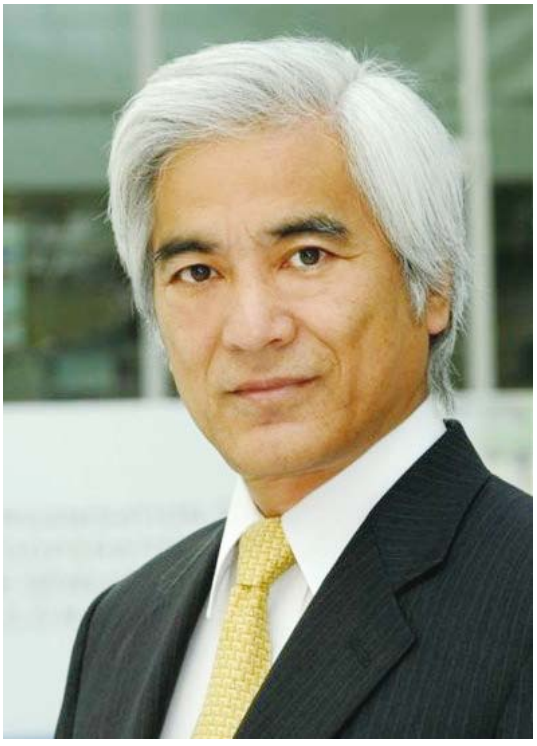
APO NEWS
Information to Make a Difference in Productivity

New APO Secretary-General

On 16 September, the APO welcomed its 10th Secretary-General Mari Amano. He was elected unanimously at the 55th APO Governing Body Meeting held in Tokyo in May 2013 to succeed ninth Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki, who completed his term of office on 15 September.



APO Secretary-General Mari Amano.

Secretary-General Amano is a graduate of the University of Tokyo, where he received a BA in economics, and studied at Hertford College, Oxford University, to obtain a diploma in social studies. He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1973 and had a distinguished 40-year career. He held several posts in Japanese embassies to the USA (1996), Thailand (1994), Kuwait (1987), and the UK (1976). In the Tokyo MOFA office, he served as Deputy Director General of the Multilateral Cooperation Bureau (2000) and Economic Affairs Bureau (1998), as well as Director of the Overseas Public Relations Division (1992) and desk officer in other divisions in the Economic Affairs Bureau (1989, 1984, 1978) and Economic Cooperation Bureau (1980).

More recently, he served as Consul-General of Japan in Houston, Texas, USA, from 2001 to 2004, and as the Acting Director-General of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization from 2004 to 2007. Subsequently, Secretary-General Amano was the Deputy Secretary-General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris from 2007 to 2011. Immediately prior to joining the APO, he was Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and the Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland, from September 2011 to September 2013.

A father of three daughters, in his free moments Secretary-General Amano enjoys sailing and is interested in collecting French wines.

Taking office at the Secretariat on the first day, the new Secretary-General was looking forward to enhancing the APO's relevance to the needs of a rapidly changing world. He commented, "I would like to upgrade the APO to become an international organization with the highest productivity."

His aspirations for APO members spanning the Asia-Pacific region include an emphasis on green technologies, women, and the service sector. "I would like to build a solid personal friendship with each and every APO Director, and to that end I will try to visit all of them in their capitals in my first year," the Secretary-General stated. "Reaching out to such nonmembers as Myanmar, Brunei, the United Arab Emirates, and Africa should also be within our scope."

The APO welcomes Secretary-General Amano, who will use his wealth of experience in diplomacy, economic development, and management to lead the APO and contribute to the sustainable development of member economies.

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Asian Productivity Organization (APO)
Leaf Square Hongo Building, 2F
1-24-1 Hongo, Bunkyo-ku
Tokyo 113-0033, Japan
Tel: 81-3-3830-0411
Fax: 81-3-5840-5322
e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org

Urban agriculture and productivity

For many Asians, "urban agriculture" (UAG) is a familiar phenomenon. It is a common sight in open fields, backyards of houses, along riverbanks, or even on rooftops. It may be paddy farming, horticulture, intensive dairying, or gardening. UAG is natural and beneficial to exploit every space to grow food when necessary. How much does UAG matter and what are the issues involved?

