



APO NEWS

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p. 6, Joint meeting, Japan



p. 7, APO Honorary Fellow, Singapore



p. 8, Workshop, Cambodia

APO liaison officers meet in Tokyo

The APO assists its member countries' pursuit of socioeconomic development through productivity by fostering a spirit of mutual cooperation. As the national counterparts to the APO, the national productivity organizations (NPOs) play a critical role in preparing and implementing APO projects. Within the NPOs, APO liaison officers are the focal point for day-to-day communication and coordination between the APO Secretariat and NPOs. In recognition of their importance, the APO organizes a Liaison Officers' Meeting once every two or three years. This year's meeting took place at the Secretariat in Tokyo, 27–29 August 2008, during a slight lull in Tokyo's notoriously humid summer heat. The meeting brought together 22 liaison officers and senior project coordinators from 18 member countries to discuss their partnership with the Secretariat and how to maximize the benefits of APO projects and services to member countries.



Liaison officers introduce themselves on the opening day

This year's meeting was of major importance because half of participating countries had appointed new liaison officers since the previous meeting in 2006. APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka emphasized the significance of this meeting for new liaison officers in his opening remarks by stating that, "This meeting will give you firsthand observations of the set-up, working environment, and operation of the APO Secretariat.... I trust that this will deepen and enrich our working relationship."

Following the Secretary-General's remarks, liaison officers and Secretariat staff introduced themselves. Singapore Liaison Officer Wong Wai Meng, the third longest serving after those from Bangladesh and the Philippines, commented, "I think that it is a welcoming and good thing for us to have many new faces at this meeting. I believe that our new friends will bring a lot of ideas and suggestions for the further development of the APO."

The first item on the agenda concerned the nominations of project participants. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of qualified participants to ensure the success of projects. "The candidates' qualifications in terms of present position, responsibilities, scope of work, experience, and English-language proficiency should meet the minimum requirements given in the project notifications to achieve the intended objectives," stated the meeting chair, Secretariat Administration and Finance Department Director Dr. A.K.P. Mochtan, adding that, "Qualified participants meaningfully participate in the program and also ensure multiplier effects." The need to ensure qualified national experts for research projects was also stressed to assure solid outcomes of the research. Liaison officers agreed that the quality of participants was of overriding importance. They outlined the nomination procedures and time requirements for those processes and offered suggestions on how to improve the current systems to identify the best candidates and thus guarantee the high quality of APO projects.

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Liaison officer interview

The *APO News* conducted an interview with four liaison officers. With 17 and 13 years, respectively, Abdul Baqui Chowdhury, Bangladesh, and Carlos A. Sayco, Jr., the Philippines, are the longest-serving liaison officers, while Tassaneeya Attanon, Thailand, and Josffa Ismail, Malaysia, were appointed after the last Liaison Officers' Meeting in 2006. The free-form, wide-ranging discussion commenced during the lunch break on the first day and had to continue due to the tight schedule. All four officers contributed enthusiastically, but due to space limitations we can only present excerpts here. We thank all four for their cooperation.

How would you summarize your work as an APO liaison officer so far?

Josffa: It's been very interesting and challenging. I was appointed as the liaison officer for Malaysia in July 2008 and was told that I would have to manage all projects as specified by the APO and that the position involved acting as a liaison for all local participants and with the APO Secretariat, being able to communicate well in English, and that I must possess good project management skills to ensure that all projects and programs ran smoothly.



APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia Josffa

Tassa: I've also found it to be very interesting and challenging during my 1.5 years and feel that it really involves representing your country within the APO. I once worked for the FTPI a couple of years ago in the Productivity Promotion Division, then left to gain experience in marketing and networking in the private sector. Then in November 2006, I was asked to come back to the FTPI to work as the

manager of the International Relations Department and liaison officer for Thailand.

