



# A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION


## First APO Web conference

*In its drive to harness the information and communications technologies for developing the human resources of member countries, the APO has undertaken a number of initiatives to exploit these powerful tools. Some earlier examples are the APOnet, a dedicated extranet program; the offering of e-books on the APO Web site; and the videoconferencing seminar on TQM held in February this year. The latest effort of the APO in using ICT for training and development is the launching of a new Internet-based e-forum site at <http://wb.apo-tokyo.org:8080> to host Web conferences. The first such conference was held on 13–25 July 2003 to facilitate discussions on the SIGN<sup>3</sup>-Asia initiative. SIGN<sup>3</sup>-Asia stands for “Sustainable Investment Global Network for Asia.” The “3” in the acronym denotes the need to consider the triple bottom line of development—economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental sustainability—in all investment decisions. Its central aim is the promotion of sustainable investment. The SIGN<sup>3</sup> concept was a proposal of the Asian and Pacific Development Center in Kuala Lumpur, European Partners for the Environment (EPE) in Brussels, Regional Institute of Environmental Technology (RIET) in Singapore, International Institute for Environment and Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).*

**T**he Web conference was announced on the home pages of the APO, RIET, and EPE Web sites. Invitations to participate were sent to almost 300 professionals involved in sustainable development, Green Productivity, cleaner production, foreign and domestic investment, venture capital, and academia. The moderator, Ari Huhtala, an adviser to the Finnish government, submitted a discussion paper with eight questions on “What is the challenge?” and five questions on “Where next?” The discussion was clustered around these two main issues. There were 30 written submissions during the conference and they were accessed more than 1,000 times by viewers. The submissions are still available on the e-forum Web site mentioned above. Although most of the conference participants were from APO member countries, there was a significant number from outside the APO region, particularly from Europe, Canada, Peru, and the USA.

This Web conference is the first for the APO and it provides an important learning experience. Moderator Huhtala gave this assessment of the two-week program: “Visits to the conference Web site were numerous, but as with most Internet events, it was difficult to attract substantive participation. The Internet is not sufficiently interactive to provoke real spontaneous dialogue. Yet it exposes the participants’ written contributions to thousands of potential readers. It is also difficult for the participants to position themselves between their personal interpretations and those of the stakeholder groups they belong to.

“Despite these general shortcomings, a core group of over 20 active participants emerged. They came from a refreshing variety of institutions involved in development banking, asset management, the stock market, research, accounting, government, renewable energy technology promotion, and SME development. The power and importance of market forces and the role of individual companies (financiers, traders, and manufacturers) in the investment decision-making processes were clearly established by the participants. Despite an emerging understanding of the importance of the triple bottom line in the investment community, the conference also emphasized the importance of vigorous awareness promotion and training activities on the basic issues of sustainable development and their links to investment.”

The conference solicited commitments for cooperation from some of the key institutions in the region: the Association of Development Finance Institutions, Association of Socially Responsible Investment, and UNEP Finance Initiatives Asia Task Force. 

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**“The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps—we must step up the stairs.”**

**Vance Havner**

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**Asian Productivity Organization**  
Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F  
1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 102-0093, Japan  
Tel: (81-3) 5226-3920  
Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950  
E-mail: [apo@apo-tokyo.org](mailto:apo@apo-tokyo.org)  
Web site: [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org)



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## Welfare versus productivity

**T**he level of welfare of the current member states of the European Union (EU) is unequalled—the vast bulk of their citizens are looked after from the cradle to the grave. This has been enabled by continuous productivity growth and the equitable sharing of its fruits.

