



# APO NEWS

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## 51st WSM in Bangkok

**T**hirty-five NPO and Agriculture delegates from the 19 APO member countries gathered in Bangkok, the dynamic capital of the Kingdom of Thailand, for the 51st Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organization (NPOs), 19–21 October 2010. Accompanying the delegates were 17 advisers from nine member countries, and there were also four observers representing the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Pan African Productivity Association, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.



Inaugural session of the 51st Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Bangkok, 19 October 2010. Photo courtesy of FTPI

Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Executive Director, Thailand Productivity Institute, and APO Alternate Director for Thailand, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the host country. He remarked that over the last few years, the APO had improved its programs in terms of quality and quantity to cope with global changes and the level of development of member countries. This had resulted in greater accumulated experience and new knowledge. “The APO has become a center of excellence on productivity in its own right and occupies an autonomous position in the world,” according to Dr. Phanit.



Dr. Witoon Simachokedee speaks at WSM. APO/Kaoru Negishi

Following the welcome statement, Dr. Witoon Simachokedee, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry, and APO Director for Thailand, delivered the inaugural address. Dr. Witoon reiterated the importance of productivity to create wealth and improve the quality of life through socioeconomic development and stressed that efforts to improve competitiveness and productivity should focus on the three important factors of production-capital, labor, and technology. Synergy among these three factors would result in higher productivity growth.

The meeting unanimously elected Dr. Phanit Laosirirat as Chair and he was assisted by Mr. Soutchay Sisouvong, NPO Delegate from Lao PDR, as Vice Chair. After confirming the meeting agenda, the delegates heard the Secretary-General's statement (see pages 2 and 3), the Secretariat's presentation on 2011 and 2012 projects, and a report on the evaluation of 2009 projects.



Dr. Phanit Laosirirat welcomes delegates to the meeting. APO/Kaoru Negishi

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# Summary of Secretary-General's statement

**S**ecretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki, the ninth APO Secretary-General since the organization was founded in 1961, made his first public appearance at the Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Bangkok, Thailand, on 19 October 2010. After thanking member countries for electing him, he called for their continued cooperation “so that we can work together to improve productivity both quantitatively and qualitatively.” He then expressed gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for its generosity in hosting the WSM; and Dr. Witoon Simachokedee, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and APO Director for Thailand, for his inaugural address and Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Executive Director of the FTPI and NPO Head of Thailand, for their arrangements and warm hospitality.

Secretary-General Yamazaki said that he felt privileged to join the APO as it prepared to celebrate its Golden Jubilee next year and cited the “tremendous contributions” of the previous Secretaries-General. “Our proud history and record of achievements make me resolved to carry out the mandate of leading the APO Secretariat to further the cause of productivity for the benefit of all member countries,” he stated.

He noted the unprecedented financial difficulties facing the organization due to the steep decline of the US dollar against the yen. This had forced the Secretariat to modify the 2011 and 2012 Program Plans to devise the best project lineup within the budget available. The modifications included changes in some project titles, types, or venues, and scaling down or deferment of some where applicable. In doing this, the Secretariat carefully examined the relevancy, continuity, and optimum mix of the project lineup. “The Secretariat tried its best to ensure that the modifications would not compromise the quality and effectiveness of the original projects,” explained the Secretary-General. He cautioned, however, that the exchange rate remained uncertain. The WSM delegates were requested to review the revised project plans, reconfirming those for 2011 and endorsing the list for 2012.

Addressing the work program for the next biennium, the Secretary-General said that, “I am totally convinced that the continued close partnership with NPOs is the key factor in our pro-



Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki. APO/Kaoru Negishi

ductivity movement endeavors.” Among efforts to strengthen the capacity of NPOs, he pointed out that the Center of Excellence (COE) in Business Excellence in SPRING Singapore was beginning to bear fruit and would continue through the 2011–2012 biennium.

He also touched on the APO’s recent engagement in the public sector and referred to an observational study mission sent to Canada, a recognized leader in public-sector productivity, in August. “Six NPO representatives including three heads of NPOs joined the mission, reflecting the interest of member countries, and I believe that mission has enriched our perspective on this topic,” Yamazaki reported.

