



Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

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An APO representative making a traditional escort for the participants up to the Leaf Square building for the inauguration of the event

Tokyo City Dome area during the evening hours of Sunday the day before the commencement of APO study mission for international media practitioners

Sri Lanka in multi-country study tour of innovations in Japan's agriculture industry

Sri Lanka's participation vital to offer a wider publicity through media to share knowledge, competencies, present and future development drives in regional agriculture industry to the masses engaged in agriculture in SL.

By HARSHA UDAYAKANTHA
PAINS REPORTING FROM TOKYO

THE Multicounty Observational Study Mission (OSM) on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners, organised by the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) commenced on 8 September 2014 in Tokyo, Japan.

A total number of APO sponsored 17 participants especially from print and electronic media of APO member countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand arrived at Nissei Tokyo hotel in Suidobashi Tokyo on 7 September to participate in the study mission.

The seven day OSM includes the first day presentations namely, "Promotion of Entry into the Sixth-Order Industry and Promotion of Agriculture-Commerce-Industry Collaboration", "The Sixth Sector Innovations to Revitalize Rural Communities, Innovative Film Agriculture Using cutting Edge Membrane

Technology" and "Overview of Agricultural Journalism in Japan" as well as observational tours, field visits, discussions and video screenings of agriculture related commerce and industry collaborations.

Making the opening remarks at the initiation of the program on 8 September 2014 at Laop square building in Tokyo, Japan, Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) Secretary General Mari Amano stated that APO started a mission to mutually understand the productivity missions and a successful platform has now been facilitated through the APO to share knowledge and experience on agriculture and related facilities among member countries via effective learning through each other.

"Today, it is pleasant to note that almost every country in the region has taken steps to promote agriculture as an industry that uses the cutting-edge technology for its efficient promotion and effective marketing of the produce," he added.

The first day of the study mission also included a welcome lunch for all participants at Restaurant Rissea at Tokyo Dome Hotel hosted by APO Secretary General Mari Amano, APO, Japan Director - Industrial Department J.M.Thiloka Jayasundara also attended the occasion. Jayasundara is the first Sri Lankan and the first ever non-Japanese citizen to be a Director of the APO during its history of nearly 53 years of implementation.

In a brief overview of the APO activities, Joseffito C. Bernado - Director Agriculture Department Asian Productivity Organisation in Japan said that all participants at this study mission would be effectively exposed to the modern agricultural technology and its practices performed in collaboration with the private sector and the local government to share and learn through experience.

"Growing food and related industries are a major requirement of the growing population and it has become more of a challenge than ever before, with climate change, lack of land for agriculture and related issues. Building a framework therefore, for cooperation among journalists for easy and better networking has become vital to promote and safeguard this industry of global importance," he said.

The APO and its activities

Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) that organizes the study mission in collaboration with the respective national productivity organisations and secretariats in member countries was established in 11 May 1961 as a regional inter-governmental organisation. Its mission is to contribute to the socio-economic development of Asia and the Pacific through enhancing productivity.

The APO membership is open to countries in Asia and the Pacific which are members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Current member-



Mari Amano - Secretary General of the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) making the opening remarks at the initiation of the program



Joseffito C. Bernado - Director Agriculture Department Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in Japan speaking at the inauguration of the study mission

ship comprises Bangladesh, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In serving its member countries, the APO also performs five key roles as a think tank, catalyst, regional adviser, institution builder and clearing-house for productivity information.

The APO Secretariat, the executive arm of the APO, is headed by the Secretary General and carries out the decisions and policy directives of the governing body. In collaboration with the National Productivity Organisations of the member countries, it plans and implements a two-year plan and annual programs.

APO programs cover the industry, service and agriculture sectors, with special focus on socio-economic development, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development, human resources management, productivity measurement and analysis, knowledge management, production and technology management, information technology, development of NPOs, green productivity, integrated community development, agribusiness, agricultural development and policies, resources and technology as well as agricultural marketing and institutions.

Its activities include research, forums, conferences and study missions, workshops, training courses, seminars, observational study missions and demonstration projects.

The APO OSM on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners this year includes an array of vivid programs that include special observational

tours and field visits for activities such as observing apple cider processing, briefing on development of agriculture in Aomori prefecture focusing on innovative approaches in agriculture and agro tourism activities, visiting Tsaii Agricultural Corporation and Tsugaru Mirai Agricultural Cooperative, Tokiwa branch to observe garlic preservation using cryo-technology at Aomori prefecture, visits to observe and understand paddy field art at Inakadate, visits to Hiroaki Apple Park and Happy Longevity Village - farm direct shop and Cherry Center at Nambucho, attending Summer Fiesta of Nambucho, briefing on agro tourism activities in the area, its history, present status and future prospects, observing agro-tourism sites in Nambucho, visits to farm house holds for interview, experiencing SOBA making, fruits pickling, a visit to the Plant Factory at Chiba University, a visit to Tsu I Farm to observe harvesting of tomatoes by using film agriculture at Isehara, Kamikasuya, a visit to Morouchi Ito Farm and its wholesaler as well as its processing factory Maeda Kinzaburo Shop.

The end presentations of the study mission include presentations on

"Women's Power to Revitalize Rural Agriculture and Promotion of Sixth Industry" by Kazuo Sato - Director of the Women and Elder Affairs Office - Agriculture Human Resource Development Division Management Improvement Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and Fisheries, "Women's Participation in Agriculture and Sustainable Rural Enterprise Development" by Eri Ohtsu, G2 Farm of the Kumamoto prefecture and a presentation on "Design and production on Television Program for Farmers by Kenchi Kodama - Freelance Director of Hantura TV.

Sri Lanka's participation at the program

Sri Lanka's participation at this Multicounty Observational Study Mission (OSM) in Japan on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners is considered a much valued opportunity extended to Sri Lanka by the APO through the National Productivity Secretariat of Sri Lanka under the Ministry of Productivity and Promotion, to offer a wider publicity through print and electronic media to share knowledge, competencies and present and future development drives in the industry to the masses, engaged in agriculture in Sri Lanka.

It also offers a prime opportunity to highlight and showcase the traditions, developments and market oriented agricultural produce, productions and related productivity initiatives implemented in Sri Lanka by the agro-educationalists, professionals and farming industrialists in Sri Lanka to the international community, through electronic and print media presentations at the programme.

Following the event the Sri Lankan participants at the program are expected to take part in a number of publicity promotions and awareness programs with National Productivity Secretariat of Sri Lanka to acknowledge the masses around the country on the latest developments of the industry and industry related productivity standards in the region which are also widely facilitated and guided through the APO activities.

Sri Lanka's participation at the ongoing APO study mission in Japan for mass media practitioners is equally important in promoting bilateral relations between Sri Lanka and Japan at a time a high profile delegation with the initiative of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits President Mahinda Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka elevating greater ties of diplomatic relations between the two friendly nations.

The writer is part of the Sri Lankan delegation in the study mission. He is the Editor in Chief of Sri Lanka The Treasure Island - the monthly international travel and tour magazine. The other Lankan member is Seetha Sirmalee Alahakoon, Senior Producer of the Educational Programs Division of Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation.



Beautiful and peaceful Tokyo city during the evening hours of Sunday the day before, the commencement of APO study mission for international media practitioners - Pt by Harsha Udayakantha Pains