**“Indeed, governments, both national and European, are apparently working against productivity enhancement despite (implicitly) realizing that it remains the key to economic growth and hence the ultimate source of welfare.”**

Today, however, productivity rarely figures in national debates on the maintenance of the welfare state. Furthermore, the EU’s lofty 2000 targets of making it “the world’s most competitive information economy” by the year 2010 (essentially by reducing national barriers to further productivity growth) are all but forgotten. Rather, Europe’s concerns are with maintaining current levels of welfare in a situation of economic stagnation: employment, unemployment benefits, health systems, old-age pensions, and security. Indeed, governments, both national and European, are apparently working against productivity enhancement despite (implicitly) realizing that it remains the key to economic growth and hence the ultimate source of welfare. Consider the following typical situations:

To help extract the current “sick man of Europe” from its no-growth hole, the German government—two-thirds of whose parliamentary members are trade unionists—has presented reforms aimed at encouraging productivity and entrepreneurship by reducing taxation (which penalizes productive activity and job creation) and making labor markets more flexible. The latter means easing restrictions on dismissals in smaller

companies (to encourage more hirings) and trimming unemployment benefits, the current levels and durability of which hardly “make working pay.” Other measures include additional incentives for part-time work, removing obstacles to the use of temporary workers, and more efficient labor agencies. However, there is vociferous opposition to such increased flexibility, especially from the trade union movement, and this is despite the government’s background.

In France, as well as in Austria and Italy, it is the government’s old-age pension reform that is the subject of considerable opposition. Currently, some 75% of the working population retires before reaching age 60. Yet life expectancy continues to rise. Thus, a declining workforce—like it or not—has to be ever more productive to pay for the growing army of pensioners (productivity per hour of a French worker equals that of an American). And the dire financial straits of the government are compounded by its actions to smoothen structural change in the economy by payrolling the exit from the working population of older (50 years), especially unskilled, workers. The French, like the Austrians, Italians, and others, realize that sacrifices have to be made, but... not at the expense of “my” welfare. Thus, a congregation of vested interests stymies change. And no one advocates striving for productivity—*quelle horreur*—which remains strongly associated in the public mind with both working harder and inevitable job losses. So let’s not reduce welfare, even though the current level could not be sustained, and certainly make no admonishments to work more or even smarter.

Ireland’s productivity-cum-welfare concern is different; its remarkable productivity growth since 1989 has been paralleled by a 50% rise in alcohol consumption. This increase has in turn been responsible for a loss of productivity and growing public expenditure on the consequences of alcohol abuse—equivalent to almost 2% of national output. To counter this phenomenon, the govern-

ment, rather than legislate, is urging the drinks industry to discourage youth from drinking.

**“...productivity improvement often results from enterprises turning threats into challenges.”**

And then, even more important, there is the EU level. In 2002, the European Commission produced a white paper on “Productivity: The Key to Competitiveness of European Economies and Enterprises.” It sounds good. However, in 2003, it has made proposals to reduce health hazards, especially allergies. Industries must submit risk assessments for virtually all chemicals circulating within the EU, some 30,000 of them. This is likely to cost €7 billion in the coming decade. On the other hand, as France has demonstrated, productivity improvement often results from enterprises turning threats into challenges. In this case, the health benefits for society as a whole from reduced chemical hazards could far exceed the expenditure to achieve this, and enhanced occupational health and safety is a significant contributory factor to productivity development.

These instances indicate some of the ways in which governments are groping for sticks and carrots to ensure—as in Scandinavia—that welfare can better be harnessed for productivity growth and that enhanced productivity can enable welfare to be sustained.

First, governments have to decide on actions, albeit after broad consultations, and then act decisively. At the EU level in particular, there remain many domains in which action is needed to ensure a more “level productivity playing field.” New laws are currently being drafted to enhance the four freedoms of movement (of labor, capital, goods, and services), European public tendering, and mutual recognition of training and taxation systems, among others. But between the drafting and passing of legislation, there are many vested interests to be tamed.



