National University of Singapore, wrote in his introduction to the book that there are some important differences between this APO book and other related publications, such as the World Competitiveness Yearbook published by the Institute for Management Development (IMD). According to him, the distinctive features of the APO book are: 1) Its focus is on the productivity and associated policies of the APO member countries. 2) A longer time series is provided which allows a comparison of each country with itself over time. 3) It contains no ranking of countries as relative position is not the focus of the study. 4) It includes country analyses on productivity strategies and policies. "These features reduce possible overlap with existing publications and thus may even be used in conjunction with them."

On the future plans for this APO publication, Secretary-General Tajima said, "As it fulfills a longstanding desire by all the stakeholders of the productivity movements in APO member countries for quantitative evidence of the contributions of productivity to their socio-economic development and progress, I believe that it should be published annually to provide new data as well as to update the data and analyses already included."

The book retails for US\$29.00. For order or more information, please contact Ms Yoko Fujino at the APO Information and Public Relations Department (Tel: 81-3-52263927; Fax: 81-3-52263957; E-mail: ipr@apo-tokyo.org). 

New Officers in the APO Secretariat



Mr. Norimasa Matsuyama

Mr. Norimasa Matsuyama is the new Administration and Finance Officer in the APO Secretariat, replacing Mr. Naoto Yamamoto who has moved over to the Research and Planning Dept. as Program Officer.

Mr. Matsuyama came on board on 21 January 2002. Prior to joining the APO, he held several positions in the private sector, including senior manager of AMS Japan Corporation, Tokyo; manager of Arthur Anderson, Tokyo; and Chief Financial Officer of Kumagai Gumi's subsidiary in Australia. He received a BA degree in Foreign Studies from Sophia University, Tokyo. He is also a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Mr. Matsuyama is married with two daughters.



Mr. Satoshi Okada

Mr. Satoshi Okada joined the APO Secretariat as Program Officer in the Information and Public Relations Department on 1 February 2002. Just before this, he was serving as the Public Information Officer of the UNHCR regional office for Japan and the Republic of Korea in Tokyo. He has also worked as a staff writer for the *Asahi Weekly* and *Asahi Evening News*.

Mr. Okada received his Master of Science degree in Journalism from the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University, NY, USA.

Mr. Okada is single.



p-Experts Deputed by APO

INDIA

Dr. Venkatachalam Anbumozhi, Associate Professor, Department of International Studies, Institute of Environmental Studies, Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, The University of Tokyo, Japan, and **Dr. Arumugam Sathasivan**, Senior Environmental Engineer, Sydney Water, Australia, were deputed to serve as resource speakers in the Study Meeting on Environmental Impact Assessment in Agriculture, 7-12 January 2002.

JAPAN

Dr. David Owyong, former associate professor, National University of Singapore, was deputed to make a presentation at the press conference to announce the launch of new APO publication, *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*, on 11 January 2002. Dr. Owyong served as the chief expert in the study behind the publication.

Mr. Pieter Ypma, Associate Professional Officer Marketing, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Thailand, was deputed to serve as a resource speaker in the Multi-country Study Mission on Retailing of Agricultural Products in Urban Areas, 22-29 January 2002.

MALAYSIA

Mr. Cho Han Kyu, Chairman, Korean Natural Farming Association, Republic of Korea, was deputed as an expert in the Technical Advisory Service Mission: Planning Meeting for GP-ICD Demonstration Program, 26-28 December 2001.

PHILIPPINES

Prof. Somchai Chatsavang, Department of Animal Science, Kasetsart University, Thailand, was deputed to render technical advisory services in the Green Productivity Demonstration Program: Extension and Expansion Service for the Pig Farms, 7-18 January 2002.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Hiroshi Iwayama, President/CEO, RIIM Chu-San-Ren, Japan, was deputed to render consultancy services on Total Quality Management, 15 to 23 January 2002.

VIETNAM

Mr. Koichi Ueda, Deputy General Manager, Cement Plant Department, Engineering Division, Taiheiyo Engineering Corporation, was deputed to provide technical advisory services in the Green Productivity Demonstration Program, 8-17 January 2002.

