

New Year message from APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki

As we usher in 2013, I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy, and productive New Year.

Last November, the Secretariat relocated its office to Hongo, Tokyo, and started a new chapter with the same dedicated staff, vision and mission, strategic directions, and commitment to helping APO members achieve sustainable socioeconomic development.

The year 2012 witnessed new initiatives in APO projects. One of the highlights was the introduction of time-tested private-sector productivity and quality concepts, approaches, tools, and techniques into APO public-sector projects. The Public-sector Productivity Program Framework was also developed to guide APO members in streamlining their activities and adopting a coordinated approach to promote innovation and productivity in this sector, as public-sector organizations are key to the economic development and competitiveness of a country. The APO also unveiled the Taipei Declaration embodying the recommendations of experts who participated in the International Conference on Productivity and Sustainable, Inclusive Development in the Asia-Pacific in Taipei. The recommendations focus on key areas to guide not only the APO but also other stakeholders to achieve sustainable, inclusive growth.

In a continuing spirit of partnership, the APO collaborated with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Asian Development Bank Institute, among others, in the past year, in areas such as the 3Rs, green public procurement, greenhouse gas emission reduction, and climate change mitigation measures. APO members thus benefited not only from the expertise of those organizations but also from wider international exposure and networks.

In agriculture, we continued focusing on food safety management due to the growing need of enterprises in the food industry to build their capacities and to support food security. With a grant from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, seven food company demonstration projects were implemented in Lao PDR and Cambodia. To support the Government of Japan's rehabilitation efforts in the tsunami-struck Tohoku region, the APO implemented the Special Program for Restoration and Revitalization of Rural Agriculture and the Food Industry that included local participants. It increased awareness of the many advantages of controlled-environment agriculture and management systems for safe, reliable, high-quality food and agricultural products.

In 2013, APO members can look forward to the 8th Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) in Singapore, 14–16 March, organized with the support of the Green Productivity Advisory Committee. The 2013 EPIF will continue to showcase the most advanced environmentally friendly products, technologies, and services to enhance sustainable development and competitiveness. The APO will also launch a new center of excellence (COE) to continue promoting collaboration and exchange of knowledge and best practices on a specific focus area to drive productivity enhancement in the APO region. This follows the COE for Business Excellence (BE) hosted by SPRING Singapore, which has been instrumental in building up the BE capabilities of other NPOs. The COE remains a key APO program and an excellent approach to propagate critical productivity-enhancing capabilities of NPOs.

The APO must strive to exceed expectations continuously by increasing its outreach and membership and carrying out more meaningful, relevant projects. Therefore, I hope to continue forging partnerships to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the Asia-Pacific through productivity enhancement. Let us identify new pathways through innovative thinking and collaboration to achieve national and regional aspirations. Here's to a prosperous, productive 2013! 



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