Sayco: The role of the APO liaison officer is demanding but it also offers opportunities for professional development. To be effective one has to appreciate the roles and responsibilities of the position other than just liaising with the Secretariat. There are certain competencies and skills required including people skills, writing ability, and public relations and negotiation skills because a liaison officer in a way acts like an ambassador for his/her country. Since the NPO-APO Secretariat interface deals mostly with coordinating project planning and implementation one can also keep abreast of the latest trends and developments in productivity like the application of information and communication technologies, e-learning projects, harnessing social capital, innovation management, and other international issues that impact productivity. To maximize benefits from various APO projects, it is critical for NPOs to: 1) determine their institutional and human resources capability building needs including internal support requirements; 2) observe APO policies, procedures, and project requirements like nomination deadlines and quality of nominees; and 3) monitor participation in APO projects to address improvement concerns.

Chowdhury: Yes, I would also say that the work of an APO liaison officer is challenging. It involves many additional tasks. There is usually one or two people assigned to liaison officer duties within the NPO of Bangladesh. Internet and e-mail communications were introduced around 2000 but are still not very popular or widespread, since the country relies on a paper-based office culture. The process of taking decisions is still very long. I should mention that the APO liaison officer must be someone with a cool brain who is able to withstand pressure.

What are the most rewarding and challenging aspects of the job?

Chowdhury: The most rewarding aspect of the position is meeting people within the APO network multiple times and getting to know them and how they do their jobs. The most challenging aspect, on the other hand, is keeping up with the fast-changing environment.

Josffa: The most challenging task over the past 1.5 months has been my responsibility to equip myself with a liaison officer's skills and knowledge within

a limited time since all the programs and projects are running simultaneously. Another challenge at the moment is that only one person in the MPC is assigned liaison officer duties, so everything must be managed properly on my own. The rewarding part is that when people come to Malaysia to attend an APO project, we want to show them a wonderful, pleasant time and help them appreciate every aspect of our culture.



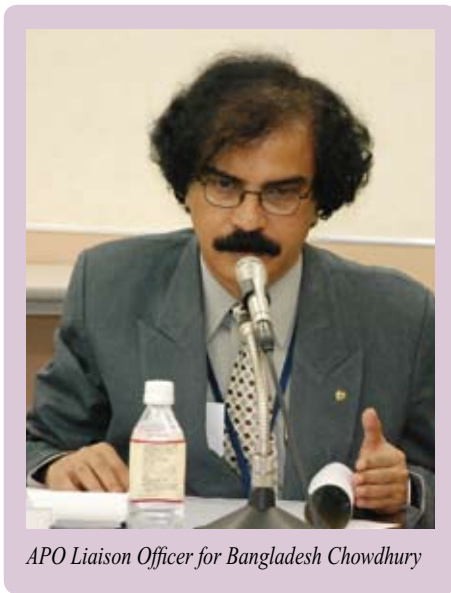
APO Liaison Officer for the Philippines Sayco

Tassa: The FTPI receives strong support from the ministry, and there are five people assigned to the liaison officer team, so that is a very satisfactory situation. We also enjoy being able to understand the culture, traditions, and protocols of other APO member countries so that we can pass that knowledge along to APO project participants, enabling them to enjoy and make the most of their involvement. It's like diplomatic work, in a way. We must be aware of the sociopolitical situation and current topics in other countries, and learning so much about other cultures is its own reward. In addition, being liaison officer for Thailand means that you represent the country, in some aspects, which I'm so proud of.

Sayco: I find it especially rewarding when introducing new projects and topics with APO support, for example, the Philippine Quality Awards and knowledge management. Anything that results in capability building for the NPO, establishing or expanding networks of social capital, and learning new tricks of the trade feels rewarding at the personal level. The challenge is that we have to work within the government system and have to adhere to government rules and regulations.

What is the level of awareness of the productivity movement and the APO in your country?

Chowdhury: Productivity-related activities are currently the sole province of the NPO. No other agency is involved on a national scale. The APO has been popularized through distribution of the *APO News* among private-sector project participants and government line agencies. Key areas of interest include basic productivity and quality tools like kaizen and 5S, since these require no or low investment by enterprises wishing to adopt them. Enterprises also need to be able to see immediate results from a productivity initiative.



