



APO news

APO Secretariat Reform Plan

The 48th APO Governing Body Meeting held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 13–15 June 2006, was epochal in that it approved a number of proposals by the Secretariat that will have a long-term impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Among the more significant were the Secretariat Reform Plan, provision of airfares to and waiver of participating country expenses payment for private-sector participants attending APO projects, and increasing the Working Capital Fund. Another major proposal of the Secretariat that after consideration the Governing Body decided to review at its 2007 meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, was the new membership contribution formula. This is a report on the Secretariat Reform Plan.

APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka's Secretariat Reform Plan, which covers the areas of Secretariat restructuring, personnel policy, and financial discipline and management, has a two-fold objective: 1) improving organizational effectiveness and work performance and 2) maximizing resources for improving the quality of APO services to member countries. Under the plan, the number of departments in the Secretariat will be reduced from six to the following four: Administration and Finance, Research and Planning, Industry, and Agriculture, eliminating Environment and Information and Public Relations. Among the reasons cited for this restructuring were: the small staff strength of the Secretariat of less than 50; a myriad of small departments that impedes better utilization of manpower resources as it does not allow for flexibility in staff deployment; a top-heavy organizational structure; and encumbrances to communication and coordination within the Secretariat under the current structure.

In his reference paper on the reform plan submitted to the Governing Body, the Secretary-General emphasized that the restructuring does not imply diminishing interest in Green Productivity or sacrificing the publication and IT programs. It essentially means integrating those two departments with others and not the discontinuation of their services. Staff members involved will be redeployed.

The Secretary-General's proposal on personnel policy has two aspects: Increasing staff mobility within the Secretariat through more transfers among departments and at all levels; and introducing an effective staff appraisal system enabling salary increments to be linked with performance. He sees this as an important step toward achieving a proper balance between administration and project costs.

Like all organizations, the APO has its own financial regulations and project regulations. However, they do not cover every possible contingency that may arise from the multitude of APO activities taking place across the length and breadth of Asia and the Pacific. This situation has given room for departments in the Secretariat to manage project finances in their own ways, a phenomenon often referred to as "silo thinking," making the effective monitoring of their activities difficult. The Secretary-General said that current financial procedures were being reviewed for greater clarity, efficiency, and accountability, adding that more needs to be done.



Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka

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"Dreams are renewable. No matter what our age or condition, there are still untapped possibilities within us and new beauty waiting to be born."

Dale E. Turner

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involved in a sloppy sales process was eliminating profitability and alienating customers.

Most of us are occasionally the victims of poor service. As customers, we do not like being taken for granted and not being appreciated. Inevitably we turn to another supplier. Remedies for poor service and poor sales management can include improved sales training, new methods of customer relationship management, improved attitude toward internal customers, and a better focus on quality assurance during the order invoicing and delivery process. Throughout the sales process, there should be a key dependency on teamwork and an understanding of the "pass-off" from one person in the process to another (internal customers). It is not much help to an organization to hire a "top-gun" salesperson if the support processes are in such disarray that the customers are turning to the competition for satisfaction. Very soon the top gun will be working with that competition for more job satisfaction and higher remuneration.

Good salespersons are treasures in any marketing organization. Here are some tips for professional sales staff:

- 1) Remember to put the customer first as there is no substitute for excellent customer service at all times.

- 2) Be honest and fast when responding to customer queries.
- 3) Make appropriate, disciplined use of IT systems and processes to support sales.
- 4) Develop a mindset/attitude that recognizes that everyone in the business is engaged in the sales process.
- 5) Forecast sales realistically so as not to commit the company to overordering supplies and/or resource services.
- 6) Build strong customer relationships to protect and grow your market share.
- 7) Try to remain ahead of trends and be innovative.
- 8) Be prepared to do some basic, quotidian tasks such as making appointments, maintaining customer records, packing, and sending and copying information.
- 9) Become your customers' key contact person and make yourself readily accessible. ☺

Richard Barton is the Managing Director of Business Improvement Advisory Services. Previously he was the Business Process and Quality Management Executive for IBM in Australia & New Zealand. Prior to that he was General Manager with the Australian Quality Council. He has had a long and close association with the APO since 1992. Mr. Barton writes this column regularly for the APO News.



p-TIPS

Outstanding in the field (Fuel efficiency on the farm)

Is there any end in sight to spiraling energy prices? Probably not. High fuel costs affect everyone in one form or another, and we owe it to future generations to conserve energy to the extent possible. Small farmers and ranchers are being especially hard hit as soaring gasoline prices eat up their profit margins. California has an ongoing Flex Your Power at the Pump campaign to encourage state residents to conserve fuel while saving money. The California Farm Bureau Federation (www.cfbf.com/issues/energy/flex.cfm) is an enthusiastic participant in that campaign and offers suggestions to reduce farm fuel consumption without sacrificing productivity.

