



APO *news*

Tokyo hosts 47th Governing Body Meeting

The Governing Body of the APO meets annually in one member country to receive the annual report of the Secretary-General and the audited financial report for the preceding year and to make policy decisions. After an interval of six years, the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) was once again held in Tokyo, 14–16 June, at the Mita Kaigisho. A total of 69 delegates comprising APO Directors, Advisers, and observers attended the meeting, which was hosted by APO Director for Japan Kosuke Nakahira and organized jointly by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED), Japan's NPO, and the APO Secretariat.



Delegates to the 47th Session of APO Governing Body

A special feature of the 47th Session of the GBM was the conferring of the APO Regional Awards, which occurs once every five years. In addition, a symposium on Promotion on Economic Partnership in the Region, and Productivity Cooperation among APO member countries was organized by the JPC-SED to coincide with the GBM as part of events to commemorate its 50th anniversary on 13 June, which GBM delegates also attended.

Outgoing APO Chairman Sheng-Hsiung Hsu in his opening address at the Inaugural Session welcomed the guests and delegates and thanked the Government of Japan for hosting the meeting in Tokyo and for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates. He also welcomed APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, who was attending his first GBM. He noted that since its founding in 1961, the APO has been in the forefront of the productivity movement in Asia and the Pacific. The expansion of membership from eight to 20 was satisfying, Hsu said, and he took justifiable pride in the fact that the Republic of China was a founding member. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the privilege of serving as APO Chairman during the past year.

The inaugural session was graced by Japanese Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ichiro Aisawa and Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Koichi Hirata. Fiji's Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck also attended as a special guest. In his inaugural address, Minister Aisawa emphasized the linkages between economic development and productivity and pointed out that innovations in the more efficient use of energy had contributed to Japan's remarkable economic growth. He noted that Japan has high regard for the role played by the APO in contributing to the socioeconomic development of the region through human resources development. Now, however, the minister pointed out that there is a need to resolve the economic gap among APO member countries through

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"An investment in knowledge pays the best dividends."

Benjamin Franklin

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Annual report of the Secretary-General

Each year at the Governing Body Meeting, the APO Secretary-General presents his annual report. It usually provides a preview of future activities and policy directives that are under consideration and at the same time captures the work done in the past year.

At the outset of the report, Secretary-General Takenaka extended his heartiest congratulations to the JPC-SED on its 50th anniversary. He mentioned that the JPC-SED had been in the forefront of the productivity movement in Asia and the Pacific since the founding of the APO in 1961 and he hoped that its role as a pacesetter and standard bearer would continue to be important in the years ahead. Takenaka also congratulated the four APO regional awardees and 10 APO national awardees who were honored for their outstanding contributions to improving productivity at the regional and national levels. *(Please refer to the box below for a list of awardees.)*

Emphasizing the need for the APO to adapt to changing circumstances in the region and to emerging realities, Takenaka pointed out that APO activities must become more focused, its performance needs to become more cost-effective, and it should have more interactions with national and international organizations, both



Secretary-General Takenaka


inside and outside the region. He also mentioned that in order to make the best use of its expertise and knowledge, the APO should become more selective in its activities.

Touching upon the sharp decline in private-sector participation in APO programs, Takenaka expressed concern that the APO is clearly missing an indispensable sector of society. He further explained that the private sector is the main driver in any national productivity program and that if this sector is apathetic toward the productivity cause, all our productivity efforts could turn out to be meaningless. This could also undermine the relevance of NPOs in society as

they could be viewed as failing to provide useful services. Therefore, it is essential for the APO to seek as much private-sector participation in its projects as possible. Takenaka suggested that the details of three aspects of this issue be examined: 1) identification and selection of appropriate themes and design of suitable curricula relevant to private-sector needs; 2) sufficiently in-depth treatment of the training topic; and 3) more nominations of private-sector participants for projects.

On the issue of efficiency and cost-effectiveness in relation to Secretariat administration and project management, Takenaka mentioned various measures that have been taken so far. He also noted that restructuring of the Secretariat could be viewed as one part of ongoing efforts to achieve greater administrative efficiency, for which he sought the advice and guidance of the Governing Body during the meeting.