APO Liaison Officer for Bangladesh Chowdhury

Josffa: Malaysia is now emphasizing improving the public-sector service delivery system, and the 5S technique is being implemented in that sector. 5S, kaizen movements, and problem-solving techniques are also becoming widespread in secondary schools. Another focus is on improving the competitiveness of Malaysian SMEs. There is generally good awareness of the productivity movement, and thus of the APO, in the private sector. However, due to the rapid change in the business environment, productivity and quality are now seen as the core for innovation and higher levels of competitiveness.

Tassa: When translated into Thai, “productivity” sounds like “increase the population,” so it can be slightly difficult to promote. In the government sector, there is a good understanding of and budgetary support for the productivity movement. The Thai Quality Awards are helping to promote

the basic concepts of productivity and quality at the national level. The FTPI Promotion Division has started successful 5S campaigns in secondary schools. Awareness of the APO is fairly low, but the FTPI makes presentations on its own network and that of the APO nationwide which will eventually improve the situation.

Sayco: Productivity awareness has been created primarily in the industrial sector of the Philippines. Inroads have been made elsewhere through the Philippine Quality Awards and other efforts, especially in the government. It is easier to improve awareness as more people have Internet access. The nation is now promoting a competitiveness agenda, which is helping to make productivity known on a broader scale. Holding the 2009 Eco-products International Fair in Manila should do a lot in terms of publicity for the APO, and we at the DAP are looking forward to that.

What are your expectations of the APO?

Chowdhury: In the short term, I hope that the APO will focus on basic problems such as rural development and productivity improvement in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors for poverty alleviation. IT- or advanced technology-related topics can be included as a long-term plan.

Josffa: The APO has provided various training programs on productivity tools and techniques. I hope that it will continue these tasks to make its member countries competitive.

Sayco: I think that there should be more support for Category C (individual-country) projects, like TES deputation and in-country training programs because they provide good opportunities for strengthening NPOs through staff capacity development. To improve the quality of participants, a key topic of this Liaison Officers’ Meeting, the APO should provide feedback on each participant so that NPOs can take follow-up action. Finally, I hope that the APO will pay attention to the development of APO alumni bodies, since they can be a useful channel to develop NPOs.

Tassa: The level of collaboration between the APO and NPOs and among NPOs should be strengthened. I hope that the APO will support member countries in identifying and sharing the necessary resources for their productivity movements. Expanded networks involving other countries and

international organizations will help the APO increase the global competitiveness of its members.



APO Liaison Officer for Thailand Tassaneeya

What do you like best in the APO News and what are your expectations of the newsletter?

Chowdhury: I still like the quotations (Common Sense Talk). I also enjoy reading p-Watch. I hope that the *APO News* will carry more news from member countries.

Josffa: I enjoy reading the p-Leader column because I can learn the productivity trends and future goals of other member countries. I also like the Comment Board, project news, and Program Calendar.

Sayco: I like articles featuring study missions to member and nonmember countries as they provide opportunities to learn best practices or new trends in productivity and quality. I hope that the *APO News* will carry more stories on NPO activities to encourage sharing of the latest developments and best practices.

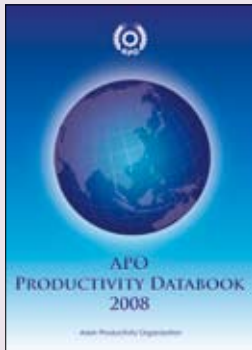
Tassa: Given its target group of productivity practitioners, the *APO News* is doing a good job of sharing information on the APO. The p-Leader column is useful for understanding the productivity goals and activities of other countries. Some articles on projects are interesting, while others are boring because the contents are too basic.



