



APO *news*

Historic productivity RTC in Africa

The APO, in collaboration with the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA), organized the first Roundtable Conference (RTC) for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa, Sandton, South Africa, 28–31 August 2006. It was attended by 26 delegates from Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. The opening ceremony was graced by about 100 guests, including South African Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana and APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka. The APO deputed seven resource persons from its member countries to share the Asian experience. The RTC was supported by a financial grant from Japan.

APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, in his opening address, expressed the hope that the RTC would provide timely momentum for enhancing economic development through higher productivity in the participating African countries and an opportunity for PAPA to play an even greater role with renewed support from its members. He said that changing mindsets is what the productivity movement is all about: “To establish the belief that we can change past practices, do better, and compete with the best in the world is an essential ingredient for achieving sustained economic development.” The Secretary-General attributed the successful productivity movements in APO member countries to the role of the national productivity organizations, commitment of government, and involvement of all sectors of society, especially labor and business, noting that the success of the APO as the only regional organization active in the field of productivity was due to: “First, the financial commitment of member countries is a *sine qua non* to make a multilateral organization viable and sustainable. Second, the existence of a core country or countries willing to play a leadership role is crucial to keep momentum for organizational growth. And third, the development of a network of cooperation among member countries, with the more advanced member countries acting as mentors to the less advanced ones, is of particular value to narrow the productivity gap between them.” (See page 2 for a summary of the Secretary-General’s address.)

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RTC attendees

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“Clarity is the preoccupation of the effective leader. If you do nothing else as a leader, be clear.”

Marcus Buckingham

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Secretary-General's address at the Roundtable Conference for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa

The following is an abridged version of the address given by APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka at the opening of the Roundtable Conference for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa on 28 August.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here in the Republic of South Africa to attend the Roundtable Conference (RTC) for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa, which the Asian Productivity Organization has the honor of sponsoring, and to address such distinguished guests and participants from Africa and Asia. It is my sincere hope that this conference will provide timely momentum for enhancing economic development through higher productivity in the participating African countries. It is also my hope that the conference will allow PAPA to play an even greater role on the African continent with renewed support from its members.

Sometime ago, I saw on television an interview with Mr. Carlos Ghosn, President and CEO of Nissan Motor Company, a leading Japanese automaker. Mr. Ghosn was responsible for the successful turnaround of the company, from one that was losing money to a highly competitive enterprise in the global market. When asked about the most difficult obstacle that stood in the way of achieving this, he answered that it was not a lack of funds or other resources but a lack of realization on the part of his staff that things could be changed. Until they realized that the old, established way was not the only way to do business, it was not possible for him to introduce any reform measures. However, once that mindset had changed, other things gradually fell into place.

I believe that changing mindsets is what the productivity movement is all about. To establish the belief that we can change past practices, do better, and compete with the best in the world is an essential ingredient for achieving sustained economic development. The fact that Asia has achieved the highest economic growth rates in the world in the last half-century is not unrelated to the existence of many vibrant national productivity organizations (NPOs) in the Asia-Pacific region and the



Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka (file photo)

activities of the APO, the only intergovernmental regional organization actively promoting the cause of productivity.

The NPOs occupy a pivotal position in the productivity movement, guiding, coordinating, and orchestrating other stakeholders. For NPOs to perform such functions, they must enjoy a high degree of autonomy, support, and flexibility. The government has a crucial role to play in raising awareness about productivity among its people and industry and nurturing their positive attitude toward productivity improvement. The effectiveness and sustainability of a productivity movement depends on the extent to which the government commits itself to it because the productivity movement calls for considerable financial outlays, and in many countries only the government can provide funding on a regular and sustained basis. Productivity is neither a monopoly of the NPO nor that of the government but cuts across all sectors and embraces all actors and layers of society. Toward that end, the NPO must ensure that it secures the widest representation and participation, including labor and business.