Second, there is the role of the enterprise itself, the generator of national income. Obviously, the benefits of striving to become ever more productive and innovative have to be rewarding for all stakeholders. Law plays a significant role here, but enterprises also need to be aware of their “corporate social responsibility”—their policies and actions must enhance their employees’ and community’s quality of life. This requires a notably improved understanding of how profits and growth can be balanced with sustainability and environmental improvement, a subject of growing interest.

Third, a new force for sustainable productivity promotion is emerging: the insurance and reinsurance industry. Three decades ago, the tobacco industry rejected claims that it could be held responsible for an individual’s lung cancer. This is no longer possible. Today insurance companies are increasingly concerned, for example, that carbon dioxide-producing industries could be the subject of vast future claims for causing global warming, with repercussions on insurers. They are therefore taking a proactive stance toward companies that have not themselves already detected early signs of possible claims. Thus, in the future, private enterprise could well play a significant role in policing companies’ sustainable productivity growth. 🌀

*Anthony C. Hubert is President of EuroJobs, an organization he established to promote efforts to raise the quality of working life and productivity in Europe. He was formerly Secretary-General of the European Association of National Productivity Organisations. He writes regularly for this column.*

## From the **SECRETARY-GENERAL’S** schedule

**July 2003**

*7–10 July*

**APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima** made an official trip to Bangkok to attend the coordination meeting of national experts to prepare for the 2003 edition of the *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*. During his stay in Bangkok, the Secretary-General paid a courtesy call on **APO Chairman Manu Leopairete**, who is also the **APO Director for Thailand and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry**. He was accompanied by **Mr. Dhawatchai Tangsanga**, Executive Director of the Thailand Productivity Institute, and **Mr. Mukesh Bhattarai**, APO IT Program Officer.



*Mr. Tajima (left) and Mr. Manu*

*11 July*

**Held a meeting with Tan Sri Dato’ Azman Hashim**, APO Director for Malaysia and Chairman of the Malaysian National Productivity Corporation, who was visiting Tokyo. Other Secretariat staff members present were **Mr. N.G. Kularatne**, Director (Administration and Finance), **Mr. Y. Ohnishi**, Director (Research and Planning), and **Mr. Augustine Koh**, Director (Environment).

*11 July*

**Received Dato’ Mustafa Mansur**, President of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, who paid a courtesy visit to the APO Secretariat.

*25 July*

**Received Mr. Sajith Premadasa**, Sri Lanka’s Deputy Minister of Health, Welfare and Nutrition, who paid a courtesy visit to the Secretariat.

*28 July*

**Hosted a welcome luncheon** in honor of participants attending the APO symposium on “Best Cases of Integrated Community Development,” Tokyo.



## New APO publications



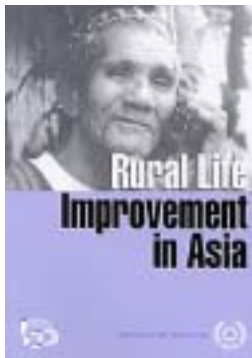
### RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

APO 188 pp. July 2003 ISBN 92-833-2341-6

Rural development involves the introduction of new socio-economic activities and the construction of physical infrastructure and facilities to improve the quality of life in rural areas. However, these activities often result in depleting natural resources and degrading the environment. To avoid such conflicting consequences, rural communities familiar with local resources can often offer good ideas to reconcile them. The public sector on its part should endeavor to introduce a more vigilant and participatory approach in rural development

It was against this background that the APO organized a seminar on “Rural Development and Environmental Conservation” in Nepal in November 2001 to discuss issues arising from the interface between rural development and environmental conservation and to suggest policy measures to resolve them.

This publication is a report on the proceedings of the seminar. It includes a summary of the outcome of the seminar, four resource papers, and 14 country papers presented at the seminar. The resource papers dealt with the following topics: Issues and strategies in linking rural development and environment conservation in Asia and the Pacific; Case study of Nepal’s Royal Chitwan National Park’s buffer zone; and Empowering farmers with knowledge of environmental conservation. This volume is useful to all those interested or involved in rural development.