Reading productivity and economic trends

Part 5: The process of technology assimilation

Eunice Y.M. Lau and Koji Nomura



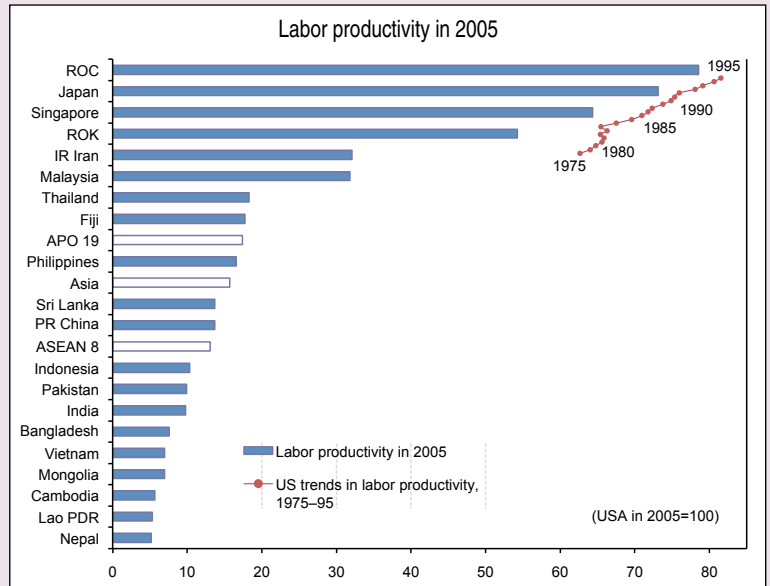
Technological transfer plays a key role in economic development. Part of the technological advancement is embodied in capital goods, which can be acquired through investment. But how to master the embodied technology to yield its full productivity potential in the host country is largely tacit and requires learning by doing. This process of technology assimilation can be slow, disruptive, and costly. How successful a country can be in this respect depends on its social and techno-

logical capabilities. Empirically, assimilation rates vary across countries, resulting in diverse development experience and outcomes.

As mentioned previously in this column, the Asian miracle was credited largely to input accumulation rather than to total factor productivity growth. Focusing on level comparisons of Asian and US manufacturing for the period 1963–1997, Marcel P. Timmer (*Journal of the Japanese and International Economies*, 2002; 16: 50–72) observed that labor productivity levels achieved by the Republic of China and Republic of Korea in 1997, even after a period of capital intensification, were lower than what the USA had achieved at similar levels of capital intensity. In other words, capital accumulation might have created the potential but was itself not a sufficient condition for performance; the same amount of capital was used more productively in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s than in the Republic of Korea and Republic of China in the 1990s. Although capital intensity was not covered in the *APO Productivity Databook 2008*, the accompanying chart shows that labor productivity at the whole economy level in the Republic of China was 79% that of the USA in 2005, whereas the Republic of Korea's in 2005 was 85% and 55% of the US 1975 and 2005 levels, respectively.

The USA's superior assimilation ability was also apparent in comparisons with Europe. The divergent productivity performance in the latter half of the 1990s was largely attributed to the failure of Europe to reap productivity gains from ICT investments compared with the USA. Empirical evidence therefore

suggests that soft investment in organizational change, managerial skills, and human capital is required to complement the accumulation effort.



Given the diminishing possibilities for further productivity improvements with a particular technology, sustained growth must involve the continual introduction of new technology, new goods, and new activities. However, the pace of the climb up the technological ladder can be too fast if insufficient time is allowed for the assimilation process and learning costs are too high to be beneficial to productivity growth. On the other hand, countries can also be stagnant in productivity growth with the existing technology when the pace of technological change is too slow and new opportunities are not created. The right balance is difficult to judge a priori, and different industry sectors even within a country can display diverse capabilities in adopting new technologies and pushing the frontier. In general, flexibility of a country in resource allocation and factor markets with a well-educated workforce will be conducive to the process. ☺

Contributors

Ms. Eunice Y.M. Lau is a visiting research fellow at Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University. She has served as economic advisor at the Industry, Economics and Statistics Directorate, Department of Trade and Industry, Government of the UK; Head of the Productivity Economics Branch, Economic Analysis Directorate, Office for National Statistics, Government of the UK; and lecturer in the Department of Economics, University of Portsmouth, UK.

Dr. Koji Nomura is an Associate Professor at Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University. He is also chief expert of the APO Productivity Databook project, as well as project manager of the APO Productivity Database project. He has done extensive research on productivity, particularly on measuring capital. He has served as senior visiting research fellow at the Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan; economist at the OECD; and fellow at the Center for Business and Government at Harvard University JFK School of Government.

