



Korea hosts 48th APO Governing Body Meeting


The Governing Body of the APO meets annually in a 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. This year's meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 13–15 June, with 52 delegates comprising directors, advisers, and observers. It was organized jointly by the Korea Productivity Center (KPC) and the APO Secretariat.

Outgoing APO Chairman Taito Waqa, in his opening address, welcomed all guests and delegates and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the meeting. He also thanked the APO Secretary-General and Secretariat staff for their preparatory work. He noted that productivity, as a strategy for socioeconomic development, was being endorsed by an ever-increasing number of countries on all continents of the globe. Waqa cautioned that although the APO had a 45-year history in promoting productivity, its members should continue their efforts and maintain their lead in this endeavor.



Inaugural Session of the Governing Body Meeting

APO Director for the Republic of Korea and Chairman and CEO of the KPC S.K. Bae, in welcoming the guests and delegates, stated that hosting the 48th session of the APO Governing Body was an honor for the Republic of Korea. Since its establishment in 1957, the KPC had been a leading institution in the nation in developing human resources by offering training and consultancy in various fields, Bae noted. He reminded the audience that the Republic of Korea had been one of the first signatories to the APO Convention in 1961 and had always cooperated closely with the organization. Emphasizing the significance of the Governing Body, he hoped that the meeting would serve as a good opportunity to publicize the APO's productivity endeavors among the Korean public.

Vice Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy Jong-Kap Kim delivered the inaugural address, in which he said that building a regional community was urgent since economic, cultural, and social issues in one country instantaneously affected its neighbors. Kim noted that Asia was becoming an increasingly important player in the world economy and was seen as the engine driving it in the years ahead. According to an International Monetary Fund estimate for 2006, the global economy is expected to grow at the rate of 4.9%, with growth in Asia at 7%; the Asian Development Bank has confirmed that Asia is within reach of sustainable growth given its large, relatively young population and commitment to building a regional economy based on free trade. Kim cited the Green Productivity Program as a good example of initiatives taken by the APO, the success of which has propelled other countries to adopt similar methods. He said that this exemplified the APO's direct relevance and creativity in addressing Asian concerns. 

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"It is wise to direct your anger toward problems—not people; to focus your energies on answers—not excuses."

William Arthur Ward

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Annual report of the Secretary-General

The APO Secretary-General presents his annual report to the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) every year to outline performance in the previous year and preview future activities and policy directives under consideration.

Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka thanked the Government of the Republic of Korea and Chairman and staff of the Korea Productivity Center for hosting the meeting and welcomed all delegates, advisers, and observers at the beginning of the presentation. He said that the 2005 annual report circulated previously had provided a detailed account of activities in 2005 and therefore he would not elaborate further. Instead, he focused on the three topics touched on in his statement at the 2005 GBM: APO activities must be more focused; performance must be more cost-effective; and interactions with national and international organizations should increase.

Secretary-General Takenaka pointed out that the Secretariat had taken a number of measures to reduce administrative and operational costs. The voluntary return of 3% of gross salaries of Secretariat staff members from May 2005 was extended for another year. Two departmental directors and two senior general service staff members who left the Secretariat were replaced by younger individuals with considerable savings in administrative costs. Project costs were reduced by about 10% in 2005 compared with the previous year, although the total number of projects remained about the same. In addition, a substantial reduction of arrears in membership contributions contributed significantly to improving the financial situation of the APO.

Referring to APO Secretariat reform, Takenaka said that efforts had been made to increase transfers of staff among departments, as called for in the APO Secretariat Reform Plan. There had been an exchange of officers between the Industry and Agriculture Departments, and a senior officer in the Information and Public Relations Department moved to the Environment Department. Those transfers marked a first step in efforts to increase



Secretary-General Takenaka

personnel mobility and to overcome the tendency toward “silo thinking” within the Secretariat.

With regard to financial management, the Secretary-General said that a review of current financial procedures was being undertaken to streamline them for greater clarity, efficiency, and accountability. Although some progress had been made, much more needed to be done, he acknowledged. He said that the process of reform which the Secretariat had set in motion would gain momentum from now but there was still a long way to go and the goal could not be reached without the full support of member countries. He expressed his hope that the APO Secretariat Reform Plan submitted to the GBM would be strongly endorsed by all member countries.