Among other new topics to be taken up, the Secretary-General listed the Information Security Management System based on the ISO27000 standard, mental health and productivity, talent management for globalizing SMEs, material flow cost accounting, an Asian SME benchmarking index, the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity, farm practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cutting-edge technologies such as nanotechnology to boost agricultural production, and the important area of food safety management.

He added that project series with recognized value would continue, including the Eco-products Inter-

national Fairs (EPIFs). The 2011 fair will be held in New Delhi, India, in February. He also congratulated the Malaysia Productivity Corporation and Development Academy of the Philippines, two previous EPIF hosts, for organizing their own environmental exhibitions in 2010: “I am greatly encouraged by the commitment and efforts to promote Green Productivity and eco-product initiatives in individual member countries.”

Secretary-General Yamazaki also referred to the productivity databook project to help member countries determine their sources of economic growth and make intra-APO and international comparisons with standardized methodology. He cited the Asian Quarterly Growth Map, which is available on the APO website, as another tangible output of the project.

The Secretary-General shared findings of the impact evaluation study conducted this year, which has employed a new methodology since 2009. The new methodology included assigning an independent expert to undertake the evaluation. “The assigned expert has reported a clear, immediate impact of APO projects in demonstration companies in Thailand, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Philippines,” he said.

He added that the APO’s outreach to Africa continued to be very well received and much appreciated by the Pan African Productivity As-



sociation. In connection with this, he acknowledged the cash grant from the Republic of China that had made the 2010 African Program possible.

Secretary-General Yamazaki also expressed the Secretariat's gratitude for the generous cash grants from the Government of Japan, enabling special attention to Mekong member countries, among other endeavors, and that from the Government of the Republic of Korea which had facilitated the deputation of experts to various projects. He hoped that other countries could make such grants as well.

"The continuity and quality of our activities also depend on the capability and strength of the Secretariat," Yamazaki pointed out. Examples of efforts

for greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness at the Secretariat included replacement of the e-mail system and ongoing planning to revamp the website. He stated that the Secretariat would carefully examine how an appropriate 50th anniversary event could be arranged in conjunction with the 2011 GBM within the budget available.

In concluding his remarks, Secretary-General Yamazaki referred to his attendance at the WSM as an "eye-opening experience" and looked forward to the interactions with all the delegates. He again thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and FTPI for hosting the meeting in Bangkok, "a city that always combines traditional Thai warmth with bustling dynamism." 🌀

### 51st WSM in Bangkok ..... (Continued from page 1)

The Secretariat's presentation on the 2011 and 2012 program plans elaborated on modifications of projects that the Secretary-General had touched upon in his statement. One delegate inquired whether the modifications, particularly scaling down of some projects, affected project duration. In response, the Secretariat explained that the durations of projects essentially remained unchanged since other aspects had been adjusted, for example, reducing the number of international resource persons and replacing them with comparable national resource persons.

The Secretariat's report on the evaluation of projects implemented in 2009 comprised two parts. The first was the results of onsite, end-of-project evaluations, and the second was the impact evaluation study. The latter was presented by Prof. Serafin Talisayon, the independent evaluator who conducted the impact evaluation study this year. He reported that APO projects had generated clear positive impacts, and they were particularly observable at the level of participants. Organization-wide impacts were somewhat less pronounced, however. To address this, Prof. Talisayon recommended that the nominating companies and organizations improve their reentry action plans to allow staff members participating in APO projects to share and apply the lessons learned in the workplace.

In the afternoon, the WSM delegates gave country reports on how the APO had contributed to their socioeconomic progress and indications of areas in which NPOs required assistance in addressing challenges they may face in the future. These themes were related to the APO's 50th anniversary next year, a time to take stock of the APO's endeavors thus far and suggest its directions in the years ahead.

Discussion on this theme continued as the delegates brainstormed on the APO's thrust and subject areas at a joint strategic planning session conducted in the afternoon of the second day of the WSM. It was a lively, constructive discussion, providing insightful feedback to the Secretariat, which will compile it for follow-up and submission to the 2011 GBM. Prior to the brainstorming exercise, the delegates formed two committees, the Industry and Service sector committee and Agriculture sector committee, which met separately to reconfirm the modified 2011 project lineup

and review and endorse those for 2012. Chairing the Industry and Service sector committee was Mr. Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr., the NPO delegate from the Philippines; Dr. Apichai Pongsrihadulchai chaired the Agriculture sector committee.