The APO's productivity journey may offer valuable lessons to other like-minded organizations. First, the financial commitment of member countries is a *sine qua non* to make a multilateral organization viable and sustainable. Second, the existence of a

core country or countries willing to play a leadership role is crucial to keep momentum for organizational growth. And third, the development of a network of cooperation among member countries, with the more advanced member countries acting as mentors to the less advanced ones, is of particular value to narrow the productivity gap between them.

The participation of the experienced resource persons from APO member countries in this conference is clear evidence of the mutual cooperation that is the APO's bedrock spirit. Without the concerted effort, commitment, and action of people like them, the APO could not have been as effective as it is today. It is our sincere wish that all the distinguished participants who are present here today at this RTC will join hands, hearts, and minds for the sake of productivity improvement in the African region.

I have noted the excellent arrangements made for the conference by the host organizations, the National Productivity Institute of South Africa and PAPA. I want to commend the leadership exercised by Dr. Yvonne Dladla and Mr. Thembo Lebang and express my deepest appreciation to Minister of Labour Membathisi Mdladlana of the Republic of South Africa for his gracious presence. My special thanks go to Mr. Nelson Mandela for sending his video message. Nothing is more encouraging than the blessing of the most respected living statesman in the entire world. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my heartiest congratulations to participants from Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia, and the Republic of South Africa for their timely decision and commitment to revitalize the productivity movement in their respective countries.

I look forward to the outcome of this conference and hope that the results derived in the form of productivity master plans will be tangible and action oriented with clear guidelines and roadmaps for the participating NPOs and PAPA. Last but not least, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Japanese government for the financial support to implement this RTC.

Nelson Mandela's message to the African RTC

I constantly remain amazed, impressed, and appreciated when approached to continue speaking and making speeches on matters like the one today. I have repeatedly announced my retirement from public life and expressed my wish to remain retired. Friends, however, seem to continue disbelieving me in this regard and they pay me the compliment of valuing my comments and remarks. For this, I thank all of you present at this occasion where delegates from Africa and Asia, together with others, meet in a common purpose.



Nelson Mandela in his video message

At my age, I no longer need to put on pretenses and shall not pretend to you that I have any expertise, knowledge, or advice about productivity. You, after all, are the experts meeting to advance the cause of productivity as a driver of successful economies and societies. What I can say, with great certainty, is that this forum of cooperation between institutions and persons

from our respective continents provides the springboard for development and advances on both continents and regions. It is in this taking of hands and working together that humankind shall advance and progress in our century.

People and leaders in Africa have acknowledged that the progress on our continent demands that we take responsibility for our fate. This includes responsibility for the enhancement of productivity. This conference, as I understand it, will through partnership strengthen the drive toward greater productivity. I wish delegates well over

the next four days with their deliberations on promoting the productivity movement in Africa. I am certain that this will enhance the quality of life of all our people in Africa. I have faith in human progress, and productivity in all spheres of human activity is certainly at the heart of that progress. I thank you.

Historic productivity RTC (Continued from page 1)


PAPA President Thembo Lebang, in welcoming delegates and guests to the inaugural session, remarked that the RTC “will go down in the history of Africa as the beginning of a concerted effort by Africa and its allies to journey into competitiveness and the adoption of a culture of excellence.” The challenge, he added, was to ensure that these efforts would bear quality fruits whose sweetness would be tasted in each African household. In appealing to PAPA’s strategic partners to join in this productivity journey, he said that PAPA needed a full-time secretariat to implement its productivity agenda and that a great difference could be made by a grant to sponsor it.

A high point of the opening ceremony was a cameo appearance in a video message by former South African President Nelson Mandela. Mandela described the RTC as a forum of cooperation between institutions and persons from the African and Asian continents providing a springboard for development and advances on both continents and regions. “It is in this taking of hands and working together that humankind shall advance and progress in our century.” He further said that the people and leaders in Africa acknowledge that the progress of the African continent demands that they take responsibility for their fate, including responsibility for the enhancement of productivity. “I have faith in human progress, and productivity in all spheres of human activity is certainly at the heart of that progress,” he added. (See above for the full text of Mandela’s message.)

