



A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

IT Initiatives in the APO Secretariat

Information technology (IT) and its very rapid development over the last few years are dramatically transforming the way we work and do business. It is now a powerful and indispensable tool for these purposes. In the APO Secretariat, efforts are being made to harness IT to renovate and improve its operating system. The latest IT initiative came from APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima who was anxious for the Secretariat to serve member countries well continuously. In the first half of 2001, he set up an IT Committee in the Secretariat under the leadership of Mr. Mukesh Bhattarai, who was transferred from the Industry Department where he served as program officer to the Information and Public Relations Department as the newly created IT program officer to take charge of the IT function in the Secretariat.

Mr. Bhattarai and his committee are assigned the following tasks: 1) to enhance the APO Web site on the Internet with the objective of building it into an authoritative portal on productivity; 2) to implement an Intranet system within the Secretariat to improve work operations and to introduce knowledge management; and 3) to establish an Extranet system to foster closer relationships with the NPOs of member countries for the more effective and efficient implementation of APO programs.

APO Web Site

The APO Web site was launched in January 1997. Its initial objective was to introduce the mission, work, activities, and news of latest developments of the organization and of the NPOs to the public. The scope of information provided was gradually expanded to include important statements of the Secretary-General and archived issues of the *APO News* in both the English and Japanese editions. In September last year, the Web site was redesigned and its contents greatly expanded and improved.

The APO Web site caters to four groups of users. The first group is the general public who visit the site for information about the APO. The next group comprises productivity practitioners, managers, academicians, and others who are seeking information related to the productivity concept. In the third group are APO participants and resource persons who use the Web site to access information and documents on the APO projects they are involved in, like project notifications, program schedules, bio-data forms, and guidelines for participation. The final group are those who want to be updated on APO activities or to read the *APO News* online. The monthly average number of visitors to the Web site has been increasing. On an annualized basis, the figure topped 100,000 for the first time in May this year. This is a clear indication that visitors are finding the APO Web site useful.

APO Intranet

The APO Intranet became operational in late 2001. The system, based on a local area network (LAN), is enabling Secretariat staff members to share information quickly and effectively. The Secretariat now has its own mail server, which adds an important dimension to the Intranet system. A dedicated lease line was set up to allow staff members to connect to the Internet on a continuous basis. Prior to this, staff members wishing to connect to the Internet for accessing/sending e-mail or visiting Web sites had to use either a dial-up modem or go through ISDN. Both were time-consuming and costly. With the LAN, staff members can connect to the Internet instantaneously. It also reduces the cost by almost 50 percent. With this cost savings, the investment in the LAN will be recovered within two years, not to mention other advantages gained, like improved efficiency, time saved, and greater convenience for staff.

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June 2002

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

Lou Holtz

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Business Process Re-engineering: An Aussie Case Study

A recent article in the management section of *The Australian* newspaper said: “Quality requires guts, razors merely spill them – the best way to cut costs is by tackling quality.” The same article reported that many organizations seeking to become more competitive had adopted a business excellence framework model or a national quality award model to chart their productivity improvement progress. In so doing, most concluded that people are their greatest asset. Yet any attempt at cost reduction is done at the expense of people, often those with the best corporate knowledge.

“Quality requires guts, razors merely spill them – the best way to cut costs is by tackling quality.”

Last year I conducted a business review of productivity improvement progress being made by a printing company. This organization is one of the oldest specialized printing companies in Australia, with many long-term employees possessing valuable knowledge, skills, and corporate history. In 1982, the then private family company was sold to a diversified public company and a new set of profit and production outcomes was expected.

In 1995 a new general manager was appointed and requested to come up with innovative ways to improve the company’s performance. He decided that the major thrust was to focus on changing the culture of the organization. The workforce comprised many very long-serving employees who

were highly knowledgeable but also set in their ways, with outmoded work practices and suspicious of change. The management team progressively set about changing the organization. The leader of this team was the general manager himself. He understood that if change was to occur it had to be led from the top and be strategic.

