



APO *news*

EPIF 2006

The Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) 2006 was held at Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, 31 October–2 November, with the theme “A Better Environment for All.” This was the third in the series of EPIFs after those in Malaysia and Thailand in 2004 and 2005, respectively. The fairs are meant to educate consumers by showcasing the latest eco-products, eco-technologies, and eco-services and provide a platform for industries to exchange eco-information and explore eco-business development. SPRING and the Waste Management and Recycling Association (WMRA) of Singapore were the main joint co-organizers, which extended enormous support and made exemplary arrangements for the success of the EPIF. Many other national agencies like the National Environment Agency, Public Utilities Board, and Singapore Water Association also lent support to this mega-event as co-organizers.



Opening of the EPIF 2006 (front row, L-R): SPRING CE Png Cheong Boon; Dr. Khor; Minister Ibrahim; METI Deputy Director-General Bando; Secretary-General Takenaka; and WMRA Chairman Michael Ho (photo courtesy of ZAIKAI)

The EPIF 2006 official opening ceremony was graced by guest of honor Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. In his speech (*see pages 2 and 3 for summaries of addresses made at the opening ceremony*), he stressed the use of eco-products for a sustainable living environment and stated that they benefited both consumers and industries by reducing production and disposal costs, creating a win-win situation for environmental sustainability. Dr. Amy Khor, Chairperson of the EPIF 2006 Steering Committee, outlined key features of the event, described it as an excellent opportunity to learn from industry professionals, and hoped that future EPIFs would attract even more interest and wider participation. APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, while thanking the government of Singapore, pointed out that such fairs created awareness of eco-friendly products and were significant for the productivity quest in Singapore and other countries in the APO region. During the opening ceremony, young children gave a music and dance performance containing lessons on eco-practices. Subsequently, the new EPIF logo (*see page 2*) was released, which will be used from 2006 on.

The *Eco-products Directory 2006* was released during the opening ceremony and presented by Prof. Ryoichi Yamamoto, Vice Chairperson of GP Advisory Committee, to Minister Ibrahim. The directory contains information on nearly 600 eco-products, eco-materials, eco-components, and eco-services. Prof. Yamamoto's continuous guidance and valuable advice have been instrumental not only in publication of the directory series but also in the organization of the EPIFs.

(Continued on page 6)

Volume 36 Number 12
December 2006

“A professional is someone who can do his best work when he doesn't feel like it.”

Alistair Cooke

INSIDE

- 2.... Excerpts of addresses at the EPIF 2006
- 4.... New APO publication
- 4.... Common Sense Talk
- 5.... Competitiveness building of ASEAN SMEs through productivity and quality improvement
- 5.... Teleconference on One Village, One Product
- 6.... New officer at APO Secretariat
- 6.... African mission to Japan
- 7.... p-Experts
- 7.... Program calendar
- 8.... APO News quiz

Published monthly by
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Printed on Recycled Paper

One hundred and one exhibitors from 14 countries including Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, and Sweden participated in the EPIF 2006, making it one of the largest events to date in Southeast Asia, attracting about 35,000 visitors from all walks of life. The exhibitors were divided into five sections: infrastructure building and construction material; eco-material technology; home appliances and electronics; water resources conservation; and automotive. A major attraction was the Eco-city displaying myriad aspects of eco-buildings and eco-cities illustrating how eco-housing can be planned in an environmentally friendly manner. Its strategic placement in the center of the exhibition area attracted the maximum number of visitors.

An eco-moment photo contest was organized in which visitors voted for photographs depicting environmental aspects. Schoolchildren were encouraged to walk the “eco-discovery trail” while they answered a simple questionnaire by visiting different booths. About 1,000 schoolchildren from primary and junior high schools attended the EPIF.

In the evening of 31 October, a networking reception was organized for exhibitors, entrepreneurs, and environmental professionals to explore opportunities for promoting eco-products, which was graced by Singapore Minister of State for Trade and Industry S. Iswaran. The networking reception was marked by an eco-fashion show participated in by designers from Australia and Singapore.

The international conference on “Growing the Eco-nomy”—Learning from the Best Eco-practices was organized parallel to the EPIF. Renowned international speakers delivered presentations on the best eco-practices of industries, regions, and countries for sustainable economic development. The speakers included Dr. Tsutomu Kanai, Chairman Emeritus, Hitachi Ltd., Japan; Prof. Dr. Werner Bidlingmaier, Bahaus University, Germany; Prof. Martin Charter, Director, Centre of Sustainable Design, UK; and Ngiam Hai Guan, Public Utilities Board, Singapore. This conference was attended by about 300, who engaged in discussions on green procurement, eco-product development, green labeling schemes, green technologies, etc.

Other concurrent events included the Eco-products Promoters International Meeting on 30 October and 1 November organized by the APO and SPRING; International Conference on the Development of Model Eco-towns for Enhancing Promotion of Eco-products in the Asia-Pacific Region on 1 November organized by the APO and SPRING; Thematic Session on Environmentally Sustainable Industrial Development: The Concept of Eco-towns in the Asia-Pacific Region on 1 November organized by the United Nations Environment Programme and Global Environment Foundation; International Green Purchasing Workshop on 2 November organized by the International Green Purchasing Network, Green Purchasing Network, and Enterprises Promotion Centres; and Green Building Technologies Conference on 1 and 2 November organized by the Building and Construction Agency of Singapore, British High Commission, and National University of Singapore. 