The keynote address was delivered by South African Labour Minister Memphathi Mdladlana. He recounted that the productivity agenda in the Southern Africa region had been launched in 1998. Since then, South Africa has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the skills of its workforce, workplace productivity, and standard of living of its people. The core concern, he pointed out, was to reduce unemployment and poverty and create a solid foundation for a productive nation. He said that the South African government

wanted to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014. Achieving economic efficiency and greater productivity has acquired a new sense of urgency, and the Labour Ministry, in support of the National Productivity Institute headed by Executive Director Dr. Yvonne Dladla, has taken on this challenge with renewed vigor and excitement.

“We host this conference fully cognizant of the challenges we face as government leaders to uplift the lives of our people and the potential that productivity has in lifting our people out of the abyss of all the many social ills,” Minister Mdladlana said, while expressing the hope that the RTC would enable Africa to learn and share in the productivity gains experienced by most Asian countries, which today are the front-runners in world competitiveness. “Their achievements provide and inspire us with compelling reasons to follow the same model that has seen a change in the economies of these countries. It is our belief that in creating partnerships with our Asian counterparts through sharing their productivity experiences, the productivity movement in Africa will be enhanced.” He concluded that a vibrant productivity movement was essential for the stable growth and development of Africa and declared: “Let us join hands in becoming the champions of productivity.”

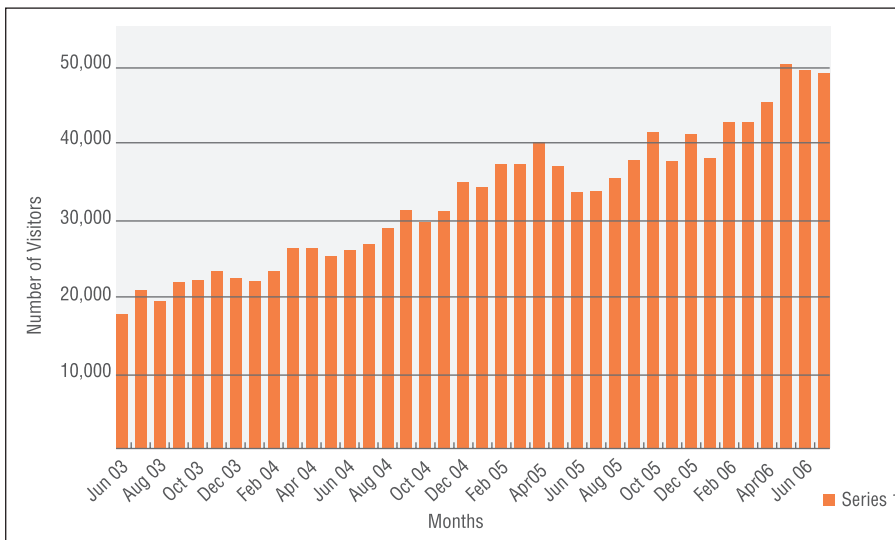
The seven resource persons deputed by the APO to share the Asian experience in productivity promotion were Director-General Dato’ Nik Zainiah Nik Abdul Rahman, National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia; Executive Director Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Thailand Productivity Institute; former Chief Saquib Mohyuddin, National Productivity Organisation, Pakistan; former Managing Director Nguyen Thi Bich Hang, Vietnam Productivity Centre; Director for International Department Yasuhiko Inoue, Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development; Principal Consultant Low Choo Tuck, Eunison Network Pte. Ltd., Singapore; and Prof. Akira Goshi, Nihon University, Japan. 

APO Web site overview

The Internet has already established itself as a solid platform not only for information dissemination but also for networking. The growth of e-commerce in recent years clearly shows the power of this technology to reach millions of customers in the most efficient and effective way.

Recognizing the importance of the Internet in reaching our stakeholders and partners, the APO has been trying to use it as much as possible. The APO site has four main purposes: informing the general public about the APO and its activities; interacting with NPOs, experts, and participants for better project implementation and making specific project-related information available; disseminating outcomes of APO research, surveys, and study meetings in the form of e-books and e-reports; and conducting e-learning courses. The APO has made its Web site into a gateway for knowledge dissemination, interactions with and among participants, and e-learning activities. With the expansion of these activities, the number of visitors attracted to the APO Web site is showing a steady upward trend.