Takenaka stressed that the APO must continue to strengthen ties with other regional organizations to create synergies for mutual benefit. In this spirit, the APO is expanding its collaboration with a number of organizations including the ASEAN Foundation and Colombo Plan Secretariat. He also mentioned that the APO should play a more global and contributory role in enabling other regions to develop their productivity movements.

The Secretary-General then dealt with the two proposals that were sent to Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs by the previous Governing Body for an investigation of the operational details. One was whether to set an annual theme for APO activities and the other was whether to establish an APO organizational excellence award to recognize businesses and other organizations in member countries which have made significant achievements in productivity. Takenaka informed the GBM that the WSM would make a final decision on an annual theme only after careful evaluation of the results of GP-related activities, which were chosen as the special theme for 2004 and 2005. Instead of setting up a separate award, it was recommended that the APO continues organizing projects relating to quality and productivity awards so that member countries could refine their own award systems and mechanisms. 

APO Regional Awardees 2005

Dr. Chao-Yih Chen	Republic of China
Mr. Jong-Yong Yun	Republic of Korea
Datuk Mustafa Mansur	Malaysia
Mr. Sunil G. Wijesinha	Sri Lanka

APO National Awardees 2005

Mr. Sheng-Hsiung Hsu	Republic of China
Dr. Mohammad Hossein Emadi	Islamic Republic of Iran
Mr. Young-Hwan Cho	Republic of Korea
Mr. Mah Lok Abdullah	Malaysia
Mr. Damdinjav Amarsaikhan	Mongolia
Dr. Abdul Quadir Jahangir Durrani	Pakistan
Mr. Filemon T. Berba, Jr.	The Philippines
Mr. Koh Juan Kiat	Singapore
Mr. Manu Leopairote	Thailand
Dr. Nguyen Huu Thien	Vietnam

APO honors productivity champions

The Asian Productivity Organization established an award scheme in 1978 to give recognition to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the promotion and improvement of productivity in Asia and the Pacific region. The award, known as the APO Award, was conferred once every three years until the scheme was revised and expanded in 1985. The revision included renaming as the APO Regional Award and the introduction of the new category of the APO National Award to commend individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of productivity promotion in the respective APO member countries. These two awards have been conferred once every five years, commencing from 1990. In addition, another new category, the APO Special National Awards, was introduced to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the APO in 1986.

At the opening session of this year's APO Governing Body Meeting in Tokyo, the APO honored three distinguished individuals with its Regional Award for outstanding contributions to the promotion and enhancement of productivity in Asia and the Pacific. They received the award, conferred once every five years, from APO Chairman Sheng-Hsiung Hsu. A fourth recipient, Jong-Yong Yun, Vice-Chairman and CEO of Samsung Electronics, Republic of Korea, could not attend the presentation ceremony. The citations for the three recipients present, as read by APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, are given below.