APO/NPO Update

New APO Director for Sri Lanka

Mr. Mahinda Gammanampila, Secretary, Ministry of Employment and Labour, has been appointed the APO Director for Sri Lanka with effect from 1 February 2002 in place of Mr. S.C.Mannaperuma.

New Head of National Productivity Organization of India

Mr. B. N. Jha, IAS, has been appointed the Director General of the National Productivity Council of India in place of Mr. A. K. Goswami effective from 1 February 2002.

New Telephone Numbers of PSB, Singapore

As from 1 March 2002, Singapore will be adopting a new 8-digit format for phone numbering of fixed-line telephones/facsimiles. The new telephone and fax numbers of the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board will be 65-6278-6666 and 65-6278-6665.

Changes in APO Secretariat

Mr. Norimasa Matsuyama, Administration and Finance Officer, appointed as from 21 January 2002.

Mr. Naoto Yamamoto, re-designated Program Officer (Research & Planning) as from 21 January 2002.

Mr. Satoshi Okada, Program Officer (Information & Public Relations), appointed as from 1 February 2002.

Program Calendar

Republic of China

Seminar on Quality Control for Processed Food, 8-14 May 2002.

Japan

Study Meeting on Land Classification in Sloping Upland Areas for Sustainable Production Systems, 10-17 July 2002.

Thailand

Workshop on Low-cost Automation for Supporting Industry, 29 April-3 May 2002.

Second Workshop of the APO Best Practice Network, 21-24 May 2002.

Seminar on Agricultural Models, 1-5 July 2002

Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. If you need the address of your NPO, it is available from the APO Website at www.apo-tokyo.org.

FTPI Establishes Center of Excellence on Benchmarking

Benchmarking has been accepted by corporations worldwide as one of the most effective tools for enhancing their competitiveness through improving productivity and quality. It is a systematic process for a company to evaluate its products, services and processes against those of other companies, either in the same or other industry, with the reputation of having the best practice in the same areas for the purpose of further improving them. According to some users of this tool, benchmarking often results in breakthrough innovations that enhance competitiveness within a short time. Because of its merits, some national productivity organizations (NPOs) of APO member countries have included benchmarking as one of the major areas for providing training and consultancy services. The Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI) is one such NPO.



Mr. Chong Chee Leong, Resource Speaker from Singapore, making a presentation

In October 1999, the FTPI established a benchmarking program to: 1) promote the concept of benchmarking and equip organizations with benchmarking capability, 2) provide best practice information, and 3) facilitate information-sharing among organizations through partnerships and networking.

As a first step in launching its program, the FTPI wanted to know the status of benchmarking practices in Thailand and to gauge the industry response to the idea. It mounted a series of public seminars conducted by specialists from the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board. From the feedback received, it became quite clear that benchmarking was new to Thai industries, and most were hesitant to share information on their work processes with others for fear of losing their competitiveness. This led to the realization that the creation of a database of local and international best practices was necessary to serve as a basis for information sharing.

To build its own in-house capability to provide consultancy and training services in benchmarking, the FTPI enlisted the assistance of the APO in deputing experts to train its staff as well as undertake the following tasks: 1) develop

casebooks of successful best practice programs of leading companies in Thailand, 2) do a benchmarking study on strategic planning, and 3) design self-assessment tools for Thai industries based on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. The APO responded by dispatching three experts to the FTPI, under its Development of NPOs (DON) program, over the period October 1999 to December 2001.

The APO also sponsored a study mission for senior management members of FTPI to visit the National Productivity Corporation of Malaysia and the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board to gain insights into institutionalizing benchmarking program in NPOs.

Since its establishment about two years ago, how much has the FTPI benchmarking program achieved? Apparently, much has been done. For instance, six casebooks on the best practices of leading organizations in Thailand, both local and foreign-owned, were developed and published as part of knowledge transfer. This series of publications is ongoing. About 35 companies are participating in the self-assessment project. The first benchmarking study on strategic planning had eight companies taking part. And

(Continued on page 6)