The WSM adopted the reports and proceedings of the meeting for submission to the 2011 GBM at the end of the session. On behalf of the delegates, Vice Chair Soutchay Sisouvang presented a vote of thanks, in which he expressed the delegates' gratitude to the host country. He also looked forward to extending Laotian hospitality to everyone when the next WSM met in Vientiane in October 2011. The meeting closed with statements by Secretary-General Yamazaki and WSM Chair Dr. Phanit Laosirirat.

Thai hospitality was evident in abundance throughout the WSM. It was seen daily in the sumptuous cuisine offered the WSM delegates, always accented by elegant flower arrangements and decorative carved fruit. In addition, MK Company, one of the most successful local enterprises operating in the intensely com-

petitive food and beverage industry, graciously hosted a visit by WSM delegates so that they could observe firsthand an example of the host country's productivity improvement pursuits. As a testimony to its success, MK has around 300 restaurants nationwide which are well-known "Thai-suki" eateries. The delegates were given a tour of MK's central processing center, which handles and prepares materials for distribution to its restaurant chain. The visit was an impressive reminder of how productivity can make a real difference in corporate competitiveness. 🌀



MK employees assisting Indonesian Agriculture Delegate Leli Nuryati with protective gear before entering the central kitchen. Photo courtesy of FTPI



# Productivity methodologies, tools, and techniques

## Creating value through service innovation—Ab. Rahim Yusoff

The rapidly changing marketplace calls for enterprises to use innovation as a strategic approach to outperform their competitors. The same scenario applies to the public sector as demands from the public and other stakeholders mandate that public agencies change their approaches in satisfying their clients' needs and expectations. In applying innovation as a strategic approach, many business leaders decide to focus on cutting-edge technologies and embark on intensive R&D hoping that they will be able to offer new inventions in products and services offered. In the public sector, agencies capitalize on information and communication technology as a tool to enhance their service delivery.

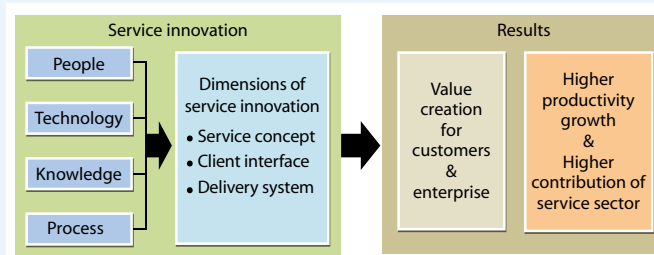
This strategic approach of using technology to innovate is part of a bigger solution to improve enterprise performance. However, enterprises must see beyond technology to innovate for the delivery of value-added products and services to their customers. According to Joseph Schumpeter, technical progress is part of innovation but the practice of innovation involves more than technology. Schumpeter argues that innovation could also be in the form of the production of new types of goods, changes in the properties of existing goods, or the introduction of new methods of production that may be based on new scientific discoveries, opening of new markets, the use of new sources of raw materials and intermediate goods, and new organization of production. Thus it is obvious that innovation takes place in many forms and formats so long as business value has been created. This value can be in the form of incremental improvements to existing products or services, the creation of entirely new products and services, or reducing costs.

At the macro level, the economic landscape has witnessed the greater importance of the service sector. In developed economies, this sector accounts for more than 72% of GDP and 70% of employment. The unique nature of service is that it is intangible in nature, more performance than object based, production and consumption occur simultaneously, and the provision cannot be stored. Thus it is imperative to promote service innovation that will ultimately result in creative and innovative offerings to the market.

What is service innovation? Service innovation is a new or significantly improved service-product offering, the way it is delivered to customers, and the interface with customers (Figure). In simple terms, service providers must project creativity and innovativeness in their products by understanding customers' expectations and designing the best, most effective ways to meet them. This approach also requires the creation of niches by enterprises where customers will be able to experience superior product offerings. In this way, enterprises will be able to expand their market, potentially increase sales, and reduce costs.