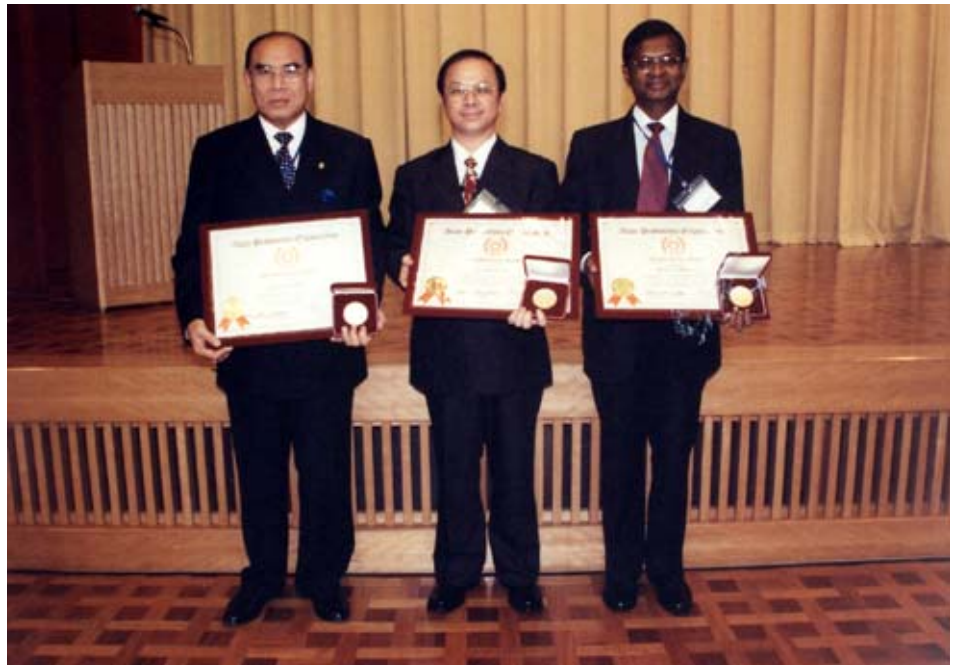
Dr. Chao-Yih Chen

Dr. Chen is the Director-General, Industrial Development Bureau, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Republic of China. He supervises the National Productivity Enhancement Program (NPEP) of Taiwan, which emphasizes Green Productivity and undertakes productivity enhancement programs in developing countries through Taiwanese investments. The dispatch of NPEP experts to APO member countries has helped to improve the operational efficiency of enterprises across Asia.

Dr. Chen assisted in the establishment of the International Green Productivity Association, which now has five national chapters, and the online Green Design Network to promote green product policies, provide training on greening supply chains, and upgrade Green Productivity. Under Dr. Chen's initiative, Taiwan's Green Productivity technical know-how was transferred to other Asian countries through consulting programs, seminars, forums, international workshops, and publications. He has himself presided over many international conferences relating to environmental protection.

Datuk Mustafa Mansur

Mustafa is the President of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers. In this capacity, he



(L-R) Mustafa, Dr. Chen, and Wijesinha

helped to organize the first APO Eco-products International Fair, which was held in Malaysia, and served as Chairman of the Organizing Committee.

Mustafa is a Board Member of the National Productivity Corporation of Malaysia. His active involvement in the work of this organization and in promoting the productivity concept, tools, and techniques to Malaysian industries has had a significant impact on productivity and quality improvement in the industrial sector of the country. He has spoken on productivity throughout the region and has served as an APO resource speaker on several occasions, especially in the areas of creative entrepreneurship and technological innovations in SMEs. Mustafa has a long track record of distinguished public service in Malaysia, for which he was decorated by both state and federal governments.

Mr. Sunil G. Wijesinha

Wijesinha is the Managing Director and CEO of the

Merchant Bank of Sri Lanka Ltd. He played a pioneering role in promoting quality circles and 5S in Sri Lanka and founded the Quality Circle Association of Sri Lanka. Wijesinha helped launch the Sri Lanka National Productivity Year 1996 and the National Productivity Decade 1997–2006 and had a leading role in preparing the National Productivity Policy of Sri Lanka.

As President of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Quality & Productivity, he developed a network of collaboration with the Quality Circle Forum of India, AOTS-ABKD Alumni Association of Tamil Nadu of India, Pakistan Institute of Quality, and Bangladesh Society of Total Quality Management. Wijesinha has written and lectured extensively on quality circles, 5S, and other productivity-related subjects in Sri Lanka and other countries, including 10 APO member countries. He has also been deputized by the APO as a resource person. ☺

Tokyo hosts (Continued from page 1)

poverty alleviation programs, as this will eventually ensure peace and stability in the region. He suggested that Green Productivity be further promoted through such activities as eco-products exhibitions and the *Eco-products Directory*, in which the APO has already demonstrated comparative advantage. Mentioning that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had stated at the Asia-Africa Summit in Bandung, Indonesia, in April that Japan would provide assistance in applying to Africa the knowledge gained from Asia's productivity movement, Minister Aisawa seconded the transfer to other regions, particularly to Africa, to stimulate their economic growth. Finally, he assured the GBM delegates that Japan supported APO Secretariat-initiated administrative and operational reforms to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Secretary Hirata, in his special remarks, said that the global economy had continued to recover over the past year and Asian economies had witnessed expansion. Noting the increasing interdependencies in the global economy, he stated that productivity, and therefore the work of the APO, would play an increasingly important role in growth and development. He concluded by expressing the continued support of METI for APO activities and wished the delegates a successful meeting.