- 1) Inflate tires to proper pressure. Overinflated tractor tires lower productivity and waste fuel, while underinflated ones increase wear.
- 2) Consider reduced tillage. Try reducing tillage or its intensity whenever possible or change to no-till cropping if fields permit.
- 3) Modify equipment, where applicable, to perform multiple operations in one pass. This reduces trips across the same field.
- 4) Use the appropriate-sized tractor for the load. Excess tractor capacity wastes fuel; too small a tractor for the load is also inefficient.
- 5) Stay on top of general tractor maintenance. Regular maintenance makes

all vehicles cleaner, safer, and more fuel efficient.

- 6) Paint on-farm fuel tanks a light color to reduce evaporation losses. This cost-effective measure yields long-term savings.
- 7) Minimize the time spent driving tractors or other field equipment on the road. Lighter, more fuel-efficient vehicles should transport crops to storage or markets.
- 8) Think about how you use your pickup truck. Heavy trucks have a crucial role on farms, but their power isn't needed on trips to town. Combine errands as much as possible. If a family member has a medical appointment, schedule vehicle service, buy farm supplies, and purchase inputs on the same day.
- 9) Remember that general driving tips enhance fuel efficiency. Use your heating and air-conditioning only when really necessary and don't exceed the speed limit.
- 10) For diesel-powered irrigation pumps, be sure to match the engine output horsepower with the horsepower demanded by the pump. Research shows that matching pump and engine rpms moves the most water per liter of fuel.

Productivity management tools for women entrepreneurs in agribusiness

Women are among the most important human resources of countries in Asia and the Pacific. However, the potential of this human resource pool is not optimally tapped for entrepreneurial activities due to sociocultural biases against women in many countries, especially in the more conservative rural societies of Asia and the Pacific. While the role of women in agribusiness is increasingly a major element in many rural development programs, in many APO member countries, women have yet to make significant progress in the establishment and operation of agribusinesses, which remain dominated by men. Most women are also unable to move up the ladder in the agribusiness sector because of difficulties in managing their multiple roles of managing households and business enterprises. The complex nature of some agribusiness enterprises demands time and good managerial skills. These were among the common observations of participants and experts at the recent training course on Productivity Management Tools for Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness conducted by the APO in cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, in Bali, 3–12 July. The aim of the course was to encourage women in agribusiness by providing knowledge and skills in the use of productivity management tools and techniques to enhance their entrepreneurial and managerial capacities.

Twenty women and five men from the public sector, private sector, academia, industry associations, and nongovernmental organizations attended. Four international experts from India, Japan, Malaysia, and the Philippines and two national experts gave presentations and led discussions on the various topics covered under the seven modules of the 10-day training course: 1) Concepts and principles of entrepreneurship in agribusiness; 2) Productivity and quality management in agribusiness; 3) Productivity and quality improvement tools and techniques; 4) Financial analysis tools and techniques; 5) Supply chain management for improving productivity; 6) Quality assurance systems and private quality standards; and 7) Designing and implementing company productivity improvement programs.



Examining vanilla beans at Bayu Jaya Kusuma

The course included several exercises involving application of the tools and techniques to practical problems. Participants also visited Bayu Jaya Kusuma, a family-owned and -operated company engaged in the processing and export of vanilla and coffee beans and in fresh vegetable marketing; and Giri Murya, a sweet potato processor and promoter of small enterprises among farmers using processed sweet potatoes as an anchor product. Course attendees performed rapid appraisals to recommend how the productivity of those firms could be enhanced. The two agribusiness companies demonstrated the feasibility of involving women in rural enterprise job creation. Participants recommended that the course be offered again so that more women could be trained to become successful agribusiness managers and entrepreneurs in APO member countries. 

COMMON SENSE TALK



“Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency.”

Natalie Goldberg

“Although there may be nothing new under the sun, what is old is new to us and so rich and astonishing that we never tire of it. If we do tire of it, if we lose our curiosity, we have lost something of infinite value, because to a high degree it is curiosity that gives meaning and savor to life.”

Robertson Davies

“If you don’t make mistakes, you aren’t really trying.”