The figure shows the total number of visitors to our site by month, which has been hovering between 40,000 and 50,000. In July this year, total hits were 750,110.



Analysis of the visitors shows that interactive services and e-books are the major reasons for visiting the APO Web site. In July 2006, 22.8% of total hits accessed interactive services including the APOnet, a virtual document depository extranet component of the site; e-learning; e-forum; etc. In the same month, 22.7% of visitors downloaded various e-books and e-reports. *Six Sigma for Quality and Productivity Promotion, Processing and Utilization of Legumes, and Greening on the Go* were the most popular e-books during July. Project notifications, the participants' guide, and APO bio-data forms were also frequent downloads.

Analysis also shows that in July about 16% of visitors accessed the site through a referral by various search engines, with Google at the top of the referral list.

Although Internet Explorer dominates the browser world (more than 90% according to one estimate), our analysis shows that, surprisingly, Netscape Browser is more popular among APO site visitors. In terms of operating systems, Windows is the most commonly used. It was noticeable that Windows 2000 is still dominant among users and even Windows 98 is used by about 8% of visitors. This information is kept in mind when designing or revamping the site.

The Internet is becoming ubiquitous in every part of the world. As it has already become part of the daily life of many productivity practitioners, the APO will continue to harness this wonderful technology for better and more cost-effective delivery of its services to its stakeholders and clients.

COMMON SENSE TALK



"Clarity is the preoccupation of the effective leader. If you do nothing else as a leader, be clear."

Marcus Buckingham

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."

Colin Powell

"One measure of friendship consists not in the number of things friends can discuss, but in the number of things they need no longer mention."

Clifton Fadiman

"When you write down your ideas, you automatically focus your full attention on them. Few if any of us can write one thought and think another at the same time. Thus a pencil and paper make excellent concentration tools."

Michael LeBoeuf

"Would you want to do business with a person who was 99% honest?"

Sydney Madwed

"Most creative work is a process of people passing ideas and inspiration from the past into the future and adding their own creativity along the way."

Jochi Ito

"I have a very simplistic concept for evaluating risk. I first analyze the downside. What's the worst thing that can happen if the project or enterprise fails? How much money can be lost? Image destroyed? Careers shattered? Empires lost? And if the analysis isn't too grim, we proceed."

Jay Chiat

"Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people."

Harry Emerson Fosdick

"The sentiment of justice is so natural and so universally acquired by all mankind that it seems to be independent of all law, all party, all religion."

Voltaire

Best practices in rural entrepreneurship development

Entrepreneurs are not born, but are made. Entrepreneurial competencies and skills can be learned and developed, but an enabling environment plays a crucial role in this process and is necessary for entrepreneurs to grow and survive in the increasingly competitive business environment. These were some of the views of the participants and experts in the recently concluded multi-country study mission on Best Practices in Rural Entrepreneurship Development organized by the APO in cooperation with the National Productivity Corporation of Malaysia, 7–11 August. Twenty participants from 14 countries, three international experts from India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and five national experts from Malaysia were involved in the mission.

Participants noted that in almost all countries in the region entrepreneurship is now recognized as an effective approach in addressing unemployment and underemployment, especially in developing countries. Thus, the promotion of entrepreneurship development has become an essential feature in the national development plans of most countries, and those that have adopted this strategy earlier than others are now reaping some success. Malaysia is an example of how an effective entrepreneurship development strategy can translate into employment generation, poverty alleviation, and reductions in disparities in opportunities and the quality of life of urban and rural people. A clear indication of that success is the low unemployment rates of barely 3% over the last decade and overall reduction in poverty from 7.5% in 1999 to 5% in 2005. This is a notable achievement when considering that in 1970, 52% of the population was living below the poverty line. The success was based on the holistic approach pursued by the Malaysian government in its rural development strategies and the importance it placed on the development of entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas.