APO Director for Japan Kosuke Nakahira delivered the Welcome Address, in which he noted that since Japan had last hosted a GBM six years ago Asia had faced and overcome many challenges, including the Asian financial crisis, SARS, and avian flu. The APO must continue to mount timely responses to the needs of its member countries, he pointed out, and urged Directors to work together to reform the organization for the benefit of all using this GBM as a starting point. ☺

New APO Chairman and Vice Chairmen

The 47th Session of the APO Governing Body elected Taito Waqa, the APO Director for Fiji, as APO Chairman for 2005–2006 and Umesh Narayan Panjiar, Acting APO Director for India, and Kirnadi, APO Director for Indonesia, as the First and Second Vice Chairmen, respectively.



(L-R) Kirnadi, Panjiar, and Waqa

COMMON SENSE TALK



“The artist belongs to his work, not the work to the artist.”

Novalis

“Life is like a game of cards. The hand you are dealt is determinism; the way you play it is free will.”

Jawaharlal Nehru

“A particular shot or way of moving the ball can be a player's personal signature, but efficiency of performance is what wins the game for the team.”

Pat Riley

“Your mind is like a parachute. It only works if it is open.”

Anthony J. D'Angelo

“There are many truths of which the full meaning cannot be realized until personal experience has brought it home.”

John Stuart Mills

“To give up the task of reforming society is to give up one's responsibility as a free man.”

Alan Paton

“The most violent element in society is ignorance.”

Emma Goldman

“Time is like money: the less we have of it to spare, the further we make it go.”

Josh Billings

“In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these.”

Paul Harvey

“An investment in knowledge pays the best dividends.”

Benjamin Franklin

OEHS at the workplace

Companies once thought that there was a bottom-line tradeoff between safety and efficiency. Now it is increasingly recognized that designing a safe work environment can also result in greater efficiency and productivity. Green Productivity (GP) concepts developed by the APO help to increase productivity and enhance environmental protection including consideration of occupational health and safety requirements at the workplace. The easier it is to do a job, the more likely it is to see gains in productivity due to greater efficiency. Analogously, the safer it is to do a job, the more likely it is to see gains in productivity due to reduced time off for injuries. GP tools and methods can address both of these issues concurrently. The GP concept aims for socioeconomic development with the ultimate objective of sustained improvement in the quality of life. Therefore, the occupational, environmental health and safety (OEHS) of the workforce form a very important aspect of the GP Program.

The APO held a workshop on GP and OEHS in Taipei, Republic of China, 9–13 May, to illustrate how to apply the GP concept to improve the OEHS in all organizations. Nineteen individuals from 13 APO member countries attended. Since risk and hazard assessment is an important component of any OEHS program and there are already a number of well-established methodologies for risk assessment for improved OEHS, the workshop also explained them and associated activities for their adoption.

The participants heard presentations from resource persons on: GP concepts, principles, and practices and linkages with OEHS; Hazard and risk assessment; Management of health and safety standards at the workplace; OEHS legal framework in the ROC; Assessment methodology and facility audits for OEHS; Chemical and medical surveillance and monitoring; Data and information management; Business management, health, safety, and environment



Group discussion in progress

quality: Assessment of trends; Hazard communication; Emergency and disaster management and preparedness; Overview of OEHS monitoring and operation control; and Development of integrated OEHS management systems following ISO14001 and OHSAS18001 and development of action plans for certification.