What are the tools required to deliver service innovation? There are various tools that can be applied while planning for service innovation.

Figure. Service innovation framework



However, the use of appropriate tools is dependent on what an enterprise hopes to achieve. Some of the tools that enterprises may consider are:

1. Service blueprinting. This is a picture map that visually portrays the service system encompassing the process of delivery, role of customers and employees, and visible elements of the service. Every process is broken down into logical components and easily defined tasks and steps. Opportunities for mistakes or noncompliance according to customer standards are identified, and training must be provided to employees to reduce and eliminate those mistakes. Continuous improvement initiatives must be undertaken to ensure that opportunities for mistakes are eliminated.
2. Six Sigma. This tool has been successfully used in the manufacturing sector and is equally relevant in the service sector. Six Sigma is a systematic method using the define, measure, analyze, improve, and control approach, utilizing data and statistical analysis to enhance operational performance by eliminating variance and waste. This approach focuses on meeting customers' requirements by controlling variations in production, thus eliminating errors and defects.
3. Business management solutions. To create an enabling environment for service providers to be innovative, they must be supported with the right business management solutions that help firms to connect with their customers effectively and remain economically linked to suppliers. Through effective data and information mining, better and faster decision making, more efficient financial management and compliance, and quicker responses to market changes are possible, as well as managing people more productively.

Today's challenging marketplace requires organizations to innovate, and the way forward for service providers is to embrace service innovation.



Contributed by Ab. Rahim Yusoff, Senior Director, Business Excellence Department, Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC). Mr. Ab. Rahim served as an assessor for Malaysia's Quality Management Excellence Award and a judge for the National Innovative and Creative Circle Convention 2010, in addition to other excellence- and innovation-related activities within the MPC.

# Tapping quality award expertise in California

**T**he Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) is a US scheme established by Congress in 1987 to recognize business excellence practices of businesses and nonprofit organizations. Many APO member countries have undertaken their own national award programs on business excellence, of which five are currently based on the MBNQA model.

To learn from the experiences of US enterprises during their quality journey and examine the applicability of ongoing challenges and successes of US quality management systems in the Asia-Pacific context, an APO study mission was conducted 13 to 17 September 2010, with the assistance of the National Institute of Standards and Technology and the Foundation for Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards Inc. The program brought together 17 participants from 11 APO member countries, all of whom were involved in national quality award programs in their countries. It was held in Newport Beach, CA, so that the participants could also attend the official MBNQA Regional Conference held at the same venue.

The study mission was intended to create an awareness of quality management practices outside the APO region by gaining knowledge of the MBNQA criteria and evaluation processes. It also aimed to allow participants to absorb lessons learned from past MBNQA recipients in their own progress toward business excellence. The MBNQA Regional Conference provided the participants with the opportunity to attend various network and open-microphone sessions and hear presentations by executives of previous MBNQA recipients. Motoki Shirai, a member of the Japan Quality Award Council of the Japan Productivity Center, commented, “We are having a Japan Quality Award Winners Conference in February, so I am adopting some ideas and concepts I learned at the regional conference into our event.”

The group visited Sharp Healthcare, a 2007 recipient, and had the chance to hear about how the MBNQA experience had turned the organization around into being recognized as the best healthcare provider in the region. The participants also visited production sites of Solar Turbines Incorporated, a 1998 recipient, and learned how, more than 10 years after receiving the award, the strategies and

core business principles of the MBNQA experience are still deeply integrated into its business practices.

Two leaders of MBNQA-receiving companies were also invited to speak to the group, followed by Q&A sessions. Mr. E. David Spong spoke of his own experience and role at Boeing Airlift and Tanker (A&T) Programs in 1998 and at Boeing Aerospace Support in 2003 in their respective MBNQA journeys. Boeing A&T developed a seven-step approach to its process-based management methodology used by its more than 100 integrated product teams and the even more numerous self-directed work teams that support them. Mr. Richard Norling shared his experience in leading Premier Inc. to receive the MBNQA in 2006. Premier Inc. is the largest healthcare alliance in the USA, serving 1,700 hospitals and more than 43,000 other healthcare sites. Its MBNQA efforts focused on the “Big Hairy Audacious Goal” of delivering “the best, most cost-effective care in the nation and for the alliance to have a major influence on reshaping healthcare.” By concentrating on ethics and leadership, customer satisfaction, and keeping the focus on people, Premier Inc. continues to make improvements.