An immediate answer is that UAG contributes to better livelihoods of the urban poor by providing nonmarket access to food and offering jobs and incomes (UN ESC 2000). The importance of UAG in this regard is paramount, especially in least developing countries where huge numbers of the poor flock to urban areas. Better household food security and poverty reduction should be the prime policy target for those populations. Governments and civil society can offer helping hands such as micro credit, vocational training, land titles, or market facilities. In the past, the APO has organized several seminars and training courses that addressed these issues.

In some Asian countries, a challenging issue has been emerging in UAG: optimal land use. Unless resources are used efficiently, the productivity of the entire economy will be undermined. Land is one of the most important resources for both the agriculture and urban sectors. In many Asian countries, urbanization has sprawled at unprecedented speed to what had once been fertile agricultural land. Roads, housing, and factories disrupted farmland and rural villages. Irrigation channels have become filthy ditches. Land prices have soared elsewhere, and speculation followed. Some lucky farmers have been paid handsomely for selling their land, but many others have held onto farmland because no guaranteed alternative employment was available or in the hope of further price rises. The consequence is patchy mixes of farmland and urbanized plots, far from the ideal land use that spatial economists dream of.

If this phenomenon is confined to limited areas of a nation, it can be regarded as a local issue. But Asia is changing at a rapid pace. With a continual influx of people, the urban population now accounts for 54% of the total in East Asia, 44% in Southeast Asia, and 32% in South Asia. The rate reached 83% in the ROK and 72% in Malaysia in 2010. Japan's census indicated that "urban-like areas" produced 30% of national agricultural output in 2005. The percentage was much higher for vegetables at 40%. UAG therefore cannot be neglected from the viewpoint of national development.

One possible solution is a policy mix of "zoning" and taxation. Japan has a long, bitter history of this, which is worth briefly reviewing.

Line drawing between urbanization promotion areas (UPAs) and urbanization control areas (UCAs) started in 1969 under the City Planning Law. After tough negotiations and hard work, local governments eventually identified 1.2 million ha of UPAs in Japan, of which nearly 30% were farmland. The City Planning Law, however, contained sticks as well as carrots to achieve goals. Owners of farmland within UPAs were requested to pay taxes "equivalent to residential land" which were 100–500-fold higher than farmland tax. This was sensible because UPAs were expected to be converted to urban use. Farmers' groups launched strong petitions and were rewarded with a conditional tax suspension for specified land.

In the late 1980s, however, farmland in UPAs and generous tax reductions became a prime target of social criticism as urban land prices soared. The rule was modified in 1991 so that tax suspensions applied only to farmers who continued farming for more than 30 years, after which they had to sell the land to the local government. Farmers were forced to choose either paying higher taxes in return for retaining the freedom to dispose of farmland or continuing to farm for such a long period. Only one-third of farmers chose the latter. Farmland in UPAs declined sharply from 150,000 ha in the early 1990s to 90,000 ha in 2004.

What happened to the 1 million ha of farmland in the UCAs? It has been protected fairly well thanks to strict control under the Agricultural Land Law. In addition, the strong impact of the Agriculture Promotion Law 1969 cannot be overlooked. This law, enacted only one year after the new City Planning Law, was armed with zoning clauses for agriculture. It was originally planned to protect agricultural "territory" but quickly evolved into a powerful means to promote comprehensive rural development. The law prescribes both policy assistance to facilitate agricultural development and zoning regulations to protect agricultural land. Government assistance for irrigation, food marketing, or agricultural loans was offered only to farmers in agricultural use areas (AUAs).

It is not a contradiction that AUAs overlap with UCAs as defined by the City Planning Law. In 1999, AUAs covered 850,000 ha of farmland in UCAs. AUA farmers have committed themselves to agriculture and receive services equivalent to those of farmers in rural areas. Many admit that these

Vegetables thriving in vertical shelves in a plant factory.

farmers are more productive than others by taking advantage of geoeconomic conditions.