Common sense talk

“Good writers define reality; bad ones merely restate it. A good writer turns fact into truth; a bad writer will, more often than not, accomplish the opposite.”

Edward Franklin Albee

“Most people believe that if you go in and try to micromanage a forest, it is possible to destroy the very thing that makes it a unique and special place. That’s just as true of the Internet.”

Glen Raphael

“Spring passes and one remembers one’s innocence. Summer passes and one remembers one’s exuberance. Autumn passes and one remembers one’s reverence. Winter passes and one remembers one’s perseverance.”

Yoko Ono

“Censorship always defeats its own purpose, for it creates in the end the kind of society that is incapable of exercising real discretion.”

Henry Steele Commager

Green certification in tourism

The number of stars a hotel boasts has long been a major consideration when planning a holiday. Whether a hotel or tourism agency is certified as environmentally friendly may soon become as important. Tourism development invariably necessitates infrastructure construction. However, the adverse impact on nature is an increasingly sensitive issue as the power and economic potential of the tourism industry increase in many developing countries. While most governments claim that their tourism and environmental policies protect the environment, in reality much more needs to be done.

Recognizing the widespread concern over possible negative impacts of tourism, the APO organized a seminar in Nepal, 4-8 August, focusing on green certification as a means of promoting green tourism. "Establishing productive green tourism is founded on the sustainable development concept. It links poverty eradication, environmental protection, and efficient resource use in the tourism development process," explained Secretariat Industry Department Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj. The seminar discussed the need for green certification and its significance for hotels and restaurants. Three resource speakers presented case studies of green certification systems.

Managing Director Enver Loke, Changemakers, the Netherlands, introduced Green Key, a European approach to tourism and hospitality industry environmental certification. Green Key has 23 mandatory and 22 optional criteria related to technical, managerial, and communication considerations. Loke stated that, "Green Key certifies tourism businesses in a number of European countries. Green Key camping sites are aware of environmental impact and natural preservation, and Green Key hotels offer high-quality services that minimally impact the environment."

Two Asian best cases were also presented. Dr. Chirapol Sintunawa, Mahidol University and Vice President of the Green Leaf Foundation (GLF), explained GLF activities and Green Leaf standards, a Thai hotel certification program



(L-R) APO Resource speakers Loke, Sintunawa, Batta

that assesses environmental impacts in multiple-stage audits. Hotels that meet certification requirements are awarded from one to five leaves, with five denoting the best environmental performance. Special Secretary Dr. Ravinder Batta, Tourism and Planning, Himachal Pradesh, India, introduced India's hotel and restaurant eco-awards that measure six environmental criteria. Dr. Batta emphasized that adapting these certification procedures is not a form of corporate philanthropy but instead benefits businesses by increasing their operational sustainability.

Seminar participants agreed that developing and adapting green certification systems in each country require the integrated efforts of all stakeholders. National governments set the policy framework and platforms, industry associations adopt and propagate systems, while the APO functions as a regional adviser. Based on the recommendations of the seminar, the preparation of a manual on approaches to green certification systems has been initiated with expectations that it will be useful in illustrating this concept for application in concrete projects in future. 🌀

APO liaison officers meet in Tokyo (Continued from page 1)

The presentations and discussions that followed focused on the Secretariat's new program initiatives including e-learning and the Development of NPOs (DON) Program. Industry Department Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj briefly described the e-learning courses focusing on types, topics, methodology, and future offerings in 2009 and 2010. Liaison officers gained a better understanding of the significance of e-learning and wide coverage that those courses allow. Subsequent discussions involved various aspects of e-learning in terms of project coordination and implementation, duration and timing, suitability of facilities, local coordinators, topic and resource speaker selection, program delivery, certification, and follow-up activities.

A joint presentation by the Research and Planning Department and Industry Department of the Secretariat on DON Strategy and DON Implementation followed. The presentation mainly focused upon apprising liaison officers, especially those newly appointed, of the research activities of the APO, the evolution of DON Strategy, and planning for DON Implementation, which included feedback from the recently concluded pilot in-country training programs held in IR Iran and India. A major discussion point was how to align individual-country programs with DON initiatives, especially in areas identi-

fied in the need assessment survey, for further development and improvement. Other project-related issues discussed in the meeting included logistics, site visits, APO alumni bodies and public relations activities, and questions and suggestions.

