

Summary of the Secretary-General's statement

After thanking the Government of Indonesia for its generosity in hosting this year's Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs (WSM) in Bali, APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki expressed gratitude for the presence of Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Muhaimin Iskandar, who delivered the inaugural address; the Governor of Bali Province I. Made Mangku Pastika for his welcome remarks; and APO Director for Indonesia Abdul Wahab Bankona and his staff for their hard work that made the meeting possible.

The Secretary-General then updated the delegates on actions after the 2012 Governing Body Meeting (GBM). He reported that an alternative office space had been found and preparations were underway to move the Secretariat to the new office toward the end of November during a three-day weekend, with full operations to resume from the first week of December. Pointing out that while the last GBM had approved the total 2013–2014 budget, it had not reached a consensus on the apportionment of membership contributions. A second task force meeting in July had narrowed the options for a formula, which were sent to member governments for feedback. "We hope that a consensus can be reached by members on the apportionment amount for the next biennium at the earliest possible date to facilitate each member's process of obtaining the necessary approval from its government for the disbursement of its membership contribution," noted the Secretary-General.

The 2012 GBM assigned this WSM to prioritize the excellent suggestions made by APO Directors on expanding activities and membership, which were compiled by the Secretariat, and develop follow-up action plans. The Secretariat had proposed plans for consideration by the WSM, said Secretary-General Yamazaki, including new project proposals funded by surpluses from 2011. "I have taken note of these suggestions, and the Secretariat is in the midst of reviewing our organizational structure to meet new challenges. To strengthen our capacity, the Secretariat will be hiring professional staff to fill three vacant posts for which recruitment had been on hold due to the office relocation issue," reported the Secretary-General.

He continued, "One of my primary objectives as the Secretary-General is to ensure that the Secretariat remains cost-effective. The Secretariat is continuing efforts to minimize costs in every aspect of our operations."

Secretary-General Yamazaki also reported that two months ago the Secretariat's computer servers had been moved to a secure data center located in Yokohama: "This will not only help the APO recover quickly and maintain our critical business processes in the event of a disaster but also allow Secretariat staff to be more mobile while remaining fully connected." Other ICT initiatives to improve productivity would be implemented in consultation with member countries starting from 2013, he pledged.

"The primary task of this WSM is to reconfirm the projects for 2013 and the preliminary lineup for 2014. Last year was the first time that the projects were presented as a two-year plan under the three new strategic directions," noted the Secretary-General. He explained that a pre-WSM meeting involving APO Liaison Officers would be held at the start of every biennial planning cycle to improve planning. He also explained that a new center of excellence (COE) would be started next year after the one on business excellence (BE) hosted by Singapore had produced notable achievements including BE manuals for training and dispatching BE experts to help other NPOs develop BE programs. The directions for a new COE would be discussed later, he explained.

The Secretary-General went on to describe several notable project themes the delegates would see in the project lineups for 2013 and 2014. He cited the *APO Productivity Databook*, as "a major undertaking for the Secretariat." The 2013 edition would expand the number of economies covered by total factor productivity growth analysis and deepen the analysis of the



Secretary-General Yamazaki delivering his statement to the WSM.

industry origins of economic growth and labor productivity. He looked forward to support from member countries for a survey to improve the utility of the databook.

"The role of public-sector organizations has been recognized as key to the development and competitiveness of a country. Thus, time-tested private-sector productivity and quality concepts, approaches, tools, and techniques have been introduced into APO public-sector projects," noted the Secretary-General, and explained that a draft APO Public-sector Productivity Program Framework had been developed. He also spoke on material flow cost accounting (MFCA) as an environmental management tool for the efficient use of materials and waste reduction in line with the Green Productivity (GP) concept. A 2010 with a demonstration project on MFCA had been followed by a multicountry project as well as basic and advanced training courses. A course to train MFCA trainers as well as a conference on the topic were scheduled for 2013 and 2014, respectively.

On a GP-related theme, Secretary-General Yamazaki reported that preparations for the 8th EPIF scheduled for 14–16 March 2013 in Singapore had begun early this year. After a review conducted by the Secretariat and Green

Productivity Advisory Committee, the 8th EPIF would be more host country driven and expected to result in a milestone similar to the last EPIF held in Singapore in 2006 which inspired the well-known eco-city project, he stated. He also said that another GP project, the Eco-products Database and the 8th edition of the *Eco-products Directory*, had been launched in May, and would be reviewed this year to ensure that its directions were in line with the needs of member countries.

The Secretary-General mentioned that the Individual Observational Study Mission (I-OSM) Program had been in high demand in recent years, with five of 13 I-OSM requests accommodated in 2011 and nine out of 20 expected this year. He expressed deep appreciation for members who had hosted I-OSMs.

Turning to agriculture, Secretary-General Yamazaki listed food safety management; food security issues; four food company demonstration projects in Lao PDR under a grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan and three similar ones scheduled in Cambodia; and cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in projects to promote

climate adaptation technologies and practices in agriculture. “We will also continue our program on community-based rural enterprise development,” he said, continuing, “National efforts to improve productivity and income in rural communities need to be intensified, as recent ADB studies highlighted rising income inequalities in Asia despite the remarkable economic growth achieved in the region as a whole in recent years.”

He stressed the importance of project follow-up, saying, “I often mention to APO project participants that the completion of the project is not the end but just the beginning. The importance of visible outputs has been emphasized not only by me but also by APO Directors.” He also requested support from NPOs and APO Liaison Officers to encourage their participants to submit reports on how they were utilizing knowledge acquired from APO projects.

Secretary-General Yamazaki asked delegates to review and reconfirm the revised 2013 Program Plan and the Preliminary Program Plan for 2014. He concluded his statement by thanking the Government of Indonesia for hosting the 53rd session of the WSM and hoping that all could take some time from their busy schedules to relax on “this fabulous island of Bali.” 🌀