Malaysia is the only country in Asia in which a Ministry of Entrepreneur Development was created specifically to cater to the needs of entrepreneurs and development of SMEs. In 2004, it was renamed the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development. It is responsible for developing quality entrepreneurs, encouraging their participation in new growth sectors, and mobilizing the cooperative movement as the nation's third engine of growth. Comprehensive programs on human resources development, business development, and viable financing schemes were developed and a well-coordinated institutional infrastructure involving various government agencies was established.


Participants also recognized the importance of incubators in attempts to foster entrepreneurs and new enterprises. Professor Reuel K. Vitucio, Vice President for Business Development of STI Education Service Groups in the Philippines, and one of the resource persons, emphasized that in the initial stage most entrepreneurs need to be assisted and nurtured through an incubation program. Incubators, whether sponsored by a government or the private sector, play a critical role in the life of new entrepreneurs. When young entrepreneurs are hatched, not all can be expected to survive on their own but must be nurtured, guided, and supported until they can fly on their own. However, the incubation period should be well defined at the outset, since it would be unhealthy for a business enterprise to remain dependent on government support over the long term. This is a pitfall of many governments that take an overprotective stance toward domestic enterprises.



Appreciating the delicate handiwork of jewelry and accessories at Dór Rue Sdn. Bhd.

Factors affecting the development of women entrepreneurs were also dissected. It was pointed out that entrepreneurship among women is affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors are made up of women's motivation, goals, risk-taking ability, and competencies that make them entrepreneurial. The extrinsic factors are social, cultural, and environmental factors that can facilitate or restrict development as entrepreneurs. Resource person Dr. Rashmi Singh, Senior Scientist, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, noted that in some Asian countries, especially South Asia, women must surmount tremendous odds to succeed as entrepreneurs. While there have been efforts to mainstream women's participation in entrepreneurship, much remains to be done for women to enjoy equal opportunity to realize their entrepreneurial potential.

The topics covered by the experts included: Rural entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific region: Issues of competitiveness and sustainability; Rural entrepreneurship: Essential preconditions for success; Microcredit and microfinance support systems for entrepreneurship development; Business incubators and rural enterprise development; Building entrepreneurial communities in rural areas; Women's participation in entrepreneurship development; Issues and challenges for family-owned and -operated agribusiness enterprises; and Rural entrepreneurship best practices projects: Selected case studies of successful agricultural enterprises in Malaysia.

Participants visited Dór Rue Sdn. Bhd. in Taman Sri Batu Caves, Selangor Darul Ehsan. The family-owned corporation produces jewelry and accessories. Started by Hanizah Haji Zainuddin in 1987 with two employees, it now has 11 full-time employees and provides training to numerous neighborhood women who do piecework for the company in their homes. The company has also served as an internship workshop for students wanting to learn the craft. Participants also visited the Institute for Rural Advancement in Selangor Darul Ehsan, a training center under the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, which serves as a venue for local and international training in entrepreneurship. 

Use of biomass in industrial boilers in the Mekong region

In view of increasing oil prices, biomass has been emerging as an important alternative energy source in Asia. Mekong region countries, which are predominantly agriculture based, produce abundant quantities of biomass and there is huge potential to tap this energy source. A regional training workshop, held 17–21 July with 17 delegates in Bangkok, was organized by the APO and Thailand Productivity Institute as part of a project sponsored by the ASEAN Foundation for the promotion of biomass use in industrial boilers in place of fossil fuels in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Lao PDR, and Myanmar. Two experts from Japan and Malaysia who were part of preparatory missions for preliminary assessments of biomass boilers in those countries in March 2006 were deputed to coordinate discussions and train participants.

The workshop emphasized that it is important for small and medium-scale industries (SMIs) to switch to biomass-based boilers, which are cost-effective and stabilize CO₂ emissions. Rice husk, corn waste, palm waste, wood chips, bagasse, sugarcane waste, wood waste, and organic solid waste are the major types of biomass produced in Mekong region countries. There are various technology options for the use of biomass, such as direct combustion, gasification, fermentation, and anaerobic digestion, to produce energy. It can also be processed and converted into pellets, called refuse-derived fuel, to feed into boilers. The effective heating value of biomass depends upon its type and water content, but ranges from 5 to 20 MJ/kg.