On the afternoon of the second day, participants visited the International Productivity Center (IPC), the training center of the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development in Hayama, around 35 km from Tokyo. The liaison officers were impressed by the IPC, which is equipped with the latest facilities. The beauty of its views and quality of accommodations were also appreciated.

When the three-day meeting ended, all involved had achieved a deeper understanding not only of the relationships between the Secretariat and liaison officers, but also among the liaison officers themselves. APO Program Manager Ishfaq A. Sheikh, NPO Pakistan, said in his closing remarks on behalf of the participants, "We will continue to make programs more substantial and so contribute toward the fulfillment of APO objectives both efficiently and effectively." 🌀

Promoting APO eco-initiatives

Since the first in Malaysia in 2004, the Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) has grown to become the largest international environmental fair and conference in Asia. Spurred by the resounding success of the EPIF 2008 in Hanoi, Vietnam, in March, the APO, supported by the Green Productivity Advisory Committee (GPAC) and EPIF Preparatory Committee, is now promoting the 2009 event to be held in Manila, the Philippines, 19–22 March 2009.

For example, an explanatory meeting on the EPIF and *Eco-products Directory* was held at the Industry Club of Japan, Tokyo, on 22 September. The meeting was jointly organized with the Keizai Doyukai (Japan Association of Corporate Executives), an influential body composed of senior Japanese corporate executives, which believes that corporate managers should be key players in a broad range of political, economic, and social issues. Thirty-three members of the Keizai Doyukai interested in environment-friendly products and services attended. Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Chairman and Chairperson of the EPIF Preparatory Committee Teisuke Kitayama welcomed the participants before briefly introducing the APO and its Green Productivity (GP) Program. He then explained his role in the EPIF and the *Eco-products Directory* and encouraged all at the meeting to become involved in the APO's eco-initiatives for the development of a sustainable society.

Dr. Tamotsu Nomakuchi, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation Chairman and GPAC Chairperson, gave a keynote speech emphasizing GP's importance in creating a low-carbon society by reducing CO₂ emissions in line with Japanese government commitment to reduce emissions to half of the current level by 2050. Mitsubishi Electric, a strong supporter of the APO's GP activities including the EPIF and *Eco-products Directory*, and the Japanese electronics industry are

working hard to make this a reality.

APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka then provided detailed information on the APO, its activities, GP promotion including the contributions of the GPAC, and eco-initiatives as exemplified by the EPIF and *Eco-products Directory*. Pointing to its past success, he said that the EPIF is “a fair to enlighten the public about the need to be more environmentally conscious.” Secretary-General Takenaka also stated that the *Eco-products Directory* series, published in tandem with the EPIFs, is continually expanded and updated with the best examples of eco-products and -services.



Mitsubishi Electric Corporation Chairman Dr. Nomakuchi emphasizing GP's importance

In June this year, Secretary-General Takenaka and EPIF Preparatory Committee Chairman Kitayama along with local executive committee members for the EPIF held the first official press conference on the EPIF 2009 and met with Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo. The EPIF 2009 will be held under the theme “Sustainable Production, Sustainable Consumption, Sustainable Future” at the SMX Convention Center, the Philippines' newest and largest such facility, and jointly organized by the APO, Development Academy of the Philippines, and Philippine Business for the Environment. 🌱

Financial lifelines for SMEs

Strengthening and developing SMEs, a key APO thrust area, involves creating an environment that nurtures new start-ups and enables the growth and development of existing businesses. Financing is critical. “SME financing is the key to providing an enabling environment for growth, since SMEs need varying amounts of funds at different stages of their growth. For SMEs in the formative stages, access to financing is critical,” explained Secretariat Research and Planning Department Director Mukesh Bhattarai. An APO research project on financing for SMEs was conducted in 2007 and the results were discussed at a study meeting in Indonesia, 5–8 August.