Initially an organizational effectiveness survey and process mapping exercise were undertaken led by an expert consultant team. From this study, it was apparent that an improvement in workforce attitudes was needed, including greater cooperation and communication between management and workforce. Other improvement projects were implemented, such as skill development and recognition programs, statistical process control training, and team leadership and team training. Supervisors were sent on tailored courses and unsafe work practices were reviewed. On-the-job training and reporting systems were put in place to ensure that appropriate action was taken and meaningful data were collected, often for the first time. The management reporting system had not been generating the data necessary to manage change in the business. The chief financial officer led that improvement project. The changes were intended to enable management and supervisors to drill down to establish comprehensive and reliable data to ensure appropriate cause-and-effect analysis.

The company exists to print and bind very large-volume, high-quality capital city and regional telephone directories. By undertaking the re-engineering of the business, modernizing the plant, and embracing best practice management methods, the company is seeking to position itself in the longer term to attract more customers, diversify its directory printing and binding capability, and eventually capture export orders.

The factory was reorganized to improve work flow. A number of shop floor process improvement teams were set up, training was conducted, and projects agreed upon. With this came the need to collect quality data, which had previously not been done. Existing processes were videoed for review, and new processes and machines once built were tested off line where possible without major disruption to the production throughput. Upgrades to machines and retooling, redesign, and modification of machines on the production line were undertaken.

Advanced manufacturing techniques were introduced to the production system following similar plant observation visits overseas. This required investment in modifying the design of existing systems as well as in new systems. It was important for the modifications not to fail because of high throughput volumes that could not accommodate any stop when production is in progress. Process assurance testing was therefore limited. As progress was made it was all linked to the culture change program. For example, a daily team meeting for the key production workforce led to improved communication. Industrial disputes began to diminish.

“The endeavor to become competitive is holistic and strategic and must involve enthusiastic, effective leadership at all levels.”

Morale and trust improved as the workforce became more fully engaged in the improvement process, making suggestions and recommendations about changes. A new software-driven rostering

..... by Richard Barton



system was developed to manage the complexities and individual workforce needs while meeting the demands of the production schedule. Waste reduction was measured and began to approach six sigma quality. Other quality indicators were identified through the results of a customer survey, and a drive was undertaken to achieve ISO 9000/2000 certification, as a milestone but not as an outcome.

The business review reinforced my view that the endeavor to become competitive is holistic and strategic and must involve enthusiastic, effective leadership at all levels. In this example, there is a powerful sense of shared vision and a strong, unswerving strategy. Goals are clear to all and teamwork is building trust. New metrics are sound and being used throughout the company to manage the business at all levels. Clear and meaningful regular communications are accompanying the change process. Profitability and return on investment are improving. The re-engineering of the business and building of a new culture of commitment and performance are well under way. 🌀

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 association with the APO. Mr. Barton writes this column regularly for the APO News.

From the SECRETARY-GENERAL'S Schedule

May 2002

15 May
APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima visited the Tokyo International Training Center of the Japan International Cooperation Agency to observe its J-net system. This is a two-way communication tool that links centers in Japan with centers in developing countries via satellite for implementing real-time distance learning and Web-based (Internet) training programs.

16 May
Received His Excellency Mr. Soukthavone Keola, Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to Japan, who called on the Secretary-General.

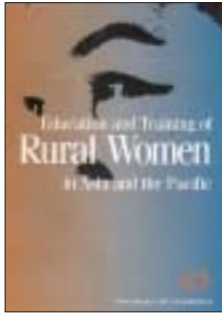


Secretary-General Tajima (left) with Ambassador S. Keola

29 May
Received the Honorable Mr. Mahinda Samarasinghe, Minister of Employment and Labor of Sri Lanka, and H. E. Mr. Karunatilaka Amunugama, Ambassador from Sri Lanka to Japan, who paid a courtesy visit to the APO Secretariat.



A picture with the Minister. (L-R) Mr. Y. Yamada, Special Adviser to APO Secretary-General, Mr. N.G. Kularatne, APO Admin & Finance Director, Minister M. Samarasinghe, Secretary-General T. Tajima, Ambassador K. Amunugama, and Mr. K. Tsuzuki, APO Admin & Finance Deputy Director

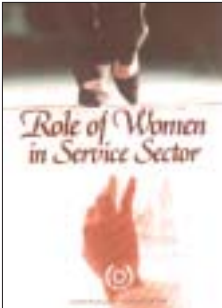


EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF RURAL WOMEN IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

APO 345 pp. April 2002

Poverty is closely associated with people’s lack of opportunities for improving their knowledge and skills. This situation is particularly true of women in rural areas. Any program that endeavors to increase women’s participation in economic activities and their control over economic and natural resources needs to address the basic problems of illiteracy among them and the traditional view of women’s role in society. Enhancing rural women’s access to education and training is therefore a fundamental concern for developing countries. Apart from literacy and numeracy proficiencies, rural women also need to acquire basic leadership, occupational, interpersonal, organizational, and communications skills if they are to participate in and contribute fully to society.