It is ironic that voices appreciating UAG are gaining momentum after farmers and farmland have almost disappeared in UPAs. Many municipalities now encourage farmers in UPAs to retain their productive land. They believe that farmland in UPAs offers urban citizens a shelter in times of natural disaster and a breathing green space in "concrete jungles." Some researchers add that peri-urban paddy land mitigates flooding. Various programs have started to retain UAG, including product sales in "road stations," allotment gardens for urban dwellers, and farming experience for schoolchildren. These are new attempts to internalize the positive externalities of UAG.

As the above example shows, the task of Japanese controlling UAG is extremely difficult and complicated. Nevertheless, many Asian countries will face similar challenges. Optimal use of scarce land must be a prerequisite for the sustainable development of national economies. APO member countries can learn many lessons by sharing experiences and knowledge on UAG.

Tsubota is currently a professor at Meiji University, Japan. As an agricultural economist for 40 years, he has been involved in agricultural policy/project analysis in several international agencies including the OECD, ADB, FAO, and APO where he was the Director of the Secretariat Agriculture Department from 2002–2006. Professor Tsubota has contributed to numerous research publications and specialist agroeconomic journals over the years.

Incubation, innovation, and entrepreneurship

Twenty-two participants, including four local ones, gathered in Taipei, ROC, for the APO workshop on Innovation, Incubation, and Entrepreneurship: Identifying and Commercializing New Opportunities, organized in collaboration with the China Productivity Center (CPC), 12–16 August. They were joined by a chief expert and three resource speakers from Australia, Canada, Japan, and the host country. The 22 individuals were from NPOs, academic institutes, innovative SMEs, and agencies involved in innovation or encouraging entrepreneurship.

Workshop participants were aware that entrepreneurship can stimulate national economies by embracing innovation, technology, and creativity and that SMEs can be at the forefront of such activities. However, the road from an innovative idea to actual commercialization can be rocky. Technology incubators therefore play a crucial role in guiding entrepreneurs to commercial success. This workshop combined the three concepts of innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship to show how new business ideas were tried, tested, and supported in incubation centers.

After the resource speakers detailed basic concepts and real-life examples of innovation and entrepreneurship incubated in centers in different locations, a panel discussion allowed the participants to question them and each other on practices that could potentially be adopted by regional SMEs to commercialize new ideas. The following day, participants divided into groups to devise action plans for entrepreneurship development in their countries in the morning session. The afternoon saw them at the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST) Innovation & Incubation Center, BIC Co., and the Micro-Garage of the NTUST absorbing concrete information on how incubators can point entrepreneurs on the path to successful commercialization.

Panel discussion on innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship.

The action plans were presented on the final day of the workshop. Chief Expert Dr. William D. Beynon of the University of Waterloo Conrad Centre for Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology, Ontario, Canada, commended the presentations and the agreement that the groups would hold quarterly virtual meetings on the progress of implementation. Dr. Beynon stressed the need to set specific times before departing for home to maintain momentum. It was "an encouraging sign," said Dr. Beynon, that a webportal for this was arranged before the workshop's end.

An ambitious plan was developed by Pakistani participant Kashif Mohammad Khan of Iqra University Islamabad campus. He planned to make presentations to colleagues, publish an article, and visit an entrepreneurial institute/incubation center to discuss how the findings of the workshop could be applied in its circumstances.

p-Tools

Productivity methodologies, tools, and techniques

Going green with material flow cost accounting

Going green enables SMEs to grasp many opportunities, from economic growth to fiscal consolidation and enhanced productivity, through more efficient use of resources. Manufacturing is the most competitive business in the world. To make higher profits, value must be added by rationalizing systems. One way that manufacturers can go green is by adopting material flow cost accounting (MFCA). This environmental accounting method incorporates the calculation and management of quantity and cost data on losses of resource inputs during the manufacturing process. This model accounts for final finished products as "positive products" and everything else involved in their manufacture as "negative products." Analyzing negative products and reducing their amount results in less environmental impact and lower costs because the resource inputs are reduced by an amount equivalent to the decrease in negative products.