The country papers presented by the participants reviewed the policy evolution and institutional framework for industrial development; current status of OEHS in participating countries; and current status of activities related to OEHS in participants' organizations. During the workshop, participants also had opportunities to discuss the emergency response plans of their organizations with a resource person and receive technical feedback on them. To observe OEHS practices in the host country, the participants visited the United Microelectronic Corporation. 🌀

Developing agro-industries for employment (Continued from page 6)

- 5) Identification of niche markets and enhancement of the competence (food safety and quality) of rural entrepreneurs to compete successfully in markets should be a core component of the rural industrialization strategy.
- 6) Organization of small producers into associations/cooperatives to achieve economies of scale and pool resources should receive priority.
- 7) There is an urgent need to establish effective market intelligence networks at both the local and national levels to keep SMEs informed of changing market demand, price fluctuations, etc. Greater use of information and communications technologies (ICT) can help rural entrepreneurs to improve their business performance. Policymakers should therefore work for the development of ICT infrastructure in rural areas.
- 8) Preferential financial and fiscal policies for rapid rural development through the development of rural-based agro-industries should form an integral part of the national/provincial development plans.
- 9) Institutional credit should be provided to stimulate rural industrialization and employment generation. Such credit should be characterized by easy access, low interest rates, simple procedures, and longer repayment schedules.
- 10) Concerted efforts of all stakeholders are needed to promote the development/improvement of rural-based agro-industries, especially of SMEs and cottage industries, to generate more job opportunities in rural areas and ensure sustainable rural development. Agro-based SMEs must be productive, innovative, and flexible to survive in an era of intense competition due to globalization and trade liberalization. 🌀

Developing agro-industries for employment generation in rural areas

The majority of people in Asia and the Pacific still live in rural areas. In most cases, the main employer in rural areas is the agriculture sector. The job-generating capacity of the agriculture sector, however, has been hampered by a number of factors, such as poor rural infrastructure, stagnant demand, and worsening terms of trade against other sectors. Trade liberalization and policy reforms are also having a negative impact on the ability of the agriculture sector to create more employment opportunities. Many governments in the region have been aggressively pursuing policies to generate more employment opportunities centered on industrialization. The results have been mixed in the Asia and Pacific region, however. Some member countries or their specific areas have successfully tapped the potential of agro-industries or invited external investors in rural areas with support from appropriate policies. But others have been trapped by the inherent impediments including inadequate infrastructure, paucity of skilled labor, and insufficient government services.

To review recent attempts to generate employment in rural areas and analyze various strategies and policy options to generate rural employment, especially the development of agro-industries, the APO held a study meeting on Employment Generation in Rural Areas through the Development of Agro-industries in Hyderabad, India, 26 April–2 May 2005. The program was implemented by the National Productivity Council, in collaboration with the National Centre for Jute Diversification and National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD). Fifteen participants from 11 member countries attended the meeting.

Six resource speakers from the USA, Thailand, Japan, and India spoke on: The agro-processing sector and its role in rural development; Resource conservation for sustainable development and employment generation in rural areas; Role of modern technology and entrepreneurship in rural industrial growth and employment generation: case studies from North America; Role of technology and infrastructure in employment generation in rural areas: experience of India; Employment generation in rural areas through cooperation among the private sector, government, and NGOs: the TBIRD experience in Thailand; and Public-private sector partnerships for employment generation in rural areas through agro-industries: case of India.

For field studies, the participants visited the following agro-industries: S & S Agro Biotech (P) Ltd., a commercial producer of banana tissue culture plants; Kaveri Seeds Co. Pvt. Ltd., a processor of various crop seeds; Vimala Feeds Unit of Janaki Feeds Pvt. Ltd., which is involved in poultry feed production; Vijaya Phyto Farms Pvt. Ltd., a nursery growing fruit trees, ornamental plants, and seedlings; and the Rural Technology Park of the NIRD, which serves both demonstration and production functions.

It was generally agreed at the study meeting that significant potential exists for employment generation in rural areas through the development of appropriate rural-based agro-industries in many member countries. However, the main constraints hindering the development of rural-based agro-industries, especially of SMEs, are: inadequate institutional credit; poor infrastructure; nonavailability of/poor access to appropriate technologies; weak market linkages; inadequate skilled workforce, need-based training programs, and posttraining guidance; lack or unreliable supply of quality raw materials; lack of a conducive policy environment, high duty/tax rates; and lack of access to export markets due to poor quality/safety of food products.