The Secretary-General then turned to the need for sharpening the focus of activities and said that he had singled out the issue of increasing private-sector participation in APO projects. As a follow-up, the Secretariat proposed organizing a number of projects aimed at attracting those in the private sector in both the 2006 program and the ensuing two-year plan. At the Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in February, a number of delegates commented that the traveling expenses private-sector participants must bear is a major cause of their absence in APO projects and that the APO should pay their airfares as well. In heeding their advice, the Secretariat submitted a proposal to amend the project regulation governing this. The Secretary-General hoped that the number of private-sector

attendees would rise if the Secretariat’s recommendations were approved. A second way, he said, was to continue to shift the emphasis from Category A projects to Categories B and C. One advantage of Category B projects is that participants from countries with a common interest or geographic proximity can share a learning experience. Another advantage, often overlooked, is that more than one individual can be invited from each participating country. The benefit of this should not be underestimated if tangible results from APO projects are to be achieved. One person cannot become the nucleus of a new productivity initiative. Three to five people representing diverse interests can do so if they are able to form a network in their country. With this in mind, member countries and the Secretariat should join forces to expand and improve on Category B projects, the Secretary-General recommended. A third way is to pay more attention to tangible results. This can take various forms. If the APO persists in a result-oriented approach, projects that could make a difference to member countries are more likely to be selected. The Secretary-General explained that the Secretariat had proposed amending the project regulations to provide airfares to private-sector participants and would also make extra efforts to shift the emphasis from Category A projects to Categories B and C projects and formulate projects that are result oriented.

However, all these efforts would come to naught if the quality of participants were uneven, he cautioned. Referring to projects in 2005, Takenaka said that he had attended several, heard presentations, joined group discussions, and participated in site visits. Most of the participants were well qualified and well motivated, but some did not seem to have the requisite qualifications or work experience to benefit from APO projects. Such participants, as has been frequently mentioned by other participants and resource persons, undermined the learning experience of the whole group. He expressed the hope that member countries would give their full support and cooperation to ensure that the quality of participants met levels specified in project notifications.

Touching on international collaboration, the Secretary-General described briefly activities under the alliance with the ASEAN Foundation and the African initiative. The APO's collaboration with the ASEAN Foundation began in 2005 with a grant of approximately US\$355,000 from the foundation to organize three projects targeting ASEAN countries in the APO membership. This collaboration was renewed in 2006 with a new grant of almost US\$500,000 for four projects. Under the African initiative, it is planned to sponsor a round-table conference for the promotion of the productivity movement in Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa, in late August for productivity stakeholders from seven African countries to which the APO is planning to depute five resource persons from APO member countries other than Japan, including two NPO heads, two former NPO heads, and a senior NPO director. In addition to the event in South Africa, selected African countries will be invited to send participants to attend two regular APO projects, one in the Philippines and the other in Thailand.

The Deputy President of South Africa, who visited the Secretariat in April 2005, expressed her appreciation for the APO's support and cooperation. The Secretary-General thanked the Government of Japan for the special fund for the African initiative and member countries and NPOs for their assistance and cooperation through the deputation of resource persons and the acceptance of African participants.

Finally, the Secretary-General noted that this year marked the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the APO and that he believed that the organization was just reaching its prime and was full of energy and enthusiasm to break new ground and reach new heights in promoting the cause of higher productivity. Since its establishment, the APO had made important and lasting contributions to the socioeconomic development of the region and would continue to make a difference, he concluded. ☺

Occupational and environmental health and safety: Risk analysis and management

The rapid growth of industry has contributed greatly to increasing overall prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. However, this rapid growth has also engendered new challenges, among which occupational safety and health with associated risks are notable. Industrialization in the Asian-Pacific region has relied on SMEs, making the task of applying sound occupational health and safety standards and risk management difficult because of specific manpower, finance, space, and technology limitations. In addition, industrialization requires infrastructure, which in turn leads to a burgeoning in the construction sector, where the majority of occupational accidents occur.