Coleman Hawkings

“Anyone who thinks it won’t be difficult for a woman to get elected president of the United States should go home, take a nap, wake up refreshed, and think again.”

Bob Herbert

“If you don’t like the superstores, it is easy enough to expand your reading horizons through other means. Spend more time in public libraries, which offer many of the features of indie bookshops, including informed staff, diversity, and offbeat titles. Of course, public libraries aren’t exactly atmospherically ‘cool.’ The clientele is often young children, women over 40, and retired men. I visit five public libraries on a regular basis and each one delivers the goods.”

Tyler Cowen

“Confidence is preparation. Everything else is beyond your control.”

Richard Kline

“Dreams are renewable. No matter what our age or condition, there are still untapped possibilities within us and new beauty waiting to be born.”

Dale E. Turner

“The excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value.”

Charles Dudley Warner

The Internet as a productivity tool for NPOs

National productivity organizations (NPOs) in APO member countries play a vital role in promoting productivity by launching productivity campaigns, providing training and consultancy services, and conducting research. They also act as the main collaborators in implementing APO activities. Thus, the APO pays serious attention to enhancing the productivity of NPOs to enable them to deliver their services more efficiently and effectively.

The Internet has now become a powerful tool that can be used for most NPO activities. However, information technology (IT) is developing at a rapid pace, leading to continuous widening of Internet applications. The level of Internet utilization in NPOs varies significantly, however, due to the digital divide that should be bridged as quickly as possible. One main constraint is the lack of relevant knowledge and skills of the staff of some NPOs. In this situation, the APO organized the workshop on The Internet as a Productivity Tool for NPOs in Jakarta, Indonesia, 10–14 July 2006, for 18 participants from 13 APO member countries.

The main objective of the workshop was to enhance the capabilities of NPOs to use the Internet as a productivity tool for their advisory, consultancy, and training purposes. The methodology adopted was presentations, interactive classroom training, experience sharing through group discussions, and site visits. Resource speakers from India, Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand gave presentations and were involved in discussions. One presentation was delivered from Tokyo through the Internet which explained how the APO Secretariat uses the Internet in delivering its services. Country presentations revealed the main activities of participating NPOs, how they use the Internet in those activities, expansions planned for implementation in the near future, and constraints they encounter. In addition, the examples of Thailand and India were presented to learn from and benchmark against. It was revealed that a few NPOs do not yet have their own Web sites and broadband connectivity and their IT facilities are limited to several computers and a dial-up connection allowing e-mail communication, whereas some others are fully equipped and utilize the Internet in almost all their activities.

The group of enthusiastic participants developed such close relationships that some from NPOs successfully using the Internet expressed willingness to help weaker NPOs in their future endeavors to expand Internet utilization. The group-

APO Secretariat Reform Plan (Continued from page 1)

The Governing Body gave the Secretary-General a unanimous mandate for his Secretariat Reform Plan. APO Director for Japan Tadao Chino commended the Secretary-General for his leadership in undertaking reform, which he recognized would need time to take effect. However, a start would have to be made. He added that Japan fully supported the reform plan of the Secretary-General. Adding her support, APO Director for the Philippines Margarita R. Songco commented that undertaking reforms would not be easy and might encounter resistance. Despite this, she said that it would be necessary to continue with the reform initiative. APO Director for Thailand Chakramon Phasukavanich commented that the drafting of the plan was the easy part. The most important thing was its implementation. He called on the Governing Body to give its full support to the Secretary-General in carrying out the reforms. ☺



Participants preparing the group report

ing for discussions was based on the present level of Internet utilization after the country presentations. The group discussions were facilitated by the resource persons and led to the development of an action plan with deadlines for implementation. Some of the activities identified for implementation were:

- Creation of a Web site. Only a few NPOs do not have their own Web sites. Some of them have already designed a site and are ready to launch it. Since economical options to launch and maintain a Web site were pointed out during the discussions, the participants from NPOs without Web sites became more positive.
- Introduction of instant messaging systems for efficient communication and monitoring projects. The staff of some NPOs are already using such systems and find them efficient.
- Minimizing paperwork to achieve a paperless office. Most NPOs are already moving in this direction, although achievements vary.
- Implementation of e-learning projects. Training programs using various types of e-learning methodologies are currently offered by some. The participants from those NPOs expressed their willingness to share English-language training materials with others on a reciprocal basis.
- Establishment of best practice databases for benchmarking. Some NPOs have already developed those databases and shared their experience with others.
- Introduction of Web-based research. Currently, some NPOs regularly access various databases on the Internet for information gathering in their research activities, while research is not a priority area for others.
- Setting up and maintaining information databases within NPOs for financial and project management. Intranets for process control using management tools such as the balanced scorecard are in use at certain NPOs.
- Setting up of e-libraries. A small collection of e-books is available from a few NPOs. Some have also set up links to access APO e-books.