The APO organized a seminar on “Education and Training of Rural Women in Asia and the Pacific” in Tokyo in early 2000 to review the present situation of education and training opportunities for rural women in member countries and to find ways to expand and improve on these programs. This publication is a compilation of the resource papers and country reports presented at the seminar, including an executive summary of the deliberations.



ROLE OF WOMEN IN SERVICE SECTOR

APO 141 pp. April 2002

Women today make up 41% of the world’s labor force. Their work is predominantly in the service sector. Businesses that have taken advantage of their manual skills as well as innovative and creative minds have scored high on productivity and growth. Despite this, most women are employed in low-status, low-skilled, and low-paid jobs. In other words, the rise in women’s participation in the labor force has not been matched by an improvement in the range and the quality of their jobs. This is largely because of the lower status of women in society and their lack of protection against discrimination. The heartening news is that there is a growing recognition of the need to upgrade their social status and to provide and train them for greater work responsibilities.

Recognizing the significant role that women can play in the economic development of a country, especially in the service sector, the APO organized a symposium on “The Role of Women in the Service Sector” in Fiji, October 2000. The objective was to enhance the status and contributions of women workers. This publication contains 11 selected papers presented at the symposium and a report of the symposium proceedings. It is a useful reference text for those involved with gender issues at work.

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



“Knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower are the three factors which motivate action; the senses, the work and the doer comprise the threefold basis of action.”

Bhagavad Gita

“Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited while the imagination embraces the entire world.”

Albert Einstein

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

Max Depree

“Quick decisions are unsafe decisions.”

Sophocles

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

Aristotle

“Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.”

Aldous Huxley

“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.”

Lou Holtz

“I believe that the world owes no man a living but that it owes every man an opportunity to make a living.”

John D. Rockefeller, Jr.


“We talk glibly of ‘intellectual property’ without taking on board what it really means. It isn’t just patent rights and brand names; it is the brains of the place.”

Charles Handy

Low-cost Automation for Higher Productivity

In 1995, with a special grant from the Government of Japan, the APO launched the "Supporting Industry Assistance Program through South-South Cooperation" (SSC) to help selected member countries develop their supporting industry, among others. Expert input in the projects under this program is sourced from the more developed countries in the APO membership. As of the end of April this year, 43 projects had been implemented since 1995, and a total of 817 people were trained. The latest SSC project implemented this year was the workshop on "Low-cost Automation for Supporting Industry." Held in Thailand from 29 April to 3 May, it was attended by 17 participants from 10 APO member countries, and three from the two non-member countries, Cambodia and Laos.

Low-cost automation (LCA) involves the introduction of standard equipment, mechanisms, and devices to convert manual operations to automatic ones. Investment cost is low, as the term itself implies, and the ROI in terms of improved productivity and better work efficiency is high. In the workshop, participants see LCA as automation that assures

better product quality, more precision manufacturing, on-time delivery, greater job safety, reduction in manpower requirements and human error, and environmental protection. The key success factors for the implementation of LCA were identified as: management leadership, trained and skilled manpower, appropriate product types, availability of the requisite hardware and software, and financial support. 



Participants being briefed on a new environment-friendly scooter made with LCA technology

quality, provides flexibility, increases productivity, and reduces cost. At the same time, it is easy to implement and affordable for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the main users of LCA. Common areas in the manufacturing process for LCA application are machining, cold extrusion, grinding, material handling, quality inspection, dimensional accuracy, surface finishing, and assembly and packaging.

The workshop was declared opened by Mr. Pansak Kummalue, Director of Consulting and Training of the Thailand Productivity Institute. In his address to the participants, he said that supporting industries are important to the economic development of many countries as they contribute to income generation and revenue in foreign currencies. He added that financial and technological factors are major obstacles to the adoption of full automation by the SMEs. As such, LCA provides a way out of this dilemma.