The APO organized a workshop on Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety with the Focus on Risk Management in the Republic of China, 22–26 May, in association with the China Productivity Center. Seventeen individuals from 13 member countries were in attendance to discuss in detail related topics encompassing hazard identification and analysis, risk level determination, and prioritization and formulation of emergency response plans (ERPs). APO experts deputed from Malaysia, India, and Japan demarcated four phases in the general risk management strategy: preincident planning, actual incident, incident control, and rehabilitation (the PAIR concept). During the workshop, participants were divided into three groups and each group was given a factory warehouse layout and asked to develop an ERP for the case of a fire. Subsequently, they were given escalating emergency scenarios and asked to describe how they would cope based on the ERPs developed. Upon completion of the exercise, the experts assessed the applicability of the ERPs in the sample scenarios.

As a part of the workshop, a field visit was organized to the Chinese Petroleum Corporation, the largest petroleum company in the Republic of China.



Participants debating an ERP

As it deals with petrochemicals, the corporation must have a comprehensive risk management system. Ming-min Wang, Director, Health, Safety and Environment Division, made a detailed presentation, the crux of which was that commitment from top management is vital for the best possible occupational safety and risk management standards. The participants found it somewhat surprising that the president of one of the largest enterprises in the Republic of China doubles as the head of its internal safety committee and periodically joins walk-through exercises to monitor and evaluate the risk prevention measures in place. After the initial presentation by Wang, the participants visited sections of the corporation for firsthand observations. It is envisioned that efforts to emulate the examples of safety-conscious enterprises can reverse the trend of worsening Asian-Pacific occupational safety and health records, with concomitant improvements in productivity.



Reforming public services: Lessons from India

Reinventing public administration

Rising aspirations of people in general due to enhanced exposure to media depicting a good quality of life and fulfilled lifestyles mean that there are demands for bureaucracies to provide better public services and show greater respect for citizens. The current reality, however, is that most government departments in the developing world are not even aware of exactly who their customers are. In the perceptions of citizens, government agencies/departments are slow, inefficient, and impersonal. With an emancipated citizenry and active civil society organizations, federal, state, and local governance and public service administration have become very complex, with diverse demands from different stakeholders both internal and external. Governments are being forced to take on new roles through public-private partnerships with the involvement and participation of civil society.

Over the years, the Weberian form of governance has become distorted, resulting in inefficiency, delays, lack of citizen focus, and rent-seeking public servants further compounded by decreasing social sensitivity in many developing countries. Currently, the new public management movement advocates the application of corporate management (governance) principles to administration. The consensus is that a reengineering of administration is required, rather than completely banishing the Weberian model that has its distinct advantages. In this regard, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in their seminal book *Reinventing the Government* set out 10 “commandments” for government functions with a citizen orientation and business outlook.

Strides in Indian public service

The Indian governance system is rooted in both the UK’s Westminster-style democracy and the



“With an emancipated citizenry and active civil society organizations, federal, state, and local governance and public service administration have become very complex....”

former USSR’s central planning system. Service delivery outcomes in India remain poor on the whole in spite of major initiatives for administrative reform. A national survey of major public services, covering elementary schools, public hospitals, public transport, drinking water facilities, and public food distribution, by the Public Affairs Center concluded that India has done well in terms of providing basic access to such services, but far less well in terms of ensuring their quality, reliability, and effectiveness. A 2005 study by Transparency International found a high perception of corruption in services as diverse as healthcare, education, power supply, land administration, and the police. Even progress toward the Millennium Development Goals has been rather slow, despite a recent plethora of government initiatives to make administration more responsive, including a Citizens’ Charter, granting rights to information, the

empowerment of Lok Adalats (public courts), and the introduction of e-governance. However, there have been marked changes, for example, in telephone services, banking, and municipal services such as housing tax administration, water supply, etc. in recent years. Things are improving as a citizen-friendly orientation is developing. Both central and state agencies are striving to put in place a service culture, overcoming both systemic and human barriers to do so, although much more needs to be done.