Companies adopting MFCA can quickly lower processing costs caused by material loss, loss of recyclable waste, etc. The major characteristics of MFCA are dividing costs into positive and negative product costs, calculating costs throughout all processes, and categorizing costs into material costs, system costs, energy costs, and waste treatment costs. Another characteristic is that all materials that do not become products are treated as losses or negative products, and all related costs are negative product costs. MFCA thus enables companies to visualize loss costs in multiproduct, small-lot production and offers a model for comparison of losses. Standard cost accounting, on the other hand, cannot indicate all material losses.

Information is the key for a successful MFCA initiative. A company must have correct data from reliable sources, with timely updates and confirmation of accuracy. These will ensure that a company can calculate the precise value of waste and cost of waste-generating steps in the manufacturing process. MFCA is especially helpful in enhancing production in SMEs because it focuses on waste reduction with the technological ideals of "zero negative product cost," resource conservation, lower energy consumption, and reduction of emissions.

It is a challenging task for SMEs to remain competitive against the current backdrop of global economic problems, which will affect their growth and business in the long run. However, implementing MFCA will enable SMEs to green their operations and increase their productivity simultaneously. SMEs ready to undertake MFCA should be aware of six essential steps for success. But first, they should recognize that the approach must start "from the top down but be from the bottom up onsite." In other words, aggressive support from management is crucial, but workers must be responsible for MFCA activities on the shopfloor. The key steps for introducing and promoting MFCA are:

1) Know the principles and fundamentals of MFCA (Figure). Knowledge can be acquired by attending ISO 14051:2011 training or reading management literature and MFCA success stories from other SMEs.

2) Obtain buy-in of stakeholders. Responsible personnel must be equipped with sufficient information to obtain buy-in from all stakeholders, especially top management, to put the MFCA concept into practice. Success stories from other SMEs can be incorporated to illustrate the merits of MFCA.

3) Identify the leaders. Pick people from different fields of expertise who have the necessary vision to make MFCA work in the organization, then form a cross-functional team.

4) Carry out a pilot run. A trial period using minimum resources will demonstrate how MFCA can benefit the company.

5) Name the project and hold a kick-off meeting. It is essential to have a large banner or signboard at the plant as a visual reminder that the organization is embarking on MFCA.

6) Involve everyone. The original team should share MFCA knowledge, tools, and concepts with all involved in a unit implementing MFCA, set specifications for product loss, establish quantity centers, and identify expected inputs and outputs for each quantity center.

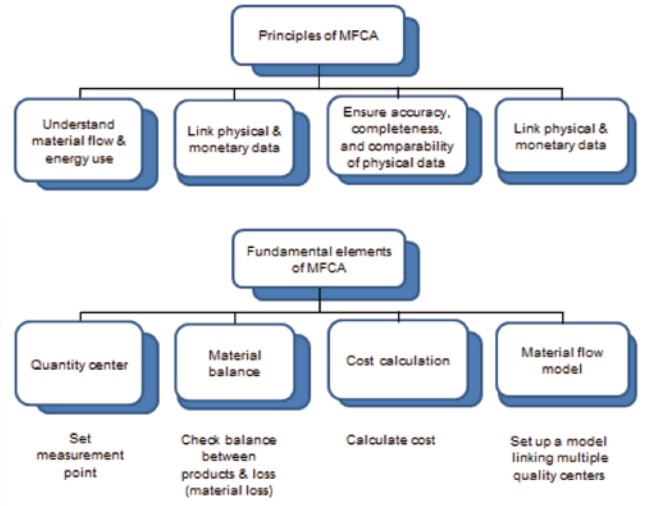


Figure. ISO 14051:2011: Principles (upper panel) and fundamentals (lower panel) of MFCA.

Source: Chart information from Propharm Japan Co. Ltd.

Terms defined in the ISO 14051:2011 standard related to MFCA include cost accounting, cost allocation, energy cost, energy loss, environmental management accounting, input, inventory, material, material balance, material distribution percentage, material cost, material flow, material loss, output, quantity center, system cost, and waste management cost. SME personnel involved in MFCA initiatives should become familiar with these terms in their own company's situation.