Three international and two local resource speakers attended. Soongsil University Professor Moon-Kyum Kim, Republic of Korea, who supervised the research, presented its major findings along with the importance of SMEs in economic development in each member country. National SME policies have a different focus: the Republic of Korea fosters innovative SMEs; the Philippines develops micro SMEs; and the Republic of China focuses on R&D, design, and brand development. Financing systems for SMEs include credit guarantees, mandated bank lending, equity financing, and assistance from nonbank institutions. However, the “major source of SME financing is bank loans,” Dr. Kim noted.

The Japanese resource speaker, Deputy Director Hisao Daito, National Life Finance Corporation (NLFC) International Cooperation Office, introduced the NLFC as a government-owned institution that monitors the SME financing market and “intervenes in the market with lines of credit mainly when there is



Discussing innovative financing methods

a credit crunch.” [The NLFC will be integrated into the Japan Finance Corporation from 1 October 2008.]

Participants agreed on the need to develop innovative methods to cope with current trends proactively in a changing business environment. Emerging methods such as over-the-counter financing for SMEs and blue angel schemes were welcomed. It was also pointed out that improved SME accounting and bookkeeping abilities are necessary to satisfy lending institution requirements. The APO was requested to play a supporting role by monitoring progress and developments in this basic area and by providing open forums for sharing of best practices, ideas, and suggestions. 🌱

Program calendar

December

Japan

Training course on Production Innovation, 1–12 December.

▶ Objective: To develop future trainers, specifically Toyota Production System (TPS) e-learning course alumni, on lean production systems emphasizing kaizen for production innovation.

▶ Participants: Outstanding graduates from e-learning courses on the TPS, industrial and mechanical engineers and consultants, managers of production industries, and university professors from relevant faculties.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Seminar on Innovative Tools and Techniques for Enhancing the Efficiency of Agribusiness SMEs, 13–16 December.

▶ Objective: To review the present status of agribusiness SMEs in member countries and identify critical factors affecting success and sustainability; familiarize participants with best practices; and equip participants with the latest productivity and managerial tools and techniques for application in agribusiness SMEs.

▶ Participants: Senior managers of agribusiness SMEs and senior researchers or consultants in the public or private sector involved in the development and management of agribusiness SMEs.

January 2009

Islamic Republic of Iran

Training course on Performance Management Systems for the Public Sector, 10–14 January 2009.

▶ Objective: To train public-sector professionals in current public management performance tools and techniques.

▶ Participants: Mid- to senior-level public-sector professionals involved in planning, budgeting, and management, and NPO public-sector consultants.

Kindly contact your NPO for details of future activities, including eligibility for participation. The project details along with the address of your NPO are available from the APO Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.

APO Honorary Fellow Loh



Loh (L) receiving certificate from Png

Loh Khum Yean, former APO Director for Singapore and Chief Executive of SPRING, the national productivity organization (NPO) of Singapore, received the title of APO Honorary Fellow in recognition of his contributions to the work of the organization. Loh served as NPO head of Singapore from 15 October 2003 to 30 April 2008, during which time he also served as APO Alternate Director and later APO Director. A certificate and silver tray were presented on behalf of the APO by APO Director for Singapore Png Cheong Boon, Chief Executive of SPRING Singapore.



A Newtel Company staff member explaining efforts to achieve service excellence in the Mongolian mobile telecom market

Workshop on Business Tools for Management: Integration of Customer Relationship Management and Total Quality Management, Mongolia, 25–29 August 2008

Certification of 18 new OHSAS auditors



Two speakers from an IRCA-approved agency conducting the course

The APO organized a training course for lead auditor certification in the occupational health and safety management system (OHSAS 18001) in Sri Lanka, 17–24 June, conducted by two APO resource speakers from DNV India, an International Register of Certificated Auditors (IRCA)-approved agency. The 20 participants from 12 member countries received three days of basic training to enhance their understanding of OHSAS prior to the five-day certification course. Eighteen successfully qualified as auditors, with the remaining two eligible to retake the examination within one year. Those 18 participants can now practice as auditors and act as trainers on OHSAS, opening a new chapter in their careers. Encouraged by these results, the APO will continue to organize certification courses on various management systems.