In the workshop, participants considered and deliberated on the following topics: The different means of automation; The concept and practice of LCA; Problems relating to introducing LCA; Planning and designing for LCA; Cost-benefit analysis of LCA; and Process for implementing LCA. For field study, they visited the Thai-German Institute.

Among the benefits of using LCA, the participants believed that it contributes to process improvement, cutting machine downtime, cost reduction,

APO Secretariat has new Admin Director



Mr. N.G. Kularatne of Sri Lanka joined the APO Secretariat as its new Director of the Administration and Finance Department on 14 May 2002. He succeeded Mr. Danilo S. Tolentino who passed away in October last year. The position left vacant by Mr. Tolentino's demise was temporarily covered by Mr. Kensuke Tsuzuki, deputy director of the department, until Mr. Kularatne's appointment.

Prior to joining the APO, Mr. Kularatne was the Director-General of the National Institute of Business Management, the national productivity organization of Sri Lanka. During that time, he organized the productivity march in his country to commemorate the APO's 40th anniversary (see *APO News* January 2002 issue for a report on this event).

Mr. Kularatne had a distinguished career in the Sri Lankan Administrative Service. He had held the post of Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Food and the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research. He also served in the Sri Lankan Institute of Development Administration as its Additional Director.

Mr. Kularatne graduated from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura with a master's degree in public administration. He also holds a master's in business administration from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

M. Kularatne is married with four children.

Marketing Forest Products

Globalization, concerns about the environment, and the increasing diversification in consumer demands are significantly changing the supply of demand for forest products in Asia and the Pacific. On the supply side, rapid deforestation in the past and the emergence of the sustainability issue in development have prompted many countries to introduce policies to ensure more efficient use of forest products and to encourage the export of more processed wood products rather than raw materials. On the demand side, economic growth and greater urbanization have led to an increase in demand for forest products, both numerically as well as in variety. Trade in forest products has also grown worldwide and in the region. Advances in wood-processing technology are enabling a greater variety of products to be made, especially for housing construction. All of these developments are making the marketing channels for forestry products more complex.

To provide an opportunity for its member countries to study the marketing of forest products in Japan with the objective of deriving useful ideas that could contribute to increasing the efficiency and sustainability of their own manufacturing and marketing of forest products, the APO organized a multi-country study mission on "Marketing of Forest Products" in Japan, 7–14 May 2002. The program was hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and implemented by the Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry. The 16 members in the mission came from 13 member countries.

The mission members were briefed by two local resource speakers. Mr. Yoshiaki Masuda from the Wood Products Division of the Forestry Agency spoke on "Marketing of Forest Products in Japan," while Mr. Tsuneo Aihara of Chugoku Lumber Co. dealt with "Changes in Wooden Houses and Trend of Demand for Lumber." For their field studies, the participants visited Tokyo Lumber Terminal Co., Ltd.; Koshigaya Distribution Center, Nice Co., Ltd.; Minami Kanbara Forestry Cooperative; and Niigata Prefecture Forest Cooperatives Federation. From these visits, mission members gained a good insight into how the Japanese forest-based

industry was coping with the changing requirements of consumers and the increasing importation of timber and timber products.



Participants on a field trip

In their deliberations on the marketing of forest products in the region, mission members addressed the following challenges: 1) availability of cheaper wood substitutes and imported timber; 2) inadequate R&D activities; 3) lack of extension/outreach programs; 4) conflict between market needs and environmental concerns; 5) poor distribution system; 6) a need for a certain level of trade protection until local products are more competitive; 7) low customer confidence in local products; 8) dumping by other countries which undermines the price of local timber products; and 9) shortage of raw materials.

To deal with the above issues, the following remedial measures were suggested: 1) technical improvement of products; 2) establish a regional R&D organization; 3) organize massive promotional campaigns; 4) encourage regional cooperation in marketing; 5) improve product quality; and 6) intensify afforestation programs. ☺

IT Initiatives in the APO Secretariat

(Continued from page 1)

The Intranet has also enabled the establishment of a knowledge center (KCenter) in the Secretariat as a one-stop window for APO staff members to access all APO-related information. The APO KCenter has three basic components: 1) an information hub on past APO projects and participant database; 2) information on member countries and their NPOs; and 3) information on APO administrative guidelines and activities. At the moment, the KCenter is available on the Intranet platform only. In the near future, it should be accessible through the Internet.