### RURAL LIFE IMPROVEMENT IN ASIA

APO 188 pp. July 2003 ISBN 92-833-2339-4

Rural life improvement programs are concerned with improving both the production aspect of rural economic activities and the living conditions of the people. In the Asia-Pacific region, there are many examples of successful rural life improvement programs, such as those implemented in the

Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. To provide an opportunity for an in-depth study of these successful programs and to identify the underlying key contributing factors, the APO organized a seminar on “Rural Life Improvement for Community Development” in Japan in April 2002.

This publication provides a summary of the findings of the seminar and the text of four resource papers and 17 country papers. Of the resource papers, three deal with the Japanese rural life improvement program, while the fourth has as its theme “An action-oriented approach to development intervention.” Like the publication introduced above, this volume should prove useful to all those who are actively involved in rural development.

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](mailto:ipr@apo-tokyo.org)

## COMMON SENSE TALK



“Chance favors the prepared mind.”

*Louis Pasteur*

“The more opinions you have, the less you see.”

*Wim Wenders*

“The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.”

*Peter F. Drucker*

“Much good work is lost for the lack of a little more.”

*Edward Harriman*

“Something new is not innovation if it does not lead to value addition.”

*John Prescott*

“I see true innovation to be made up of three ‘creativities’—creativity in technology, product planning, and marketing.”

*Akio Morita*

“Change starts when someone sees the next step.”

*William Drayton*

“If necessity is the mother of invention, discontent is the father of progress.”

*David Rockefeller*

“If you risk nothing, then you risk everything.”

*Geena Davis*

“The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps—we must step up the stairs.”

*Vance Havner*

“It is no use saying, ‘We are doing our best.’ You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary.”

*Sir Winston Churchill*

“If you hire mediocre people, they will hire mediocre people.”

*Tom Murphy*

# SMEs and the Internet


**G**lobalization and deregulation are changing the ways goods and services are produced and marketed. For this reason, export markets have become extremely competitive and this is expected to intensify further. In this environment, many big companies are turning to IT in general and the Internet in particular to gain a competitive edge. In this respect, the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are not catching up fast enough. This and their vulnerability to change can prove fatal to them. To give them an insight into how the Internet could help them in their business endeavors, particularly the online marketing of their products, the APO organized a seminar on “SMEs and the Internet” in Kathmandu, Nepal, 30 June to 4 July 2003. Seventeen participants from 11 APO member countries took part. The seminar was inaugurated by APO Director for Nepal Dinesh Chandra Pyakurel, who is also the Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies.



Group photo of participants

Case examples of the commercial use of the Internet by SMEs: Thai experience; and Government initiatives and IT application by SMEs: Case of Nepal.

The seminar dealt with the following topics: IT and SMEs; Internet and the strengthening of SMEs: Malaysian experience; e-Marketing: Current trends, challenges, and opportunities for SMEs; e-Trade readiness and SMEs of Nepal; Models of Internet use for SMEs; Role of NPOs in promoting the Internet for productivity enhancement of SMEs; Strengthening the capabilities of SMEs;

For field studies, participants visited the Association of Craft Producers to observe the online marketing of handicrafts through the Internet; Lotus Holding Company, an ISP provider; and the Trade Promotion Center of Nepal for a briefing on the Trade Point Program of UNCTAD, established to facilitate access to international markets by SMEs. 

## Latest APO program on benchmarking



2003 seminar participants visiting Ingress Engineering

Benchmarking is a recent approach to productivity improvement that has become one of the most popular and widely practiced. It has been defined as a systematic and continuous process of searching, learning, adapting, and

implementing best practices from within the same organization or from other organizations for achieving superior performance. The focus is not on results but on systems and processes. The challenge for an organization undertaking benchmarking is to convert the knowledge gained into a competitive advantage.