SMIs in the Mekong region mainly use fire-tube and water-tube boilers and these can be easily retrofitted into biomass boilers. However, depending upon boiler configuration, such retrofitting may result in a capacity reduction as great as 50%. Despite the reduction, biomass boilers are more cost-effective due to the availability of biomass at significantly cheaper rates than fossil fuels. The cost economics estimated as group work by the participants, at variable and fixed costs, showed a favorable internal rate of return, indicating the economic feasibility of biomass boiler use.


In the workshop, problems that can limit the use of biomass were identified and discussed. They included constant year-round availability of specific biomass, transportation of biomass, requisite storage space, and availability of small-capacity



Observing a biomass boiler prototype at M/s Thai K Boiler

biomass boilers and retrofitting expertise. An integrated approach by the government and private sector is thus required to develop policy measures and infrastructure, respectively.

During the workshop, a field visit was organized to M/s Thai K Boiler, which manufactures biomass boilers and has retrofitting capabilities. The field visit demonstrated the simplicity of biomass boilers, and participants were subsequently able to observe one in operation at M/s P M Textile Company. That company retrofitted its oil-fired boiler into a biomass boiler and achieved significant cost savings using palm nut shells as a fuel source.

A basic training manual on biomass boilers developed by the experts was examined during the workshop to finalize it. This will be followed by the creation of a Web-based portal and the organization of national workshops in each participating country to conclude this project. 

Better access to labor market information

Recruitment or placement of workers in the right jobs and positions according to their competence, experience, and interests has a direct bearing on the productivity of an enterprise. Given the speed at which businesses are changing and intense competition in today's economy, labor market information providers can offer many useful services to help enterprises find the right people for the right jobs.

The APO and Indonesia through the Directorate of Productivity, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia, jointly organized a study meeting on Labor Market Information in Denpasar, 3–6 July. Twenty-five participants from 14 member countries were in attendance, along with three APO-deputed and two local resource persons. The inaugural session was jointly held with that of the training course on Productivity Management Tools for Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness. Indonesian Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Erman Soeparno gave the opening address to launch both.

Among the labor market information-related issues faced by member countries

are the rapidly aging population in most developed countries, declining trend in the male labor force participation rate and increasing trend for the female rate, foreign workers as a major source of both highly skilled and low-skilled labor, and imbalance in the supply of and demand for labor. Informal channels remain the most popular sources of labor market information for both employers and job seekers, although formal channels are becoming more important. Internet recruiting will revolutionize labor market information systems in the near future.

It was pointed out that governments should make the Internet accessible to the less educated, older workers, women, and citizens in rural and remote areas, in addition to collecting and disseminating accurate labor market information so that policymakers can engage in manpower requirement planning, schools are able to help students to plan careers, and citizens are able to utilize the information to update their skills and knowledge and remain and/or become employable. Legislated intergovernmental or bilateral coordination on safety standards, guest worker welfare, and measures to deal with irresponsible recruitment agencies and employers who do not honor labor contracts also appears warranted.



p-Experts deputed by the APO

FIJI

Dr. Segundo Joaquin E. Romero, Jr., Consultant, Development Academy of the Philippines, was deputed as resource person-cum-rapporteur, and **Mr. Hasan Haider**, Senior Manager/Head, Training and Consulting Group, National Productivity Organization, Pakistan, **Mr. M. Moedjiman**, Chairman, Indonesian Professional Certification Authority, and **Mr. R.C. Monga**, Productivity Management Consultant, India, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Productivity Training Certification, 25–31 August 2006.

Mr. Robert Osterhoff, Management Consultant, USA, was deputed as technical expert for the training course on Knowledge Management and Six Sigma, 4–8 September 2006.

INDONESIA

Dr. P.N. Parmeswaran Moothathu, Senior General Manager, Environment, United Phosphorus Ltd, India, **Mr. Shigeru Nakayama**, Auditor, Det Norske Veritas As, DNV Certification, Japan, and **Mr. Lai Swee Fong**, Senior Consultant, NOVO Environmental Technology Services Pte Ltd, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Integration of EMS and OHSAS 18001, 28 August–1 September 2006.