The APOnet

In May this year, the APOnet was set up as an

exclusive Web site based on the Extranet platform. It is still undergoing tests to ensure its smooth functioning. The Secretariat hopes that it will be operational in June. As explained by APO Secretary-General Tajima, the APOnet is "to foster closer communications among the APO Secretariat, the NPOs, and the participants in ongoing APO projects for better program planning, preparation, and implementation, as well as to facilitate the establishment of networks for information exchange, productivity promotional drives, work collaboration, and benchmarking." The APOnet will enable the NPOs to have access to all APO project sites through which they can view or download resource papers, participants' reports, and the reports of the proceedings. Similarly, APO

resource persons and participants can use the site to view or download resource/country papers and other documents relating to the program they are attending, upload their own papers for access by others, and download the course materials after the program.

More online tools will be added in the near future to deliver APO services. Online registration for inclusion in the APO roster of technical experts and online processing of applications for technical expert services are two ideas the Secretariat is working on now. The message is clear that the APO is committed to optimizing the use of IT for furthering the cause of the productivity movement in Asia and the Pacific. ☺



BANGLADESH

Dr. (Mrs.) Vineeta Kamran, Principal, City Montessori School & Degree College, India, and **Mr. P. C. Bihari**, Senior Section Engineer (Diesel), Indian Railways, were deputed to conduct the Program on Total Quality and Excellence in Education, 17-22 May 2002.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Tadashi Ohfuji, Associate Professor, Tamagawa University, Japan, was deputed to conduct a seminar and to provide consultancy services on Technology Development of Quality Function Deployment (QFD), 3-6 May 2002.

Dr. Yoshihisa Onishi, Director, Information Service and Technical Cooperation Department, Japan Food Industry Center, Japan, and **Mr. K. V. R. Raju**, Deputy Director, National Productivity Council, India, were deputed as resource speakers in the Seminar on Quality Control for Processed Food, 8-14 May 2002.

INDIA

Ms Nik Zainiah bt Nik Abd. Rahman, Deputy Director-General, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, was deputed to make presentations at the Asia-Pacific Convention of Entrepreneurial Women, 26 April 2002.

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Mr. Mah Lok Abdullah, Director-General, and **Mr. Izani Ishak**, Consultant, both from the National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, were deputed to serve as resource persons in the Forum on Enhancing Productivity and Competitiveness under the Strengthening NPO Service Project, 29 April-1 May 2002.

Mr. Thomas W. T. Chow, Director, Tourism Institute International, Hong Kong, was deputed to conduct the Train the Trainers Workshop in Tourism and the Effective Marketing Skills Workshop in Tourism, 17-22 May 2002.

APO/NPO Update

New APO Alternate Director and NPO Head for Nepal

Mr. Chandra Lal Joshi has been appointed General Manager of the Nepal Productivity and Economic Development Centre with effect from 8 May 2002 in place of Mr. Ramesh Singh Pradhan. He will also serve as the new APO Alternate Director for Nepal.

New NPO Head for NPC India

Mr. Brijesh Kumar, IAS, has been appointed Director-General of the National Productivity Council of India with effect from 14 May 2002 in place of Mr. B. N. Jha, IAS.

Mr. Shuichi Yoshida, President, GTR Institute International, Japan, was deputed to conduct a Gemba Kaizen Workshop, to make a presentation at the Iran's Fifth National Congress on Establishment of Productivity Improvement Cycle in Public Sector, and to conduct the Workshop on Problem Solving, 28-23 May 2002.

JAPAN

Prof. Norman Long, Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Rural Development Sociology Group, Wageningen University, the Netherlands, **Ms Mieko Takaoka**, Lecturer, Ehime Prefecture College of Agriculture, Japan, **Mr. Mohan Dhamotharan**, a German consultant, **Ms Noriko Nishigata**, Reporter, The Japan Agriculture News, Japan, **Mr. Hiroshi Sato**, Senior Researcher, Economic Cooperation Studies Department, Institute of Development Economics, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Japan, and **Mr. Masami Mizuno**, Policy Research Coordinator, Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan, were deputed as resource speakers in the Seminar on Rural Life Improvement for Community Development, 22-26 April 2002.