The deadlines for making full use of the Internet in NPO activities range from six months to two or three years depending on the availability of resources. Most participants indicated financial constraints and lack of government support as barriers to the expansion of Internet utilization. The high cost of and/or unreliable connectivity were also pointed out as problems in some member countries. ☺

Social productivity: Learning from examples of corporate social responsibility in Japan

A seminar on Practical Management for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was organized in Tokyo, 26–30 June, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development. Nineteen participants from 15 APO member countries and five self-sponsored observers attended the seminar to investigate how Japanese companies fulfill CSR.

On the first day, Senior Analyst Mariko Kawaguchi of Daiwa Institute of Research, Ltd. gave an overview of CSR to provide a common understanding to the participants and lay the groundwork for subsequent field visits. As a unique attempt in the area of CSR, Chief Executive Officer Eriko Yamaguchi, Motherhouse Company Ltd., introduced her business in Bangladesh producing and importing jute bags. Her fair-trade business contributes not only to local employment generation but also to improving the quality of jute products based on the skills of local people.

On the second day, General-Manager and Corporate Citizenship Office Manager, CSR Department, Hiroaki Yoshizawa explained how Fuji Xerox started operating an international integrated recycling system to collect its own products in the Asia-Pacific region and to disassemble and separate them all for recycling at the Fuji Xerox Eco-Manufacturing Co., Ltd. in Thailand. The aim is to achieve 100% recycling at its own overseas plants. In the afternoon, the participants visited a factory of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. in Kawasaki to observe its comprehensive wastewater treatment system. Associate General Manager, Environment & CSR Department, CSR Division, Nobuyuki Sugimoto and his team described various CSR-related activities of the Ajinomoto group from environmental concerns to communication with stakeholders. The third day of the seminar was spent visiting the AEON Eco-Store: Environmentally Conscious Shopping Center in Chiba prefecture. Innovations in the Eco-Store include solar power generation and comprehensive energy-saving system, and TOPVALU green purchasing.

Site visits on the fourth day focused on the CSR activities initiated by SMEs. At



Comprehensive wastewater treatment system demonstrated at a factory of Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Beni San Dyeing Co. Ltd., 400 employees converted its old factory into a theater for art groups and the local community, in an example of *mecenat* (corporate support for arts and culture). U's Corporation, with 11 employees, offers an innovative business model by recycling edible cooking oil into vegetable diesel fuel as an alternative biofuel for light oil. The company contributes to society through its environmentally sustainable business based on years of experience in the oil and fat industry.

On the final day of the seminar, the participants summarized what they had learned from the Japanese examples and generated ideas on how they could initiate CSR activities under the conditions in their own countries. 🌱

Mission from Vietnam visits Japan

A three-member mission from Vietnam visited Japan on 22 and 23 June under the APO Bilateral Cooperation between National Productivity Organizations Program to learn about the productivity movement in Japan and to be updated on APO programs. The mission members were: Anh Tuan Nguyen, APO Liaison Officer for Vietnam and Managing Director, Vietnam Productivity Centre; Ngoc Tuan Nguyen, Director, Planning and Finance Department, Directorate for Standards and Quality (STAMEQ); and Thi Cam Nhung Le, Adviser to Director, Quality Assurance and Testing Centre 3.

On the first day, the mission visited the APO Secretariat in Tokyo to pay a courtesy call on APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka and receive briefings by APO departmental directors on APO activities. Later in the day, the mission members went to the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) to make a courtesy visit to JPC-SED President Tsuneaki Taniguchi. They then heard a presentation on the development of the productivity movement in Japan and roles of the JPC-SED by its International Cooperation Department.



A. T. Nguyen, N. T. Nguyen, and T. C. N. Le receiving briefings on APO activities

The second day was also spent at the JPC-SED, where the mission had the opportunity for more in-depth investigation of its activities, such as management consultancy, training for management capacity development, and productivity research.



p-Experts deputed by the APO

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Dr. Mina T. Gabor, President, Philippine Small and Medium Business Development Foundation, and **Ms. Supaporn Prach-Umpai**, Thailand, were deputed as resource persons for the multi-country study mission on Agro-tourism for Enhancing Business Opportunities in Rural Areas, 20–27 June 2006.

