

Working hand in hand with African countries

In 2006, the APO launched its African Program with special funding from the Japanese government. Since the first Roundtable Conference for Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa in Sandton, South Africa, August 2006, the APO has been working with the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA) to assist the African productivity movement. An example was the basic and advanced courses for Productivity Practitioners held in South Africa in 2007 and 2008. The first group of graduates comprised mainly NPO officials in PAPA members. "The APO has committed itself to supporting Africa's human resources capacity building in the productivity movement. This is evident from the well-selected course content, ably supported by the deployment of expert resource persons with substantial practical experience, Kelvin Chan and Lee Kok Seong from Singapore and Burhanuddin Saidin from Malaysia," reported Deputy Director of Industries Eng. Martin M. Nzomo, Productivity Centre of Kenya (PCK), upon completing the three-week advanced course, 28 April–16 May, along with 27 other trainees.

The successful outcome of several projects, coupled with the possibility of contributing further to Asia-Africa cooperation, convinced the APO to participate in the Fourth



Group discussion at the advanced course for Productivity Practitioners

TICAD IV, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), Yokohama, Japan, 28–30 May. TICAD IV, a summit-level international policy forum dedicated to African development, brought together 51 African nations, 34 non-African nations including members of the G8 and Asian countries, 74 international and regional organizations, interested private-sector organizations, civil society organizations, and individuals. The APO delegation comprised Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, Development Academy of the Philippines President Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr., and PAPA President Tembo Lebang. They took part in all the official programs and side events to promote the productivity activities of its member countries as well as the APO African Program.

TICAD IV covered many regional development issues including Asia-Africa cooperation. The discussions and suggestions of each session became the basis for the action plans in the Yokohama Declaration, one TICAD IV Outcome Document. The APO was made the implementing organization responsible for promoting productivity in Africa, which was recorded in the Outcome Documents. In addition to distributing reference materials, such as the *APO Productivity Databook 2008*, the *Eco-products Directory 2008*, and texts from the Basic Training Course for Productivity Practitioners (BCPP) at its booth, the APO, in collaboration with the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED), also organized a side event: "Diffusion of the Productivity Movement from Asia to Africa." The event showcased the results of four Technical Cooperation Projects for Productivity Improvement in South Africa, Mauritius, Botswana, and Kenya implemented by the JPC-SED with the support of Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. JPC-SED President Tsuneaki Taniguchi outlined the Technical Cooperation Project in the opening address to an audience including representatives of international organizations, senior government officers, and 16 African participants from the JPC-SED's observational study mission on Productivity Improvement Activities. Those observational study mission participants visited the APO Secretariat on 4 June to learn more about the APO and share their experiences in APO and JPC-SED projects.



JPC-SED President Taniguchi delivering the opening address at a side event

Chief Executive Officer Purity Wachuka Kamau, PCK, and one of the board members of PAPA, announced that the PCK had organized training programs for local private companies in major sectors after the BCPP. Kamau said that, "Through these programs, I would assume that more than 200 people benefited from the BCPP in Kenya as part of its multiplier effect." When asked for comments or suggestions to enhance the APO's African program, Regional Project Manager Celestine Jeftha, Productivity South Africa, expressed her hope for more opportunities to meet NPO staff from APO member countries to share onsite experiences as well as challenges and difficulties in promoting productivity in each country. 🌐