MALAYSIA

Dr. Ryoko Toyama, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Knowledge Science, Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Japan, was deputed as a resource speaker in the workshop on Implementing Knowledge Management, 27-31 May 2002.

MONGOLIA

Mr. Seigo Kojima, Senior Advisor, Japan Council of Metalworkers Unions, Japan, was deputed to conduct training and provide consultancy services on Labor-Management Cooperation, 22-26 April 2002.

Mr. Cho Han Kyu, Chairman, Korean Natural Farming Association, Republic of Korea, was deputed to render technical expert services in the APO ICD-GP project, 23-28 April 2002.

Dr. Dong Ki Kim, Professor Emeritus, Graduate School of Business Administration, Korea University, Republic of Korea, was deputed to conduct lectures and to provide consultancy services on Role of Marketing and Advertisement in Service Sector, 1-8 May 2002.

Mr. Keiryu Uechi, Vice President and General Manager, Human Resources, JAL Hotels Co., Ltd., Japan, was deputed to conduct training on Productivity Improvement in Hotel Sector, 29 April-3 May 2002.

Mr. Jagdishwar Singh, Principal, Jagdishwar Singh Consultancy, India, was deputed to conduct training on Importance of Training, New Technology and Methodology of Training, 6-17 May 2002.

SINGAPORE

Mr. Graham James, Director and Senior Consultant, Competitive Edge Services Pty Ltd., Australia, was deputed to conduct the Singapore Quality Award for Business Excellence Program, 27-31 May 2002.

Ms Sarah Gillian Gilbert, Director, Sally Gilbert Improvement Unlimited, Australia, was deputed to conduct the Singapore Quality Award for Business Excellence Program, 6-13 May 2002.

Program Calendar

Islamic Republic of Iran
Forum on Development of National Productivity Organizations, 17-19 December 2002.

Japan
Seminar on Development of Training Programs for Middle Management, 2-6 September 2002.

Republic of Korea
Workshop on Green Productivity and Natural Farming, 10-14 September 2002.

Malaysia
Workshop on Strengthening IT Capabilities of NPOs, 23-27 September 2002.

Development of Productivity Specialists: Advanced Program, 20 October-5 November 2002.

Workshop on Total Factor Productivity, 4-6 November 2002.

Pakistan
Training Course on Productivity Improvement in Foundry Industry, 2-6 September 2002.

Seminar on Afforestation and Sustainable Forest Management, 16-21 December 2002.

Singapore
Seminar on Value Analysis, 1-4 October 2002.

International Workshop-cum-Symposium on Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and Green Productivity, 14-18 October 2002.

Sri Lanka
Workshop on Partnership Development in Apparel Industry, 30 September-4 October 2002.

Thailand
Seminar on Export Strategies for Tropical Agricultural Products, 7-11 October 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 Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.

THAILAND

Dr. Michael H. Hu, Associate Professor, Department of Industrial Engineering, Yuan Ze University, Republic of China, was deputed as a resource speaker in the Workshop on Low-Cost Automation for Supporting Industry, 30 April-3 May 2002.

VIETNAM

Dr. John Man, Certified Management Consultant, Singapore, was deputed to conduct the Training Course on Developing Six Sigma Consulting Services, 13-21 May 2002.

Mr. Teruo Kawamura, Senior Researcher, Japanese Standards Association, Japan, and **Mr. Masato Suuchi**, Consultant, Japan, were deputed to serve as resource speakers in the Seminar on Total Quality Management in Manufacturing Sector, 20-24 May 2002.