APO/NPO update

Appointment of Director and NPO Head for Singapore

Mr. Png Cheong Boon, APO Director and NPO Head for Singapore, was appointed Chief Executive, SPRING Singapore, w.e.f. 1 September 2008.

New APO Director for Thailand

Dr. Damri Sukhotanang, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry, was appointed new APO Director for Thailand, w.e.f. 1 October 2008.

— Mekong Nations bank on the One Village, One Product movement —

“Think globally, act locally; independence and creativity; and foster human resources” are the three principles on which Dr. Morihiko Hiramatsu, former governor of Oita prefecture, based the One Village, One Product (OVOP) movement, the main rural development policy of the prefecture. OVOP, initiated in Japan in the 1960s, was enormously successful thanks to the commitment of farmers’ groups and support from local government. That success was replicated throughout Japan and in other countries, notably the One Tambong, One Product (OTOP) movement in Thailand. Integrating the OVOP model into its Integrated Community Development (ICD) Program, in 2005 the APO launched a five-year project for the Mekong region with financial support from the Japanese government.

Over the last three years, this ICD-Mekong project has focused on encouraging Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam to learn from successful cases studies in Japan and Thailand. This year’s workshop in Cambodia, 18–22 August, was a mid-term review of the progress and outcomes of OVOP programs in the ICD-Mekong Program. It was jointly implemented by the National Productivity Center of Cambodia and Cambodia OVOP Committee Secretariat. The workshop highlights were the presentations by Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand. The Cambodian participants introduced the national policy for the OVOP movement and detailed information on the OVOP National Committee chaired by Prime Minister Hun Sen. The OVOP movement, although known in Cambodia some years back, was officially launched in 2007 with strong government backing.

In 2003, the Lao PDR government also played a leading role in instituting the One District, One Product (ODOP) movement. Two ODOP pilot projects were launched in Savannakhet and Saravane provinces in 2008 with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Vietnamese presentation detailed the overall development process, policy support for the One Village, One Trade (OVOT) movement and three OVOT pilot projects: lacquerware in Phu Tho; community-based tourism in a craft village; and ethnic handicrafts.



Crafting silver houseware in the village of Kom Pong Luong

Thailand’s successful OTOP movement has inspired many, including Mekong region countries. The Thai presentation covered the background and expansion of OTOP as well as case studies of three farm women’s groups that enhanced the quality of life of their community via OTOP. Experiences from the Institute of Food Research and Product Development, Kasetsart University, in OTOP training for rural agencies and communities were also presented.

Participants visited five OVOP venues in Cambodia and conducted SWOT analysis for practical suggestions for improvements. “Those communities, still at the initial stage of OVOP development, have a lot of room for improvement. However, if they make continuous efforts in the current direction, in five or 10 years, they will reach a high level of success,” commented JICA Expert in Makassar, Indonesia, Kazuhisa Matsui, who was one of four resource speakers. The workshop concluded with the creation of action plans for the future development of the OVOP movement in each country, for which the APO will provide the necessary support to make local efforts self-sustainable. ☺

Online registration for Eco-products Directory 2009

Online registration for the upcoming *Eco-products Directory 2009* will start in mid-October. All companies, organizations, and associations within APO member economies presently involved in producing and promoting environmentally friendly materials, components, products, or services are invited to



list them in the 2009 directory. The URL for registration will be <http://www.sntt.or.jp/epdirectory2009/en>, and full instructions for registration will be available on the APO Web site after mid-October. The deadline for applications is the middle of December 2008. The 2009 edition will be released at the EPIF 2009 to be held in the Philippines, 19–22 March 2009.

The *APO News* is soliciting contributed articles on productivity endeavors, rewarding experiences during and after APO projects, and/or encouraging and inspiring examples of the productivity mindset in action, which will provide new ideas and energy to the dissemination of the productivity movement in member countries. Those whose articles are accepted for publication will receive an APO T-shirt. If you would like to share your valuable experiences, please contact Information Officer Sunju Lee at the APO Secretariat (slee@apo-tokyo.org).