Why should a manufacturing company implement MFCA? MFCA will reduce the amount of waste generated in production processing and prevent the need for expensive waste recycling. The company will save money on supplies and waste disposal, while conserving natural resources and energy. Therefore it will be able to give customers what they want: greener products. Employee morale will also be raised when staff have an opportunity to work together on an environmental project and reduce the risk of future liability associated with solid waste disposal. In terms of administrative value, MFCA helps increase transparency and allows monetary evaluations of the use of raw materials and natural resources by controlling and financially evaluating the generation of waste and its management.

To help local SME entrepreneurs go green, Malaysia's Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (MEWC) is supporting national efforts to promote green technology, and the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation has been entrusted with carrying out awareness activities. The objectives of the program are to: encourage participation of government agencies and local SMEs in greening technology; help local entrepreneurs become certified in green technology; create more ecolabeled products and services; assist manufacturers in managing waste; foster a culture of using green products and services; and increase marketing activities for green products and services domestically and internationally. The Malaysian Green Technology Corporation, with budget from the MEWC, will host a series of "roadshows" to promote waste minimization and Green Productivity among SMEs. One element is a case study of MFCA presented by a successful MFCA practitioner. About 1,200 companies will benefit from this program by attending a free half-day seminar. A similar program on MFCA could easily be adapted in other APO members.

Roslina Muhammad took the May 2012 APO e-learning course on Green Productivity and MFCA and was among participants earning the highest points on the exam. She then attended the advanced training course on MFCA in the ROC in August. After returning to her position in the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation, she linked up with the MECW to disseminate her MFCA knowledge for widespread multiplier effects. The APO News *applauds her efforts and thanks her for contributing this article.*

Basic productivity tools for SMEs

In all APO members, growing SMEs play a vital role in the development of national economies, not only by providing new sources of employment and replacing declining traditional industries but also for their innovativeness, creativity, and international competitiveness. A variety of practical, basic productivity tools are suitable for SMEs to achieve or sustain market competitiveness. A training course on basic productivity tools for SMEs held in Seoul, ROK, 2–5 July, was a collaboration between the APO and Korea Productivity Center (KPC). The course complemented the Development of Productivity Practitioners: Basic course held annually to benefit mainly NPOs. It was attended by 19 participants from 17 APO member countries, who represented NPOs, ministries, associations, and the public and private sectors.

Two resource speakers facilitated the four-day training course: Abdul Malek Mohamad Aripin from the Malaysia Productivity Corporation and George Hock Wong from Hoclink Systems & Services Pte. Ltd., Singapore. They were aided by two local speakers and the KPC's Director of International Cooperation and APO Liaison Officer Junho Kim. While learning how to use basic improvement tools and techniques for SMEs, such as total quality maintenance, 5S, kaizen, and quality control circles, participants had the opportunity to observe real-life applications in the service sector at Mun-Hwa Distribution Books and in manufacturing at DBI Inc. Those observations informed the drafting of participants' action plans for follow-up in their workplaces. Resource speaker Wong commented specifically on how impressed he was by the "active and intense group discussions" prior to and during the action planning phase of the project.

Participants observing IT use in inputting inventory data at Mun-Hwa Distribution Books.

APO Secretariat Industry Department Program Officer Muhammad Idham, who oversaw the course, received encouraging feedback from participants, who were uniformly enthusiastic about the training received. The site visits were especially praised in participants' written evaluations. Kumar Subodh of India was in agreement about the site visits to SMEs "providing good examples" and suggested that a similar national-level course would be beneficial. Cambodias' Mao Savin planned to "share the key tools/techniques with my colleagues immediately and later with my young entrepreneurs' association" to create multiplier effects. Shahnaz Behboudi of IR Iran referred to the tools as "very meaningful" for her company and, like several others, wished that the course could have been longer.

Advanced agribusiness management for SMEs

Today's agribusiness executives and managers operate in a rapidly changing, volatile, technology-driven, consumer-focused market. This dynamic environment poses greater challenges to executives and managers of agribusiness companies in staying competitive. They have to explore new products, business models, and even organizational structures that could increase their efficiency and overall productivity to strengthen their market position.