Field visit at Kaveri Seeds Co. in Secunderabad

To alleviate these constraints, some of the suggestions/recommendations put forward by the participants were:

- 1) The private sector should be offered incentives to establish agro-industries in rural areas. However, such incentives should be coupled with appropriate regulatory mechanisms to prevent overexploitation of natural resources and protect the rights of local people/communities.
- 2) Development and strengthening of infrastructure such as power, transport, communications, cold chain facilities, water, marketplaces, and other social/logistical infrastructure require the immediate attention of all concerned.
- 3) R&D as well as extension services should be strengthened for the development of appropriate technologies, effective technology transfers, and improved access to existing technologies.
- 4) Need-based training followed up with on-site guidance to meet the specific needs of rural agribusiness enterprises is essential to stimulate industrialization and employment generation in rural areas. More training institutes should be established and existing ones upgraded.

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INDONESIA

Ms. Noeline C. Singh, Senior Consultant, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, was deputed as resource person for the project on Strengthening NPO Services: TFP Training of Trainers for NPO Indonesia and Dissemination of TFP Techniques to Regional Productivity Offices (Phase III) "Productivity-linked Wage Systems," 27 June–1 July 2005.

MONGOLIA

Mr. John Parsons, Australia, was deputed as resource person for the Methodology and Strategies for Demonstration Companies (Phase III) under the APO's Strengthening NPO Services, 6–23 June 2005.

SINGAPORE

Mr. Brian Yearwood, Director Contracted Services, Department of Justice, Australia, was deputed to conduct the Seminar on Singapore Quality Award for Business Excellence Programme, 20–24 June 2005.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Haridas Nayar, International Development Management Consultant, Malaysia, and **Mr. Mandar Parasnis**, Environmental Management Consultant, India, were deputed as resource persons for the Review of Green Productivity Demonstration Project (GPDP) Proposal, 30 May–3 June 2005.

APO/NPO update

Alternate Director for the Republic of China

The title of Mr. Jung-Chiou Hwang has been changed to Dr. Jung-Chiou Hwang.

New Alternate Director for India

Shri N.N. Prasad, Joint Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, was appointed as the APO Alternate Director for India.

Program calendar

Republic of China

Study Meeting on Customer Satisfaction in Competitive Markets, 4–7 October 2005.

Indonesia

Study Meeting on Strengthening Knowledge Assets: Corporate Strategies in a Non-IT Environment, 23–26 August 2005.

India

Study Meeting on Improving Agricultural Productivity in Rainfed Areas, 22–28 November 2005.

Iran

Training Course on Value Engineering, 29 September–5 October 2005.

Japan

Multi-country Study Mission on Rehabilitation of Forests Degraded by Disasters, 4–11 October 2005.

Symposium on Comparative Study of Basic Agricultural Policies (11–15 July 2005) was postponed.

Republic of Korea

Workshop on Green Productivity and Eco-business Development (Industrial and Agriculture-based Products), 5–9 September 2005.

Lao PDR

Human Resources Development Program on Participatory Project Cycle Management for CLMV Countries in the Mekong Region, 8–20 August 2005.

Sri Lanka

Training Course on Productivity Measurement in the Service Sector, 17–21 October 2005.

Thailand

Study Meeting on Strategic Industries in Member Countries: Machinery Industry, 15–18 November 2005.

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.

Promotion of economic partnership (Continued from page 8)

economic growth by facilitating regional integration. He further mentioned that to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of interdependence, Asian countries are now working to strengthen regional cooperation in trade and investment, finance, and infrastructure. In trade and investment, free and regional trade agreements have been proliferating. Kuroda cautioned that it is important to ensure consistency among these agreements and with multilateral trade liberalization under the WTO framework. Market-based reforms have been critical to Asia's growth and development, he mentioned, but to reap the full benefits, countries must now move toward the adoption and implementation of comprehensive competition policies. Kuroda concluded by noting that governments in the region are responding to the challenges of growth and development with greater connectivity and

improved competitiveness, and this trend is helping the region to move toward becoming a true economic community.