Promoting Productivity-based Competitiveness in Iran

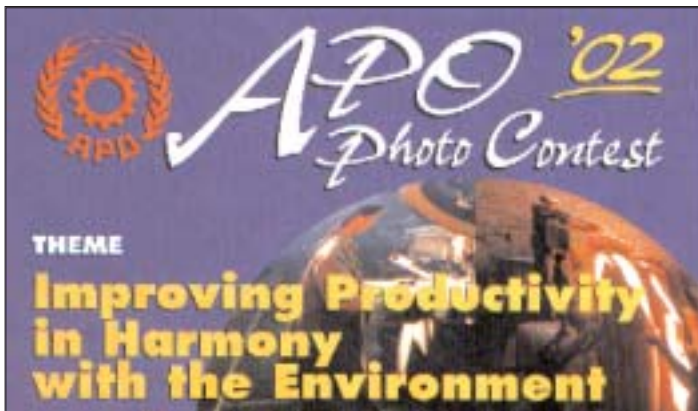
The National Iranian Productivity Organization (NIPO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran has launched a program to build a sustainable basis for national economic development. The strategy is productivity-driven competitiveness, particularly through enhancing total factor productivity (TFP). The first series of activities to be organized under this program was held earlier this year from 30 April to 2 May.

The activities comprised two one-day seminars on “Productivity and Competitiveness” and a one-day workshop on “Productivity Measurement Using COMPASS” for NIPO management and consultants. The two one-day seminars dealt with issues relating to adopting a productivity-driven rather than an input-driven strategy for enhancing economic growth, and the government’s role as the facilitator for enhancing national competitiveness. The seminars also provided a detailed exposition on the TFP concept, including: Determinants of TFP; Computation of TFP; and Linkage between TFP, employment, capital, and GDP growth. The workshop on productivity measurement for NIPO staff members was a hands-on session to acquaint them

with the use of the company productivity assessment (COMPASS) software developed by the National Productivity Corporation (NPC) of Malaysia.

Each of the two one-day seminars had more than 100 attendees. Participants in the first seminar comprised senior officials from various governmental ministries and agencies involved in national economic planning and management. The second seminar was attended by directors and deputies from all the provincial branch offices of the Management and Planning Office who came to Tehran specifically for this event. The special session for NIPO staff members had about 20 participants.

The APO deputed two experts from NPC Malaysia to provide technical support for the activities. They were NPC Director-General Mr. Mah Lok Abdullah, and NPC consultant Mr. Izani Ishak. Their involvement in the program is a reflection of the APO’s drive to promote strategic alliances and partnerships among the national productivity organizations of its member countries, as with Iran and Malaysia. 🌐



The photo contest held last year to commemorate the APO’s 40th anniversary received an overwhelming response with 1,079 entries. The photographs submitted were generally of a very high standard. The winning entries were featured in the APO 2002 calendar, which was honored with a special meritorious mention in the 53rd Japan Calendar Exhibition 2002 organized by the Japan Federation of Printing Industries and the Japan Printing News Co., Ltd.

The successful outcome of last year’s contest prompted the APO to organize one again this year. The new theme is “Improving Productivity in Harmony with the Environment.” It reflects a key thrust area of the APO and a major worldwide concern, i.e., environmental protection. In 1994, the APO initiated the Green Productivity (GP) concept, a strategy for integrating productivity enhancement with environmental protection. Since then it has been actively promoting GP in member countries with very encouraging results.

The contest is open to nationals of all APO member countries, and photos for the contest must be taken in those countries. The prizes remain as attrac-

tive as in last year’s contest: one Gold Prize (US\$1,000), three Silver Prizes (US\$750 each), and five Bronze Prizes (US\$500 each). Each of these prizes also comes with a certificate and a compact camera. In addition there are ten Special Prizes comprising a certificate and compact camera. Fujifilm is the sponsor of the camera prizes for two years running.

Publicity fliers giving details of the contest, including the rules and regulations for participation and the entry form, are available from the national productivity organizations (NPOs) of APO member countries and from the APO Secretariat. The same information, including the addresses and contact phone/fax numbers of the NPOs, is also available from the APO Web site on the Internet at www.apo-tokyo.org. Closing date for submission of entries is 31 August 2002. Winners will be notified directly by the APO in October this year, as well as by announcements in the *APO News* and on the APO Web site. The APO plans to feature the winning entries in its 2003 calendar.

Winning entries will be picked by a panel of five distinguished judges. The members are H.E. Mr. Touqir Hussain, Pakistan Ambassador to Japan; H.E. Mr. Domingo L. Siazon, Jr., Philippine Ambassador to Japan; Ms Sanae Numata, professional photographer; Mr. Hideki Tomizawa, Managing Director, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.; and Mr. Shigeru Chatani, Director, Photographic Society of Japan.