At the end of the study mission, the group took time to recap what they had learned from the various MBNQA recipient organizations and to determine how those experiences could be applied to their own countries and to the APO region. In extensive group discussions and presentations led by resource person Thomas Schamberger, Executive Director of the Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, Inc., the group identified key best practices in the area of leadership, innovation, customer focus strategies, and the development of specific measurement and analysis tools, which they found to be common to many MBNQA recipients.



Resource person Schamberger moderating a lively Q&A session. APO/Yumiko Yamashita



Thai participant Ekkawit Jitrada summarizes discussion results on MBNQA applicability in Asia, Newport Beach, 17 September. APO/Yumiko Yamashita

Resource person Schamberger suggested that future missions on quality award programs should be divided into two groups with separate objectives: “I would not include country award administrators with organizations wanting to learn from US organizations (i.e., best practices, lessons learned, etc.). The administrators are more interested in the award process rather than best practices.” Despite a lengthy preassignment completed by all participants before embarking on the mission, some believed that a prior national workshop would have been helpful to discuss some of the more advanced elements of attempts to meet quality award criteria. Pham Quang Thang, Deputy CEO in charge of SME Business, Vietnam Technological and Commercial Joint-Stock Bank, echoed many participants when he said that a similar mission “should be organized yearly.” All hoped that the APO would continue quality award-related projects, especially to train assessors, and agreed that the MBNQA continues to be an example of a national initiative to promote innovation and recognize the best practices of performance excellence in industry, healthcare, and other sectors. 



## Strategic management consultancy: focus on the service sector

On Sunday, 26 September 2010, 18 participants from 17 APO member countries flew to Tokyo to take part in a two-week training course on strategic management consultancy. They assembled at the Secretariat bright and early on Monday morning to learn about the knowledge and skills involved in integrated strategic management consultancy, with particular focus on the service sector.

The first week of the training course began with a briefing at the Secretariat, followed by lectures given by Japanese experts at the Japan Productivity Center located in Shibuya on themes such as the concepts of corporate diagnosis, innovation through scientific and engineering approaches, human resources management, and marketing. Site visits were arranged for the second week, and participants visited Kikuya Co. Ltd., Eagle Bus Co. Ltd., and Novarese, Inc.

"This has been an interesting program. It is fascinating to see how the Japanese mind works," said Alexander V. Tan from the Philippines. "The Japanese service industry has very customer-oriented types of business models," noted the Product Development and Technical Support Committee Director-Chairman, who participated on behalf of the Philippines Chamber of Handicraft Industry.

Nepal's Industrial Enterprise Development Institute Division Manager Shree Ranjan Wasti was impressed by Japan's process automation. "Everything here is automatic—ironing, cleaning, moving hangers, and packaging. In Nepal, things are done manually. The level of productivity we have seen is very high, with a focus on the employees. Companies motivate their people to reach their potential." Commenting on factory visits, Wasti was impressed by the special provisions made for women, i.e., a daycare/play area for their children. "In my country, some companies have started childcare, but it has not become standard yet."

"The Eagle Bus system was informative, and we can apply it to our bus systems at

home in Sri Lanka," said Arangallage Harshana Disnath Arangalla, Biyagama Divisional Secretariat Office Human Resource Development Assistant.

The final field visit in the course was a trip to Novarese, Inc., which specializes in weddings. Education and Training Department General Manager Asuka Nagae spoke about the company's human resources management, beginning with the education system that includes a month-long induction program for new graduates at a hotel in Nagano, central Japan: "We always make sure to tell our employees that their personal objectives are linked to our corporate objectives." Nagae explained the company's creative measures, assessment, healthy competition, employee recognition, and its ultimate goal to "see our customers smile." She was showered with questions from participants before the group toured the facilities to see what was on offer.