Mr. Robert J. Osterhoff, Executive, Xerox Corporation, USA, was deputed as resource person for the National Industrial Competitiveness and International Benchmarking Project, “Global Best Practice Forum,” 10–14 July 2006.

Dr. Georges Haour, Professor of Technology and Innovation Management, International Institute for Management Development, Switzerland, was deputed as chief expert, and **Mr. Yoshinobu Kato**, Project Manager, Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, Japan, and **Dr. Wong Poh Kam**, Associate Professor, Business School and Director, Entrepreneurship Center, National University of Singapore, were deputed as experts for the study meeting on Creative Entrepreneurship: Technological Innovation, 11–14 July 2006.

APO/NPO update

Additional Telephone Number of NPO for Indonesia

The NPO for Indonesia has a new telephone number in addition to the current numbers: 62-21-5226732

New APO Alternate Director/NPO Head for the Philippines

Mr. Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr., President, Development Academy of the Philippines, was appointed the new APO Alternate Director/NPO Head for the Philippines, w.e.f. 1 June 2006.

New Liaison Officer for Thailand

Dr. Boondee Boonyakidj, Advisor to Executive Director, Thailand Productivity Institute, was appointed the new APO Liaison Officer for Thailand, w.e.f. 8 June 2006.
Phone: 662-619-5500, ext. 451 or 455 (for private secretary)
Fax: 662-619-8099
e-Mail: liaison@ftpi.or.th

FIJI

Mr. Richard Dowse, Dowse Quality Consulting, and **Mr. David Sikorski**, Victoria State Manager, SAI Global Business Excellence Solutions, Australia, were deputed as technical experts for the training course on Fiji Business Excellence Awards Annual Evaluators’ Training, 19–23 June 2006.

INDONESIA

Dr. Joseph S. Lee, Professor, Institute of Human Resource Management, National Central University, Republic of China, **Dr. Koji Okubayashi**, Professor, Faculty of Business Administration and Information, Setsunan University, Japan, and **Dr. Tan Khee Giap**, Associate Professor of Banking and Finance, Nanyang Business School, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, were deputed as resource persons for the study meeting on Labor Market Information, 3–6 July 2006.

Mr. Shigeki Tsuchiya, Counselor, International Department, Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development, **Mr. Zahid Bin Ismail**, Manager, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, and **Dr. Mina T. Gabor**, President, Philippine Small and Medium Business Development Foundation, were deputed as resource persons for the training course on Productivity Management Tools for Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness, 3–12 July 2006.

Ms. S. Bhargavan, India, **Mr. Kenji Kohga**, Partner, Strategy and Change Services, IBM Business Consulting Services KK, Japan, and **Dr. Phanit Laosirirat**, Executive-Director, Thailand Productivity Institute, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on the Internet as a Productivity Tool for NPOs, 10–14 July 2006.

PHILIPPINES

Mr. Yong Kok Seng, Managing Director, QMC Resource Centre Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia, was deputed as technical expert for the project on Development of a Certification Program for Quality Managers, 20 June–8 July 2006.

Mr. Yoshio Hirayama, Director, TechnoSoft Co., Ltd., Japan, and **Prof. Det Wattanachaiyingcharoen**, Faculty of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Naresuan University, Thailand, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Green Productivity and Solid Waste Management, 26–30 June 2006.

Program calendar

October

Republic of China

Workshop on Green Procurement and Green Supply Chains, 24–27 October 2006.

India

Seminar on Quality Management in Food-processing Small and Medium Enterprises with Special Emphasis on Meat Processing, 10–16 October 2006.

Japan

Multi-country Study Mission on Best Cases of Niche Agricultural Markets, 31 October–7 November 2006.

Republic of Korea

Workshop on Low-cost Automation, 17–20 October 2006.

Lao PDR

Seminar on Rural Life Improvement for Community Development, 30 October–3 November 2006.

Mongolia

Forum on Development of NPOs, 3–6 October 2006.

Philippines

Workshop on Development of Productivity Specialists, 9–27 October 2006.

Singapore

Study Meeting on Enhancing Enterprises’ Competitiveness through Technology Innovation, 3–5 October 2006.

Web-based

Training Course on Social Accountability and Corporate Social Responsibility, 2 October–2 November 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.