Mr. Seigo Kojima, Senior Advisor, Japan Council of Metalworkers Unions, **Mr. Arturo L. Tolentino**,

Productivity Consultant, Philippines, **Mr. Ong Yen Her**, Divisional Director, Labour Relations and Workplace Division, Ministry of Manpower, Labour Relations Department, Singapore, and **Mr. Leslie Devendra**, Secretary General, Sri Lanka Free Workers' Union, were deputed as resource persons for the forum on Labor-Management Cooperation: Latest Trends in Unionism and the Labor Movement in APO Member Countries, 11–15 September 2006.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Prof. Torstein Hundloe, Professor Emeritus, Environmental Management, University of Queensland, Australia, and **Dr. Makoto Miyake**, Scientific Adviser, Japan Tuna Fishermen's Cooperative Association, were deputed as resource persons for the seminar on Green Supply Chains for Marine Food Products, 11–15 September 2006.

MONGOLIA

Mr. Bruce Searles, Managing Partner, Benchmarking Partnerships, Australia, and **Mr. Matao Ishii**, Global CS Planner, Management Quality Innovation Section, Corporate Planning Division, Pioneer Corporation, Japan, were deputed as resource persons for the seventh workshop on the APO Best Practice Network, 5–8 September 2006.

Mr. K.V.R. Raju, Director, Marketing and Planning, National Productivity Council, India, was deputed as expert for Application of ISO22000 and other Modern Food Safety Management Systems for the project on Productivity Performance Improvement of SME Food Processing Units, 11–22 September 2006.

PHILIPPINES

Mr. Abdul Latif Abu Seman, Director, NPC Sarawak Branch, Malaysia, and **Mr. Kelvin Chan**, Director and Principal Consultant, Teian Consulting International Pte. Ltd., Singapore, were deputed as resource persons for the project on Development of Productivity Specialists: Capacity Building for ASEAN Managers: Phase 1: Manufacturing Companies, 7–25 August 2006, and Phase 2: Service Companies, 4–22 September 2006.

Mr. Jun Chanoki, Head of Research, Food and Agribusiness Japan, Robobank Nederland Tokyo Branch, **Mr. Chan Seng Kit**, Managing Director, K-Farm Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia, and **Prof. Sudip K. Rakshit**, Vice President-Research, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, were deputed as resource persons for the training course on Development of Niche Markets for Agricultural Products, 5–12 September 2006.

SRI LANKA

Dr. Tej Partap, Executive Director, International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture, and

Program calendar

December

Islamic Republic of Iran

Study Meeting on Effective Disease Control and Prevention in the Poultry Sector with Emphasis on Bird Flu, 16–21 December 2006.

Japan and Thailand

Workshop on Integrated Community Development for the Mekong Region: "One Village, One Product" Movement in CLMV Countries, 13–23 December 2006.
International Conference on 3R Initiatives, 14–16 December 2006.

Republic of Korea

Expert Group Meeting on Productivity Measurement, 12–13 December 2006.

Malaysia

Workshop on IT for Productivity Specialists, 4–8 December 2006.

Nepal

Seminar on Strategic Management for Civil Society Organizations, 4–8 December 2006.

Pakistan

Training Course on Assessors of Quality Awards, 11–15 December 2006.

Web based

Workshop on Green Productivity and Medical Waste Management, 1–10 December 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.

Manager, IFOAM Organic Services Centre, India, **Mr. Yutaka Murayama**, Chairman, Japan Organic Inspectors Association, and **Mr. Ton van de Goor**, Director, Advance Foodservices, the Netherlands, were deputed as resource persons for the seminar on Organic Farming for Sustainable Development, 11–15 September 2006.

