

Management innovation for service excellence

The APO Top Management Forum (TMF), launched in 1985, is a special project designed to improve the capability of corporate senior managers. In welcoming the 32 APO participants and 11 local observers to the TMF 2009 held in Kyoto, 2–4 March, Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka spoke about the forum's achievements. "During its 24-year history, the forum has given the opportunity for the top managers of business corporations in APO member countries to gain practical insights into a variety of pertinent topics from Japanese best practices," he pointed out.

Secretary-General Takenaka also explained that the theme of this year's forum, Management Innovation for Productivity Improvement in the Service Sector, was based on Japanese efforts to improve productivity in the service sector, since it accounts for nearly 70% of national GDP. He noted the APO's dedication to developing the service sector in member countries, adding, "Let us persist in endeavoring to build up the service sector in the Asia-Pacific so that one day the APO region will not only be called the manufacturing center of the world but also the center of service excellence." Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development President Tsuneaki Taniguchi, Kansai Productivity Center Chairperson Kiyoshi Otsubo, and Director-General Economic Policy Department Junichi Ozawa, Kansai Bureau of Economy, Trade, and Industry, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, also gave addresses at the TMF.

After presentations by seven Japanese top managers, the format of the wrap-up discussion was changed to a brainstorming discussion with special facilitators. To broaden the spectrum of experience in management innovation, the APO invited two non-Japanese speakers to this year's TMF, Senior Specialist and



APO Secretary-General Takenaka explaining the forum theme

Chairman Yu-Chia Wang, Old-Don Co., Ltd., Republic of China, and Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) Director-General Dato' Nik Zainiah Nik Abdul Rahman. Wang, former vice president of Rich-Mill Co., Ltd., a successful restaurant chain, detailed Rich-Mill's success in transforming traditional Chinese breakfast stands into a chain store network. In her presentation on Service Innovation for Malaysian Service-sector Competitiveness, Dato' Nik Abdul Rahman gave an overview of the service sector in Malaysia, the MPC's consultative panel for the sector, and the service innovation, benchmarking, and award system. As one of the Japanese speakers represented Ganko Food Service Co., Ltd., participants had the opportunity to visit the company, observe Ganko-style management, and sample its food offerings. The group discussions coordinated by resource persons-cum-facilitators will be included in a publication summarizing all the presentations, which will also be available on the APO Web site soon. 