During the tour, Vietnam Productivity Centre International Cooperation Division Project Manager Vu Tu Quan sat in the groom's seat at a traditional Japanese matrimonial ceremony venue. About to tie the knot himself next May, Quan was delighted to be shown how to sip the traditional nuptial sake with the bride in *san-san-kudo*. "I feel very proud," he beamed. 🍷



Malaysia's Nor Surayya Binti Abdul Samad tries on a traditional Japanese wedding kimono during a site visit 6 October 2010. The gown weighs 5 kg. APO/Eriko Sugita

## APO participates in Global Festa Japan 2010

6 October was designated International Cooperation Day in Japan in 1987. That marks the joining of the Colombo Plan on that date in 1954 and the start of Japan's Official Development Assistance program. The government hopes that the official day will encourage Japanese to become involved in international cooperation activities. To celebrate, Global Festa Japan, originally called the International Cooperation Festival, has been held in Tokyo annually since 1990, and the APO has participated in it since 1998.

The Global Festa Japan 2010, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, was held on 2 and 3 October in Hibiya Park in central Tokyo. With the theme MDGs (millennium development goals)—It's Our Promise, the festival was participated in by 287 international nongovernmental organizations, Japanese government agencies, international bodies, embassies, and private enterprises. The organizers offered participatory activities teaching the meaning of MDGs. Other features were talk shows, a charity marathon, and international food stalls that attracted crowds of families, students, and the public under clear autumn skies on both days.

The APO booth was located in the Orange Area behind the main stage. In ad-



A young visitor to the APO's Global Festa booth absorbed in the map game. APO/Yoko Fujimoto

dition to panels introducing APO activities, recent publications, including the *APO Productivity Databook 2010*, were displayed and copies distributed on request. APO leaflets and pamphlets on the Eco-products International Fair 2011 to be held in India next February were also available. The game of matching APO member countries' national flags with the location of their capitals proved popular among young and old, with long queues waiting to try it. 🍷

## Secretary-General's debut official trip

On 8 October, APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki visited Seoul, the Republic of Korea to discuss issues pending from the previous Governing Body Meeting with APO Chair Dr. Dong-kyu Choi, Korea Productivity Center (KPC) Chairman and CEO. Dr. Choi expressed his support for the Secretariat proposal on the review of the APO membership contribution formula. In response, Yamazaki thanked the KPC for offering suggestions aimed at curbing the spikes in the percentage increases, which occurred in the 2011 and 2012 apportionment of membership contributions. After the meeting, Dr. Choi kindly gave Yamazaki a spontaneous tour of the KPC offices and training facilities. This was Yamazaki's first official trip to a member country, and he hopes to visit other countries in conjunction with APO projects.



Secretary-General Yamazaki (center) observes a KPC training course with Chairman Dr. Choi (R), 8 October 2010. Photo courtesy of KPC

## A searchable resource: the Eco-products Database

The *Eco-products Directory* is a groundbreaking APO publication that promotes the concept and practice of environmentally responsible purchasing among enterprises and consumers in the region. Published by the APO since 2004 as part of its Green Productivity Program, this directory catalogues a diverse range of 1,000 eco-products and -services available in the Asia-Pacific region and serves as a business resource and guidebook to cutting-edge eco-technology. Each year, new editions of the directory are circulated in Asia and beyond at various international events to widespread acclaim.



This year, the APO developed the Eco-products Database, a web-based version of the *Eco-products Directory 2010*. Users can easily access any listing contained in the printed version of the directory through a web search by product category, type of environmental label, and country of origin.

The APO believes that this new web search format is an opportunity to expand and enhance the scope of the *Eco-products Directory* in the future and looks forward to launching an updated website with listings from the *Eco-products Directory 2011*, which is currently in development.

The APO Eco-products Database can be accessed at: <http://apo-ecoproducts.com/>. Information on the *Eco-products Directory 2011* can be found here: [http://w-post.jp/epd2011/information/index\\_en.html](http://w-post.jp/epd2011/information/index_en.html).

## APO/NPO Update

### New APO Director for Bangladesh

Mr. K.H. Masud Siddiqui, Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Bangladesh, was appointed new APO Director for Bangladesh, w.e.f. 16 September 2010.