WEB BASED

Dr. A.K. Saxena, Head, Environment Group, National Productivity Council, India, and **Mr. Shigeru Nakayama**, Environment and Safety Project Leader/Auditor, Det Norske Veritas As, DNV Certification, Japan, were deputed as resource persons for the e-learning course on Green Productivity and Environmental Management System (ISO14001), 21–24 August (Phase I) and 4–7 September 2006 (Phase II), utilizing the Global Development Learning Network of the World Bank platform.

APO/NPO update

Appointments in NPO for Cambodia

Mr. Yea Bunna, APO Alternate Director for Cambodia, and **Ms. Tey Dany**, APO Liaison Officer for Cambodia, were appointed Director and Deputy Director of the National Productivity Centre of Cambodia, respectively, w.e.f. 13 July 2006.

Correction of Designation of Liaison Officer for Fiji

The designation of **Ms. Taina Tagicakibau**, APO Liaison Officer for Fiji, should be Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations and Ministry of Employment Opportunities and Productivity.

NPO for Islamic Republic of Iran

The name of the NPO for Iran was changed to: National Iranian Productivity Center.

Change in Ministry's Name in Lao PDR

The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft was merged with the Ministry of Commerce and renamed the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.


PETALS: A common framework for developing and certifying productivity specialists

First deliberated on in the cool mountains of Mongolia and continued by the pristine blue waters of Fiji, the APO initiative on productivity education, training, and accredited learning systems (PETALS) is gradually taking shape. In essence, PETALS represents a fresh proposal for a competency-based paradigm for producing and certifying productivity specialists in APO member countries.



Participants in the 2006 PETALS workshop

The idea for developing a competency-based framework for the training and certification of productivity professionals was first suggested at a DON workshop on Enhancing NPOs' Core Competence: Productivity Education and Certification held in August 2004. After a follow-up meeting of a core group of experts, a workshop on PETALS was held in Suva, Fiji, 25–31 August 2006. The introduction of PETALS will close the gaps in the training capabilities of NPOs on productivity and quality improvement tools and techniques. PETALS can serve as a reference allowing NPOs to compare their training courses and make adjustments where necessary. Moreover, PETALS will enhance the credibility of certifications issued by some NPOs. Designed with a competence-based approach, PETALS will help to ensure that specific, measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes are imparted in future NPO training. This will hopefully lead to recognition by industry.

There was strong support for the PETALS initiative from the NPO delegates attending the workshop in Fiji. The PETALS core group comprises Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Singapore. The core group was joined by delegates from the NPOs of Bangladesh, the Republic of China, Cambodia, Iran, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. At the end of the Suva workshop, the foundations of the PETALS architecture were firmly in place: the principal functions, roles, and expected competencies and specific abilities of a productivity specialist were defined and the core areas and topics productivity specialists are expected to master were identified for three levels (Table). The next step in the PETALS initiative is to develop the appropriate learning modules in a follow-up meeting of the PETALS core group in mid-2007. 

Outline of productivity specialists under PETALS

Roles and functions

- Technical expert in productivity and quality techniques
- Consultant
- Trainer/facilitator
- Promoter

Key competencies

- Ability to diagnose productivity and quality problems
- Ability to identify productivity and quality solutions
- Ability to convince management and stakeholders of solutions
- Ability to implement solutions
- Ability to evaluate solutions
- Ability to sustain and improve solutions
- Ability to train in productivity and quality techniques and solutions
- Ability to develop new productivity and quality techniques

Levels

- Level I: Productivity practitioner
- Level II: Productivity professional
- Level III: Productivity specialist

Eco-products International Fair in Singapore

The APO will organize the Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) 2006 at Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre from 31 October to 2 November 2006, with SPRING Singapore and the Waste Management and Recycling Association of Singapore. The EPIF will showcase the most advanced environmental technologies, provide opportunities to share information and explore business collaborations, and promote public awareness of environmentally friendly products and services.

The fair will also feature fashion shows of apparel and accessories made from eco-friendly materials, a networking reception, and parallel international conferences. In addition, the EPIF, which is expected to receive 40,000 visitors, will feature a futuristic environment-friendly "Eco City" in real scale.

The official Web site of the Eco-products International Fair 2006 is: www.epif06.com.