The APO organized a workshop on Advanced Agribusiness Management for Executives and Managers of SMEs, 29 July–2 August, to expose participants to the latest thinking in strategic management, marketing strategy, and other relevant ideas. Subsequently, this would help enhance their leadership and managerial skills to improve the productivity and competitiveness of their agribusinesses. The workshop also discussed related issues, along with the capacity development needs of agribusiness executives and managers in APO member countries and recommended measures to address them. The workshop was organized with the Thailand Productivity Institute. The first day was an open international seminar on Trends in Advanced Agribusiness Management, attended by 35 local participants and 17 overseas participants from 13 countries.

The program combined a structured learning environment featuring frameworks and analytical techniques for decision making, new agribusiness-specific cases, and sharing best practices among participants from the Asian region. Some of the topics covered were global trends and key drivers in agribusiness, opportunities and challenges for agribusiness in Asia, examples of value chains in agribusiness, innovative marketing techniques, and capacity development needs of agribusiness executives and managers in Asia.

Dr. Christy, resource person from Cornell University, clarifying a point on strategy formulation in agribusiness during a workshop session.

Expert Dr. Ralph D. Christy, Director, Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development and Professor of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA, commented, "The workshop was very dynamic given the good mix of participants. The APO should organize more of this type of course to address the needs of agribusiness executives in the region by exposing them to insightful real-life cases."

Participant Martin Kong Fen Nyap, General Manager, Sabah Tea Sdn. Bhd., who holds an MBA from a US university, found the workshop useful, stating, "I appreciated the content of the program, especially the case studies and the group discussions. I also learned about the competence of other countries in agribusiness." Participant S. Amal Arunapriya, Director of Agriculture, District Secretariat of Kegalle, Sri Lanka, thought that the participatory approach was successful, commended the resource persons, and suggested "after two or three years, organize a workshop to review progress, inviting the same participants."

1st Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference: Biotechnology and Global Competitiveness

Biotechnology has wide applications in the food and agriculture sectors and offers tremendous potential for increasing productivity, the development of niche products, and achieving food and feed security. To provide a unique forum for leaders from the public and private sectors, NGOs, scientists, consultants, and entrepreneurs to discuss current and emerging topics in biotechnology important to advances in agriculture, agribusiness, and food industries in Asia, the APO in collaboration with the Council of Agriculture (COA), China Productivity Center (CPC), and Food and Fertilizer Technology Center held the 1st Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference on the theme Biotechnology and Global Competitiveness in Taipei, 15–18 July.

COA Deputy Minister Wen-Deh Chen delivered the inaugural remarks, when he noted that, "Taiwan and Asian countries face not only climate change, but also population growth, aging farmers, small-scale farming, increasing cost of agricultural inputs, competition for limited resources, food safety and security, trade liberalization and globalization, and cross-border spread of animal diseases and plant pests." He added that the conference was relevant because it would address the challenges facing the global population. (The full text of his remarks is available at http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Inaugural_Remarks_DM-Chen.pdf.)

More than 70 participants from 13 member countries attended. Fifteen resource persons from the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions/Asia-Pacific Consortium on Agricultural Biotechnology; Asia BioBusiness Pte. Ltd. Singapore; CropLife Asia Singapore; International Service for the Acquisition of Agribiotech Applications Philippines; Journal of Commercial Biotechnology USA; Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation; Nanyang Technological University Singapore; Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture Philippines; US Soybean Export Council; and five organizations of the ROC made thematic presentations on different aspects of biotechnology applications in the food and agriculture sectors. The conference consisted of thematic sessions, open forums, panel discussions, a poster exhibition, and visit to the Bio Taiwan 2013 exhibition.

COA Deputy Minister Wen-Deh Chen delivering the inaugural remarks.

One important outcome of the conference was the widespread consensus among experts and participants that biotechnology is an important tool to help APO members meet the challenges arising from climate change, natural resource constraints, food security, and sustainable development. Additionally, experts shared experience on the many proven applications of biotechnology ranging from biopesticides and biofertilizers to biotech (genetically modified) crops.