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion on "Economic Tie-ups in Asia and Productivity Improvement." Prof. Shujiro Urata, of Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, served as chair. Panel members were Loh Khum Yean, Chief Executive of the Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board of Singapore; Chakramon Phasukavanich, Chairman of the Thailand Productivity Institute and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Thailand; Makoto Nakajima, Director-General, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan; and Yoji Ohashi, Chairman of the Board of All Nippon Airways Co. Ltd.



Promotion of economic partnership in the region, and productivity cooperation among APO member countries

The Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) organized a symposium on the promotion of economic partnerships in the Asian region on 13 June as one of its 50th anniversary events. The main objective of the symposium was to discuss ways to promote regional economic integration and the role of NPOs. The symposium provided a forum for the exchange of ideas on how to achieve sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific region through economic integration and to discuss ways to promote exchanges on productivity improvement experiences among NPOs. The JPC-SED purposely held this symposium one day before the 47th APO Governing Body Meeting so that delegates could also attend the symposium.

Jiro Ushio, Chairman of the JPC-SED and Chairman of Ushio Inc., gave the opening remarks. Welcoming participants to the symposium, Ushio mentioned that the timing of symposium could not be better for determining priority themes of the productivity movement in Asia and the Pacific region and expressed the hope that the symposium would help improve the visibility of the movement. Haruhiko Kuroda, President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) delivered the keynote speech. He mentioned that Japan's postwar economic growth had been unprecedented. The establishment of the APO at the initiative of the government of Japan and Japan Productivity Center was a response to a world in awe of Japan's success. Currently, Asia is in a position of economic prominence thanks to its willingness to adopt market-based reforms and reduce government intervention in national economies as well as its ability to embrace globalization. Kuroda pointed out that Asia's rapid growth had also been accompanied by a dramatic decline in the incidence of poverty and improvements in social indicators. However, further reduction of poverty is still a challenge, particularly in less developed parts of Asia. In the more developed areas, there are other challenges. After the 1997 Asian financial crisis, many countries in East Asia realized the importance of a sound financial sector in sustaining strong growth and preserving competitive advantage. In the next



Panel discussion in progress

stage of development, Kuroda pointed out that Asia needs to give increasing importance to integrating both within itself and with the rest of the world. The challenge lies in maximizing the benefits of interdependence and accelerating

(Continued on page 7)

APO Society for Bangladesh holds annual meeting

The APO Society for Bangladesh, an alumni association of participants in APO projects, held its sixth Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 19 May 2005 to elect 41 executive council members for 2005 and 2006. Minister for Industries Motiur Rahman Nizami inaugurated the AGM, which was presided over by society President Sharif M. Afzal Hossain.

In his inaugural speech, Minister Rahman Nizami noted that since the private sector has become a key player in industrial development, the government gradually will come to play only the role of facilitator. He added that in the new millennium there is no alternative other than the promotion of higher productivity in the industrial sector, which calls for trained and dedicated manpower. Therefore, APO participants trained both in local and overseas programs should take the lead as honest, capable, and efficient professionals in applying modern management techniques with the use of appropriate advanced technology for overall productivity improvement.

Abdus Salam Pintu, Deputy Minister for Industries, and Muhammad Nurul Amin, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and APO Director for Bangladesh, were present as special guests at the occasion. Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam,



(L-R) Shariff M. Afzal Hossain, Muhammad Nurul Amin, Motiur Rahman Nizami, Abdus Salam Pintu, Nazrul Islam

Director of Bangladesh's NPO, gave the vote of thanks. Around 200 participants in previous APO projects were also in attendance.

The inaugural session was followed by a seminar on the Role of Women Entrepreneurs in Productivity for Poverty Alleviation. The keynote paper was presented by Nasreen Awal Mintu, President of the Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Bangladesh. Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, Secretary, Ministry of Information, chaired the session. ☺