In this context, the World Bank survey report “Reforming Public Services in India: Drawing Lessons from Success” covering different public services, which cited 25 examples of full success and six of partial success, was an eye-opener to many. The basic triggers for reform were derived from six strategies related to Osborne and Gaebler’s 10 commandments: 1) promoting competition (threat of survival); 2) simplifying transactions (integrating e-governance and enhancing transparency); 3) restructuring agency processes (enhancing managerial effectiveness and civil society involvement); 4) decentralization (power to the people, e.g., Panchayati Raj [village-level self-governance] institutions); 5) building political support for program delivery; and 6) strengthening accountability mechanisms (minimum tenure of officials, right to information, etc.).

The survey concluded that for any reform process to be successful, an enabling environment is the most critical. The main factor with a pervasive effect on all others is the commitment of the political leadership and a champion for the cause. For example, without the commitment and single-handed ruling and facilitation by the chief ministers of three states, some important reforms would not have seen the light of the day: e-Seva Kendras (public service centers) in Andhra Pradesh; decentralization of management of primary education to Panchayati Raj institutions and Parent-Teacher As-

Cambodia hosts course on productivity improvement in the public sector


Productivity and the improvement of productivity are key factors in the economic development of any country. The productivity movements in APO member countries are in different stages of development, but in general productivity improvement endeavors have had relatively greater success in the private than in the public sector in all. Also, while the APO has organized numerous projects focusing on productivity increases in the private sector, similar efforts are also important for the public sector so that it can catch up with the expectations of the public and provide the necessary support and services in an efficient, timely manner. For these reasons and the increasing attention being paid to quality governance, there have been several requests by member countries to focus on productivity improvement in the public sector.

A training course on Productivity Improvement in the Public Sector through Quality Awards was therefore held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 29 May–2 June 2006, hosted jointly by the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy and APO. The seminar aimed to examine the principles and application of quality awards in the public sector along with performance measurement and evaluation criteria to improve quality. The course also offered an opportunity to learn the best practices in productivity improvement efforts through quality awards from award-winning public-sector organizations in Singapore and Malaysia. The 15 participants from 12 member countries were also introduced to various initiatives to promote productivity improvement in the public sector. The training course in Cambodia was facilitated by Kamaruddin Mohamad from Malaysia and Dr. Benjamin Tan from Singapore.

Quality award frameworks like the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Japan Quality Award, Singapore Quality Award, etc., have all stimulated efforts to improve quality and productivity in both the private and public sectors. The course attendees learned that today more than 80 countries have adopted some form of business excellence framework. The initial four frameworks were developed during 1987–1988 and

included the Australian Quality Award, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (USA), Deming Award (Japan), and Irish Quality Award. This was followed by a wave of adoption in the 1990s by other countries, including such APO member countries as Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Thereafter, many quality award frameworks were developed in other parts of the world and differ only in the way they are presented, assessed, and the specific criteria or model used. There are, however, considerable similarities because all award frameworks emphasize the role of visionary leadership; customer/market focus; valuing and involving staff; actions based on data, information, and knowledge; recognizing systems and managing processes; and promoting continuous learning, improvement, and innovation. Additionally, all award frameworks focus on adding value to ensure sustainability and promoting good governance and social responsibility.

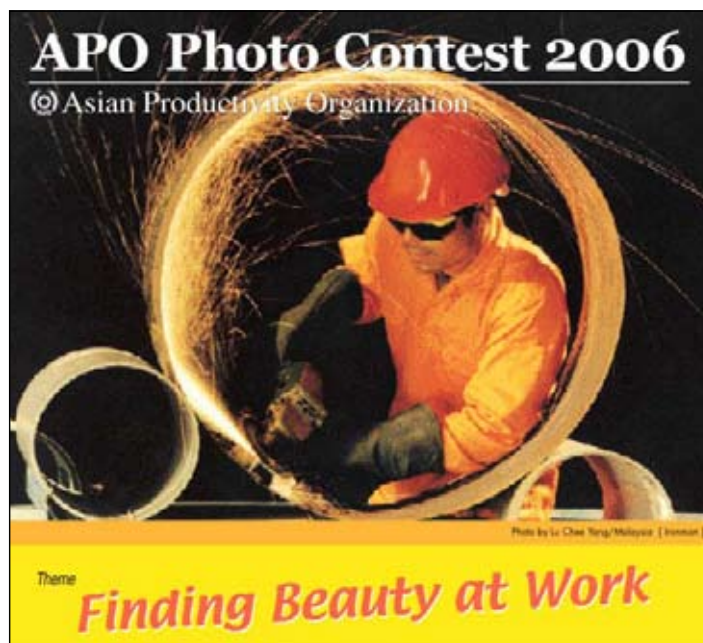
Since award-winning companies and organizations are well managed, their chances of business success are increased. There is research evidence from the USA, Europe, and Australia that award winners achieve better returns on investment, even when compared with S&P 500 companies. All awards provide a clear framework to strengthen organizational capabilities and guide organizational development toward excellence and innovation. 