The participants agreed on a set of recommendations (available at http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/news/files/2013/08/Recommendations__Asian-Food-and-Agribusiness-Conference-2013.pdf) and resolved that they would do their utmost to contribute to advances in biotechnology applications for achieving national food and nutrition security in their countries by utilizing and disseminating the lessons learned from this conference.

APO/NPO Update

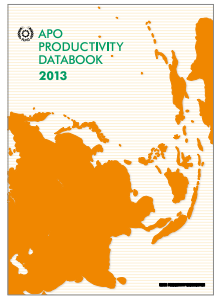
Pakistan
New Director
Name: Shafqat Hussain Naghmi
Designation: Federal Secretary, Ministry of Industries
Effective date: 8 July 2013

Singapore
New APO Liaison Officer
Name: Philicia Lim
Designation: Manager, Productivity Programme Office, SPRING Singapore
Tel: 65-6279-3723
e-Mail: Philicia_LIM@spring.gov.sg
Effective date: 1 July 2013

New publication

APO Productivity Databook 2013
(publication date 9 August; 136 pp.)

ISBN: 978-92-833-2445-4 (print edition)
ISBN: 978-92-833-2446-1 (PDF edition)



The sixth edition of the *APO Productivity Databook* is now available in e-book (available for downloading free of charge from the APO website) and printed versions. Like preceding editions, it is the result of a collaboration between the Research & Planning Department of the APO Secretariat and Keio Economic Observatory, Keio University, Tokyo.

The APO Productivity Databook 2013 provides a long-term view of comparable data on the economic growth and productivity levels of Asia-Pacific economies in relation to global and regional economies, 1970–2010. Baseline indicators are calculated for 29 Asian economies, representing the 20 APO members and nine nonmembers in Asia. Data from Australia, the EU, Turkey, and the USA are also included in certain analyses. Total factor productivity (TFP) was computed for 16 APO economies, with PR China and the USA as references. The biggest change in the 2013 databook is new TFP computations for Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

It appears from the statistical data and analysis included in the new volume that Asian economies have generally recovered from the recent global financial crisis. However, efforts to become more efficient and productive to remain competitive must continue. Valid productivity measurement is therefore more important than ever. The APO will continue to work with its members and their statistical offices to improve the data quality and coverage presented in the *APO Productivity Databook* series for use by development planners, public and private policy bodies, industries, researchers, and the general public.

Photo news

The Secretariat welcomes delegates attending the Strategic Planning Workshop for APO Liaison Officers, 26 June, Tokyo.

The Secretariat and JPC welcome delegates from the Philippines attending the Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs mission on Public-sector Productivity, 9 July, Tokyo. (R–L): Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) Program Manager Nanette C. Caparros; APO Alternate Director for the Philippines and DAP President Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr.; APO Liaison Officer for the Philippines and DAP Vice President/Managing Director, Carlos A. Sayco, Jr.; and DAP Chairman of the Board Dr. Cayetano W. Paderanga, Jr.

Expert meeting for the research project Assessment of Green Productivity Implementation and Needs of Member Countries, ROC, 21–23 August.

54th WSM to convene in Fiji

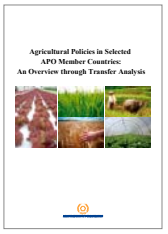
The 54th Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organizations (WSM), the APO's annual program planning exercise, will be held in Nadi, Fiji, 29–31 October 2013. This is the second WSM to be hosted by Fiji.

The agenda for the meeting will include the adoption of the report on the evaluation of 2012 projects, reconfirmation of the APO Program Plan for 2014, discussion of APO Program Plans for 2015–2016, and strategic planning sessions.