Since 1997, the APO has organized a number of programs to help member countries develop benchmarking capabilities. They included a survey in 1998 to study the issues, problems, and success factors in implementing benchmarking. Two books were published in 2001: *Benchmarking for Competitiveness Building* and *Benchmarking: A Quality and Productivity Improvement Tool*. The latest APO offering on benchmarking was a seminar held in Malaysia from 30 June to 4 July 2003. Implemented by the National Productivity Corporation of Malaysia, it was attended by 20 participants from 13 APO member countries. Apart from lecture sessions, participants were taken on observational study visits to Ingress Engineering Berhad and Telekom Malaysia.

## Introducing the APO Secretariat (II)

We first featured this new six-part series on “Introducing the APO Secretariat” in the June issue. Each part will report on the work of one department. We started with the Administration and Finance Department, and in this issue, our focus is on the Research and Planning (R&P) Department.

### Research and Planning Department

The R&P Department is responsible for the overall coordination in planning the APO’s future programs of action. This is undertaken in close consultation with the national productivity organizations (NPOs) of member countries. The plans are submitted to the APO Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs for detailed examination and subsequently to the Governing Body for approval.

In addition, the R&P Department has three sets of activities. One is to develop and strengthen NPOs, which is a basic mission of the APO. The other is to organize large-scale forums and meetings for top officials in government, industry, trade unions, and NPOs to share and exchange views and experiences on themes of specific interest. This type of activity is important to reinforce to member countries that the APO continues to seek a better quality of life in the region through the productivity movement. The final type of activity is undertaking projects that anticipate the needs and requirements of member countries by offering



Ohnishi (seated); standing (L-R) Mochtan, Eshita, Higashiguchi, Lee, and Ohara

advice and guidance to policy makers on coping with change, such as the emergence of the knowledge society.

Heading the R&P Department is Yoshikuni Ohnishi, who is among the longest-serving staff in the Secretariat. Working with him are three officers, Lee Kia Yoke, Dr. A.K.P. Mochtan, and Naoto Yamamoto (who is also assisting the Administration and Finance Department), and three general support staff: Fumiyo Higashiguchi, Mitsuko Eshita, and Akiko Ohara. 🌀

## VPC receives environment award

The Vietnam Environment Awards, initiated in 2001 by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, were bestowed on six organizations and eight individuals on 29 May 2003, among which was the Vietnam Productivity Center (VPC). Since 1998, the VPC has organized a host of Green Productivity-Integrated Community Development (GP-ICD) projects nationwide. Although most GP projects in APO member countries are implemented in the industrial and agricultural sectors, Vietnam was the first to apply the GP concept at community level. The GP Program of the VPC is therefore different in nature and scope, with the support and direct involvement of various governmental agencies, local citizens’ groups, and individual villagers. Receipt of the collective award reinforces the commitment of the VPC to environmental improvement. It also underlines the achievements of GP-ICD in Vietnam and highlights the success of environmental projects initiated and supported by the APO.



Vietnam Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Mai Ai Truc (R) presenting the award to Nguyen Thi Bich Hang, VPC Managing Director

### FNTC is now TPAF

and the development of partnerships to enhance quality and productivity touch the lives of every single citizen of our nation,” he added.

In his congratulatory message on the repositioning of the FNTC as the TPAF, APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima said that the historic event was

a recognition of the past important and outstanding contributions of the FNTC to the socio-economic development of Fiji. It also reflected a renewed and enhanced commitment of the Government of Fiji to productivity improvement as a key strategy in the further development and prosperity of Fiji. The Government of Fiji, he said, should be lauded for establishing the TPAF. 🌀



# p-Experts deputed by the APO

## INDONESIA

**Mr. Anik Ajmera**, Counsellor, Confederation of Indian Industry, India, and **Dr. B. Jagdev Singh**, Consultant, OSH & Medical Resources, Malaysia, were deputed to provide technical expert services in the workshop on Green Productivity and Occupational, Environmental Health and Safety, 3–8 August 2003.