New APO Chairman and Vice Chairmen

The 48th Session of the APO Governing Body elected APO Director for India Dr. Ajay Dua as APO Chairman for 2006–2007 and APO Director for Indonesia Besar Setyoko and Acting APO Director for the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Ghassem Ansari Ranani as the First and Second Vice Chairmen, respectively.



(L-R) Dr. Dua, Setyoko, and Dr. Ranani



The 2006 APO Photo Contest, cosponsored by FujiFilm, has the theme “Finding Beauty at Work” and is open to all nationals of APO member countries wishing to bring the images in their lens to a regionwide audience. The deadline for receipt of entries is 15 September. The nine prizewinning photos will be used on the 2007 APO calendar and other promotional materials. The information is available on the APO Web site (www.apo-tokyo.org, click on “APO Photo Contest 2006”) or from your NPO or the APO Information and Public Relations Department (1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan; www.ipr@apo-tokyo.org). Please share the beauty that you behold in everyday tasks and tools.



p-Experts deputed by the APO

BANGLADESH

Mr. Noel Shakespeare, Corporate Fire Surveyor and Director, Risk Survey Services Ltd., New Zealand, was deputed as technical expert for the workshop on Advanced Risk Surveying and Property Risk Management, 20–28 May 2006.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Anik Ajmera, Counsellor, Environment, Confederation of Indian Industry, **Mr. Hiroshi Omori**, President, Technosoft Co., Ltd., Japan, and **Datuk Dr. Soh Chai Hock**, Director, Proton Edar Sdn. Bhd, Malaysia, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Green Productivity and Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety with a Focus on Risk Analysis and Management, 22–26 May 2006.

Dr. Yasuo Oe, Professor of Rural Economics, Faculty of Horticulture, Chiba University, Japan, was deputed as resource person for the multi-country study mission on Agro-tourism for Enhancing Business Opportunities in Rural Areas, 20–27 June 2006.

FIJI

Dr. Jerome Agrusa, CHE, Professor, Travel Industry Management, College of Business Administration, Hawaii Pacific University, USA, was deputed as resource person for the training course on Hospitality Management for Providing Exceptional Services, 23 May–2 June 2006.

MONGOLIA

Mr. Goh Swee Seang, Deputy Director-General, National Productivity Corporation, and **Mr.**

Abdul Rahim Yusoff, Director, Best Practices Management Division, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, were deputed as resource persons for the project on Strengthening NPO Services: National Productivity Plan (Phase I) “Developing a Ten-year Plan” (Mr. Seang) and National Productivity Plan (Phase II) “Development of Local Best Practice Network and Benchmarking Program” (Mr. Yusoff), 5–9 June 2006.

SRI LANKA

Dr. Kamal Taori, Director General, National Productivity Council, India, **Mr. Mandar Parasnis**, Environmental Management Consultant, India, and **Dr. Suporn Koottatep**, Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Green Productivity, 22–28 May 2006.

APO/NPO update

New Address, Telephone/Fax Numbers of National Productivity Center, I.R. Iran
National Productivity Center
No. 23, Daneshsara St., Baharestan Sq.
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Phone: 98-21-77646272-4
Fax: 98-21-77646271

Program calendar

September

India

Symposium on Intellectual Property Rights and Their Implications for Developing Countries, 26–29 September 2006.

Indonesia

Forum on Labor-Management Cooperation: Latest Trends in Unionism and the Labor Movement in APO Member Countries, 11–15 September 2006.

Japan

Training Course on Strategic Management Consultancy for Productivity Improvement, 4–15 September 2006.