SINGAPORE

Mr. Stephen Lam, Executive Director, Tiptop Consultants Ltd, Hong Kong, was deputed as expert for “Creating a Culture of Service Workshops—A Total Service Management Approach,” 10–12 July 2006.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Koh Kasuga, Consultant, Japan, was deputed as resource person to undertake the design and conduct of the National Productivity Development Plan for Sri Lanka (Phase I), “Preparations for Productivity Movement Plans by the National Productivity Secretariat,” 26–29 June 2006.

Roundtable Conference for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa

The APO received partnership proposals both from the National Productivity Institute (NPI) of South Africa and the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA) in March 2005. PAPA is a loose alliance of NPOs and other organizations that share a common aspiration for and interest in productivity promotion in Africa. At present, eight NPOs are PAPA members.

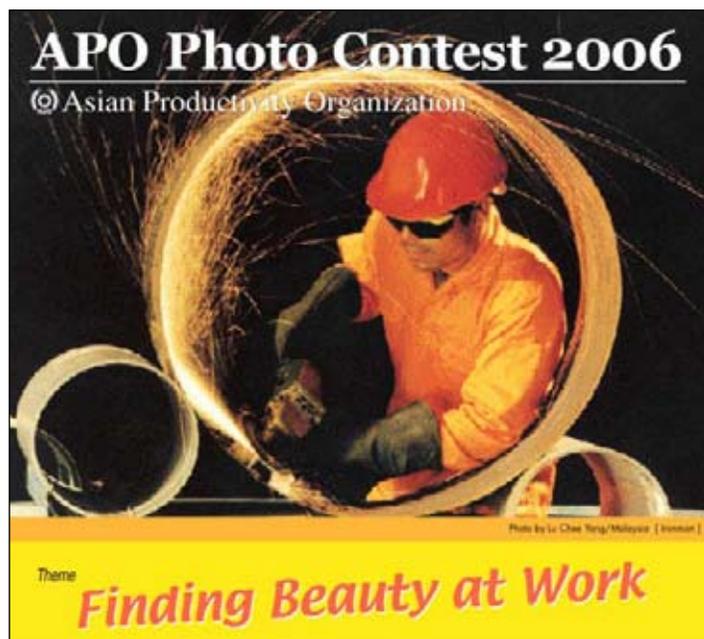
In April 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, in his address to the Asia-Africa Summit held in Indonesia, mentioned that Japan would provide assistance to transfer the Asian experience in the productivity movement to Africa. The APO was selected as one of the international agencies to help in this cause, with a special fund from the Japanese government. In September 2005, the APO sent a fact-finding mission to three African countries to investigate the status of their productivity movements and explore the possibility of establishing an alliance with them. A series of initiatives under the plan to transfer productivity experience has led the APO to organize a Roundtable Conference for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa in cooperation with PAPA. The roundtable conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel, Sandton, South Africa, 28 to 31 August 2006. More than 40 productivity stakeholders such as NPO heads, senior government officials, CEOs of business organizations, and trade union leaders from seven PAPA members have been invited to take part. The



Dr. Dladla during the preparatory meeting with APO Secretariat staff

PAPA members are Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. A total of seven resource persons will be deputed from APO member countries, all of whom are current or former NPO Heads or senior officers. The APO Secretariat will be represented by Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka and staff.

The roundtable conference will consist of two parts. The first two days will be devoted to the sharing of Asian experiences by resource persons; and the final two days, which are crucial to make the APO's African Program sustainable, will be spent on the development of productivity master plans that should provide clear guidelines and roadmaps for each participating NPO to follow in promoting the national productivity movement. Dr. Yvonne Dladla, Executive Director of the NPI and concurrently Secretary General of PAPA, visited Tokyo in mid-July for discussions with Secretariat staff in preparation for the roundtable conference. ☺



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. 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.

Boosting private-sector participation

A key concern of the APO has been that in its seminars, training courses, and multi-country study missions, generally termed training-oriented projects, only a small percentage of the participants are from the private sector. This is considered undesirable as the private sector is a key player in any national productivity movement. The APO was keen to boost private-sector participation in all its projects, particularly those mentioned above. Feedback from member countries indicated that a major hindrance was the cost of airfares, which private-sector participants must bear themselves. At the recent APO Governing Body Meeting held in Seoul, on the suggestion of the APO Secretariat, it was decided to provide airfares and waive participating country expenses payment for all private-sector participants from the following countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Nepal. For the remaining APO member countries, this benefit will only be extended to participants from private-sector SMEs. The only APO project type not covered by this new ruling, which took effect from 7 July 2006, is individual country study missions for which all participants must bear their own airfares.