## JAPAN

The following were deputed to serve as resource speakers in the seminar on Better Agricultural Practices for Environmental Sustainability, 6–13 August 2003: **Dr. V. Anbumozhi**, Assistant Professor, Institute of Environmental Studies, University of Tokyo, Japan; **Mr. Teoh Cheng Hai**, Consultant, Kim Loong Resources Berhad, Malaysia; **Mr. J. Jeffrey Palmer**, Director, Asian Rural Life Development Foundation International, Thailand; and **Dr. Vo-Tong Xuan**, Rector, Angiang University, Vietnam.

## MALAYSIA

**Dr. Noriyoshi Oguchi**, Faculty of Commerce, Senshu University, Japan, was deputed to conduct training sessions on Industry-Based TFP Measurement & Analysis for the Manufacturing Sector, 23–25 August 2003.

## MONGOLIA

**Mr. Yoshitane Ide**, Lecturer, Japan, was deputed to conduct training on Business Reengineering, 4–15 August 2003.

**Mr. Masanobu Kobayashi**, Consultant, Japan, and **Mr.**

**Taro Morita**, Deputy Director, National Life Finance Corporation, Japan, were deputed to conduct training on Management of Micro-Credit, 18–21 August 2003.

## PAKISTAN

**Mr. Kunihiko Yoshida**, Consultant, Japan, was deputed to provide consultancy services on Mould Making and Magnesium Die Casting, 27 July–9 August 2003.

## PHILIPPINES

The following were deputed to serve as resource speakers in the seminar on International Marketing of Agricultural Products, 4–8 August 2003: **Mr. Carlos A. Sayco, Jr.**, Vice-President/Managing Director, Development Academy of the Philippines; **Dr. Morton Satin**, International Consultant, USA; and **Mr. Grant S. Vinning**, Managing Director, Asian Markets Research, Australia.

**Mr. Sam Lee Chee Seng**, Training Consultant, Odyssey Training & Development, Singapore, was deputed to conduct a seminar and provide advisory services on Formulation of a Total Training Plan, 29 July–7 August 2003.

## SINGAPORE

**Dr. Barry David Inglis**, Director, National Measurement Laboratory, Australia, was deputed to conduct a Review of the National Measurement System—Phase 2, 21–22 July 2003.

The following were deputed to serve in the Experts Planning Meeting on Sustainable Investment Global Network, 1–2 August 2003: **Mr. Ari Huhtala**, Finland;

## APO/NPO update

### New APO Director for Pakistan

**Mr. Muhammad Javed Ashraf Hussain**, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Production, Government of Pakistan, was designated as the new APO Director for Pakistan w.e.f. 22 July 2003, in place of **Dr. Muhammad Akram Sheikh**.

### New APO Alternate Director for Pakistan

**Mr. S.M. Hasan Zaidi**, Joint Secretary, Administration & Finance, was designated as the new APO Alternate Director for Pakistan w.e.f. 22 July 2003, in place of **Mr. Muhammad Yasin Tahir**.

**Ms. Liana Bratasida**, Deputy Minister for Environment, Indonesia; **Mr. Atsuhito Kurozumi**, Director, International Cooperation Department, Development Bank of Japan; **Mr. Teoh Cheng Hai**, Consultant, Kim Loong Resources Berhad, Malaysia; **Mr. Melito S. Salazar Jr.**, Member, Monetary Board, Central Bank of the Philippines; **Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Hang**, Managing Director, Vietnam Productivity Center.