### New e-Mail address for NPO Bangladesh

The NPO of Bangladesh has a new e-mail address: [liaisonbangla\\_01@yahoo.com](mailto:liaisonbangla_01@yahoo.com).

## New intern at the Secretariat

I am A.N.M. Moinul Kabir from Bangladesh. I came to Japan on 23 August 2009 to start a Master's Degree course in International Development Studies (IDS) at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS). This is a one-year and seven-month program under a Japan International Cooperation Agency scholarship. On 1 October 2010, I started a five-month internship at the APO Secretariat as part of my program. The Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), a joint organizer of the IDS program along with GRIPS, facilitated the internship under an agreement with the APO.



APO/YF

I am working in the Secretariat Industry Department under the supervision of Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj. Under the FASID-APO agreement, I will be involved in some projects as well as daily activities of the department. The first assignment I completed was attending phase two of the e-learning course on Total Quality Management. The environment in the Secretariat is truly international and friendly.

In Bangladesh, I was employed from 2000 in the Bangladesh Bank, the central bank. Before coming to Japan, I was working as a deputy director in the Foreign Exchange Policy Department, a key department of the central bank, where I was involved in different policy formulation- and implementation-related activities. The bank is huge in terms of number of employees (almost 5000), so I am sure that they will manage during my absence.

My wife is a journalist and my daughter is in grade one of primary school. They are waiting for my return to Bangladesh but hoping to visit Japan. In my free time, I like reading but love playing/watching cricket, badminton, and tennis and listening to music. One of my passions is travel, and so far I have visited eight countries.

Although the nature of work in the APO Secretariat is different from my job in Bangladesh, I think that I will benefit by learning new things, especially project implementation and management. As Bangladesh is an APO member, I can become aware of what needs to be done to improve productivity. Internships are particularly helpful for people involved in development-related services. The APO promotes the sharing of experience among member countries where technical assistance is needed to enhance productivity. Interns can also learn about different aspects of development by sharing ideas. At the same time, they can experience the essence of an international working environment. For those who would like to become interns, all I can say is "give it a try."



# APO Productivity Photo Contest 2010 Announcing the winners!

**T**hanks to all who sent in their best shots to the APO 2010 Photo Contest. Launched in 2001 as part of the APO's 40th anniversary celebrations, the biennial APO Photo Contest has received thousands of images captured in member countries, each illustrating efforts related to productivity.

Judging of the 2010 contest took place at the Secretariat on 7 October. This year, the preliminary judging was done by photography experts Chikako Yatabe, former Associated Press Regional Photo Editor, Asia, and Seiji Nomura, Sankei Shimbun Photo Editor/Photographer. Yatabe and Nomura carefully reviewed each of the 813 images that had been received, commenting appreciatively as they circled the Secretariat conference room where all the prints had been hung.



Nomura (foreground) and Yatabe scrutinize all entries.



Singtong (center) comments on an image as Yamazaki takes a closer look.

## Gold Prize



*Gift from the Sea*, by Dang Thi Huong Hoa, Vietnam

After the preliminary selections had been made, the final judging took place, assisted by Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission Singtong Lapisatepun of the Embassy of Thailand and APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki.

## The Silver Prize went to these images:



*Fishing at Dawn* by Yutapond Siriwikul, Thailand



*Salt Farmers in Hon Khoi* by Ngo Duc Can, Vietnam

## These were the Bronze Prize winners:



*Planting Season* by Osamu Takeda, Japan



*Dressed up with Gadgets* by Nguyen Tran Hung, Vietnam



*Sky Lanterns Afloat* by Pongnathee Pookung, Thailand

## These photos were selected to receive Merit Prizes:



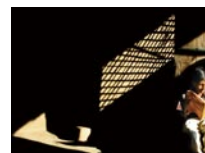
*Life* by Arun Mondhe, India



*Studying for Tomorrow* by Gregorio B. Dantes Jr., Philippines



*On the Way to Market* by Arun Mondhe, India



*Geometry of the Light* by Subodh Natu, India



*The Rewarding Gift* by Nguyen Ngoc Hai, Vietnam