Republic of Korea

Seminar on Green Supply Chains for Marine Food Products, 11–15 September 2006.

United Kingdom

Study Mission to the UK on Risk Management and Corporate Governance, 25–29 September 2006.

Mongolia

Seventh Workshop on the APO Best Practice Network, 5–8 September 2006.

Philippines

Development of Productivity Specialists: Capacity Building for ASEAN Managers (2nd batch), 4–22 September 2006.
Training Course on Development of Niche Markets for Agricultural Products, 5–12 September 2006.

Sri Lanka

Seminar on Organic Farming for Sustainable Development, 11–15 September 2006.

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.



Teaching productivity

The esteemed English-language daily The Bangkok Post, in an article by Oratip Nimkannon in its online Learning Post edition of 23 May 2006, covered the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI)'s Primary and Secondary Productivity Education Project, launched in 2005 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Basic Education Commission Office (BECO). Mass media coverage of specific grassroots efforts is vital in propagating the productivity message to the widest possible audience, and The Bangkok Post's gracious permission for the APO News to excerpt that article for our readers below is very much appreciated. The Learning Post (www.bangkokpost.net/education/index.htm) is an excellent language-cum-information resource on the APO region and beyond.

In the original *Learning Post* article, FTPI Productivity Promotion Department Manager Chantalux Mongkol was quoted on the impetus behind the project: "Schools are the main suppliers of the labor force to the industrial sector.... For competitive reasons, it's too late to start productivity at the university level or later." Initially, 13 pilot schools were chosen to teach how to apply productivity tools like 5S and kaizen to increase efficiency in daily life. At the outset, most teachers and students had little idea what productivity was or how its tools could benefit them but soon learned that increasing productivity means "managing resources efficiently." Taken out of its business context, productivity begins at home, e.g., with steps as simple as turning off electricity and tap water when not in use.

The FTPI developed instructional materials for all primary and secondary grade levels, but the pilot schools decide whether to select specific topics and integrate the lessons into other class subjects or set up a separate class teaching all aspects of productivity. The FTPI recommends the latter, since it allows students to grasp more advanced topics while progressing from one grade to the next. As noted by a teacher from Nakornluang School in Ayutthaya, although obvious behavioral changes after studying productivity included better organization of students' desks, a cleaner and more orderly environment is merely a by-product of the process of learning to maintain self-discipline which is inherent in the 5S philosophy.

One year after the start of the pilot project, Chantalux admitted that both students' and teachers' perceptions of productivity improvement remained grounded in physical terms and that while awareness had increased, fundamental changes in behavior would involve a lengthy process, requiring long-term commitment from both the FTPI and BECO. BECO Deputy Secretary-General Areerat Wattanasin called for student projects that reflect systematic increases in efficiency, such as "a conceptual framework on how to reduce poverty or eliminate the debt cycle within the students'



Display of student productivity projects at a pilot school (photo courtesy of the FTPI)

own family or community." The most important question, Areerat added, was whether the process could help students create a better tomorrow by saving resources.

The FTPI's Chantalux looks forward to incorporating productivity education into a wider network of schools, which will then pass on the knowledge and practices to families and local communities and ultimately to the students' future workplaces. The focus for the 2006–2007 academic year will be on assisting teachers to devise customized curricula for each community, while the FTPI continues to train teachers and school administrators in its year-round workshops and activities. "Increasing productivity, not only in the workplace, but also in a person's daily life, leads to a better standard of living," Chantalux said, "and increasing people's standard of living is our ultimate goal." ☺

Eco-products International Fair in Singapore

The APO will cohost the Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) 2006 at Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, 31 October–2 November 2006, with SPRING Singapore and the Waste Management and Recycling Association of Singapore.

The EPIF will provide opportunities to showcase exhibitors' most advanced environmental technologies, share information and explore business collaborations, and raise public awareness of environmentally friendly products and services. The fair, spread over 7,300 m², is expected to receive 40,000 visitors. An international conference on "Growing the Eco-nomy"—Learning from the Best Eco-practices will be held during the EPIF.

Inquiries are now being accepted from those interested in exhibiting or attending. Details are available at www.epif06.com. A brochure can be viewed on the APO's Web site (www.apo-tokyo.org).