## p-TIPS

## Sweet inspiration

### (Unleashing creativity for generating ideas)

How do creative people come up with ideas? James W. Young, author of *A Technique for Producing Ideas*, insists that the production of ideas follows a process as concrete as that for producing cars. According to Young, a “new” idea is a combination of old elements and being able to devise new combinations depends on the ability to discern relationships between seemingly disparate items. Advertising copywriters, poets, scientists, engineers, and a host of other professionals have used the technique successfully since the first publication of Young’s book in 1965. His five simple steps are:

1. Gather material. Be endlessly curious and collect specific and general information from as many sources as possible. Store your data in whatever form you wish: on a computer or electronic organizer, on file cards, in a series of notebooks. Putting accumulated information in your own words helps you remember, clarify thought processes, and disclose gaps. This step should become a lifelong quest.

2. When facing a specific problem, digest all your information. Turn the facts over in your mind, bringing different ones together to see how they relate — or don’t.
3. Stop thinking about the problem. Let your subconscious take over for a while, analogous to an incubation period.
4. While you are still not thinking about the specific issue, an idea will occur. It may come while you are in the shower, repairing a bicycle, or walking along the street.
5. Examine the idea in the harsh light of reality. Submit it to others for criticism and modification for practical use. You’ll be surprised at how often one good idea breeds another, either your own or someone else’s.



## FNTC is now TPAF

After 30 years of upgrading the skills and knowledge of the Fijian workforce, the role of the Fiji National Training Council (FNTC) was expanded and repositioned as the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF). It was officially inaugurated on 26 May 2003 by Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase. In conjunction with the occasion, the 2003 National Productivity Awareness Campaign was also launched. More than 300 guests comprising cabinet ministers, governmental officials, members of the diplomatic corps, top business executives, and school teachers and students attended this momentous joint event.

**L**ike its predecessor, the TPAF will continue to serve as the national body for technical and vocational training and as the national productivity organization to promote and enhance productivity as a viable economic strategy. The functions of the TPAF will be conducted through the following three councils: the National Training and Productivity Council, National Quality Awards Council, and National Standards and Accreditation Council.

According to TPAF Director-General Jone Usamate, the work and responsibilities of the National Training and Productivity Council and the National Quality Awards Council are simply a carryover of the activities of the former FNTC. The new activities of the TPAF will be those to be undertaken by the National Standards and Accreditation Council, which are to develop a national qualifications framework that complies with international standards; make regular reviews of vocational competency standards relating to qualifications specified in the national qualifications framework; arrange for the accreditation and registration of training providers and trainers; review such accreditations and registrations; administer and conduct national examinations and tests for trades and vocational skills pertaining to qualifications specified in the national qualifications framework; and manage the national apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

Prime Minister Qarase, in his keynote speech at the launching ceremony, said that the establishment of the TPAF “will bring productivity closer to the center of our drive to take the economy forward and to banish poverty.” The

message for Fiji is very clear, he added, “If we want the country to progress, we have to foster a productivity culture. We do not have a choice in this. It is about producing the highest quality of goods and services at least cost and in minimum time. It means hard work, investment in education and training, innovation, motivation, and a strong national commitment.”

The Prime Minister told the gathering that the government's road map for a better Fiji calls for the economy to grow by at least 5% a year if there were to be more investments and jobs, bigger pay packets, and a lifting of living standards. He stressed that the new wealth, once achieved, must be spread more evenly so that the poorest can also share in it. Fiji's economic growth for this year is projected to reach 5.1%, as against 4.4% for last year. Despite this expected robust performance, Prime Minister Qarase told his people not to be complacent as “we are a long way from the level of success we are seeking... only when large numbers of our people move out of poverty, only when unemployment falls and crime retreats, only when we have better roads and water supplies, and so many other improvements, only then will we be able to say that we have achieved our goals.”

Fijian Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck, in his welcome address, said that the 2003 Productivity Awareness Campaign will comprise a range of programs designed to raise the awareness of the need to enhance the productivity of Fiji and to motivate all segments of the community to improve quality and productivity continuously, in the workplace and in other walks of life. “It is vitally important that the productivity message

*(Continued on page 6)*



Guests at the launching ceremony



Prime Minister Qarase