New APO publication on agriculture welcomed

Agricultural Policies in Selected APO Member Countries: An Overview through Transfer Analysis

ISBN: 978-92-833-2422-5 (print edition)
ISBN: 978-92-833-2423-2 (PDF edition)



Agricultural Policies in Selected APO Member Countries: An Overview through Transfer Analysis *was published in June and is attracting favorable attention. Director Ken Ash of the OECD Agriculture Department wrote the following.*

The APO initiative to extend the OECD's producer/consumer support estimates methodology to a number of Asian countries is most welcome. For more than 25 years, the OECD has been monitoring and evaluating agriculture policies in OECD countries and, more recently, in Brazil, PR China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, South Africa, and Ukraine. Extending measurement and understanding of agriculture policy efforts to a wider set of countries in Asia, South America, and Africa is particularly important for at least two reasons: 1) an increasing share of global production and consumption takes place there, outside current OECD member countries; and 2) government involvement in agriculture remains prevalent, with a seemingly ever-changing mix of policies designed alternatively to protect, to support, and in some cases to tax producers (and consumers). Clearly, understanding existing policy aims, instruments, and likely impacts is prerequisite to government consideration of alternative policy measures that can perform better both domestically and internationally. This is why the OECD continues to review policy developments on an annual basis, and it is also why this APO contribution is so potentially valuable to policymakers in Asia. What remains, of course, is for policymaking to be informed by the new insights now available.

Agricultural Policies in Selected APO Member Countries: An Overview through Transfer Analysis is informed by the OECD methodology and experience, but it has been prepared solely under the responsibility of the APO and its national experts. It provides a consistent, systematic base of policy information on the Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Thailand. But the report goes further and explicitly discusses the relationship between policy incentives (and disincentives) and productivity performance. While neither the OECD nor the APO have all the answers, collaboration is continuing. Our shared aim is not only to provide comparable policy information for more countries, and over time, but also to extend our analysis to highlight actions governments can take (or avoid) in order to improve agriculture productivity growth on a sustainable basis globally.

NPO focus

Offspring of the EPIF in the Philippines

The APO's Eco-products International Fairs (EPIFs) encourage long-term Green Productivity (GP) initiatives in the hosts. Examples include International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN) counterparts in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia; and national/regional environmental exhibitions in Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines, such as the Suppliers' Forum on Green Public Procurement (GPP) in the Philippines held on 15 August at SMX Convention Center in Pasay City, Metro Manila, site of the fifth EPIF in March 2009. Forum organizers were the Development Academy of the Philippines' (DAP) collaborative partner Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development, Inc. (PCEPSDI), Department of Budget and Management-Procurement Service, and Department of Trade & Industry (DTI), with support from the DAP and local IGPN counterpart the Green Purchasing Alliance Movement. The DTI is receiving assistance from the EU Switch-Asian project (2012–2016) in implementing its sustainable production and consumption policies.

Even before hosting the 2009 EPIF with its 82,000 visitors and 128 exhibitors, the Philippines enacted Executive Order 301 of 29 March 2004 mandating GPP by the executive branch of government. The Suppliers' Forum on Green Public Procurement in the Philippines, held concurrently with the Green Philippines 2013 exhibition, was attended by Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection and concurrent PCEPSDI Chair J.R. Nereus O. Acosta, and numerous government and industry leaders. A message from President Benigno S.C. Aquino was read by DTI Undersecretary Nora K. Terrado. Although 150 attendees were expected, some 260 filled the audience. During the forum, 10 eco-products from seven companies were awarded the Green Choice Philippines Seal of Approval.

L–R: DAP President Kalaw; DTI Undersecretary Terrado; Vice President Benjie Yap, Foods and Home Care of Unilever Philippines Inc.; Vice President Engr. Ramon Gil Macapagal, Corporate Affairs; Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection and concurrent PCEPSDI Chair Acosta; and Industry Department Director Miyakawa.

Among invited speakers, APO Secretariat Industry Department Director Setsuko Miyakawa detailed government's crucial role in encouraging GPP, describing "the chain reaction in which the 2nd World Conference on GP in Manila led to forming the GP Advisory Committee, recognition of the importance of public-private partnerships, and then the EPIFs." "The Philippine government remains proactive in GP and is an example to all," she added. According to DAP President and CEO Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr., "Profitability, while still an ultimate goal of continuing improvement in business productivity, must be achieved without undue cost to the environment and the communities it shelters." President of the Philippine Plastics Industry Association, Inc. Peter T. Quintana acknowledged, "Practicing a green way of life is a very big challenge, but if we begin in our small way today, we will surely see a cleaner, greener future." That future appears brighter as the EPIFs continue to spawn GP efforts in APO members.