



APO *news*

Development of NPOs: A continuous process

Globalization, deregulation, and the advent of the knowledge-based economy are constantly changing the socioeconomic environment worldwide, including that in APO member countries. Consequently, the NPOs face a daunting task in staying abreast of the ever-changing requirements. In order to help NPOs to design productivity promotion strategies to adapt to and focus on changing needs and to exchange experiences among them in devising such strategies, the APO has organized a number of projects to speed up the process.

Since 2000, the APO has organized an annual Forum on Development of NPOs (DON). The first was held in Singapore in December 2000, at which NPOs were required to develop productivity road maps so that they would know the directions to take and specific programs that would allow them to reach their goals. At subsequent fora, NPOs presented their road maps delineating their focused strategies, new initiatives, and actions following the inputs at the forum in Singapore. Performance measures in the form of the NPO scorecard and human resources scorecard were also established. On 29 November–1 December 2004, another forum was organized in Sigatoka, Fiji, to identify concrete steps in which the APO network and resources could be tapped to meet the varying needs of NPOs and member countries.



Takenaka delivering his welcome address

The Fiji meeting was attended by 18 participants from 16 APO member countries. Minister for Labor, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck delivered the inaugural address at the opening ceremony of the forum. APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, who attended the annual forum for the first time, delivered a welcome address. Takenaka pointed out that the APO, in response to emerging needs, has designated the development of NPOs as a thrust area to strengthen productivity movements in member countries and to provide assistance to less-advanced NPOs to help them upgrade their capabilities. He emphasized that the APO was founded on the spirit of mutual cooperation and that the continued support of NPOs with a wealth of experience in productivity promotion would make the DON Program effective and enable recipient NPOs to jump-start their journey toward excellence. He noted that this is a very good example of the founding spirit.

After three days of discussions and experience sharing, the forum delegates concluded that the future continuity and success of NPOs depend on their ability to strategize continuously to meet their missions. To accomplish this, NPOs must reconfigure their resources, skills, and processes into strategic competencies. These competencies are organizational in nature and must be distinguished from individual competencies in the form of the attitudes, behaviors, skills, and aptitudes of workers and managers. The forum suggested the following topics as potential areas for discussion for the next DON

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"The simple act of paying positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity."

Tom Peters

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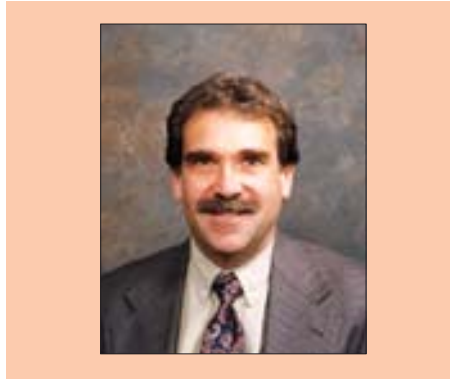


A revolutionary idea

Where is technology taking us? How pervasive and dominant will it be as humans cycle through their 24-hour days? Will we like what technology does for us, or will technology exceed the human capacity to change and adapt? Who will control technology and what does that mean for the rest of us? How important is it anyway? Should I feel threatened by the supermarket-installed, wireless, touch-screen computer staring at me from my grocery shopping cart?

If we use the Internet as our yardstick, technology is going to be very, very big, according to Howard S. Charney, senior vice-president of Cisco Systems Inc. He compares the growth of the Internet to "...Act 1 of the revolution." He added that the "Internet with its global reach will be more profound than any of the technologies that preceded it." Technology innovation is more than the Internet, but with 665 million people online throughout the world, the Internet may well serve as the vanguard of the revolution.

Let me offer an only somewhat exaggerated account of the impact of technology on American youth in the classroom. When the bells at school were out of order and a discussion ensued as to the "real" time, a student produced his cell phone and declared the time to be exactly 8:25. But my moderately expensive watch said 8:23. So I challenged the student but lost. It seems he sets it, or more accurately his cell phone clock is set automatically, by satellite. That discussion was followed by a verbal exchange with another student who claimed that he had actually completed his assignment and transferred it to his cell phone and any time that I wanted to see it, he would happily produce the assignment on the cell phone screen. I declined and gave him credit anyway. Then, to add insult to injury, another student, who had been recording my lecture on his cell phone, promised to download and make the lecture available to any student distracted by the snow falling outside the window. One student was not affected by either the snow or the lecture. He was



absorbed in watching the MSNBC news that periodically downloads to his cell phone. Perhaps the billions allocated to traditional education are mispent. Students appear eager to tell the educational establishment to "wake up and smell the coffee" being brewed by Charney's technology revolution.

"Technology innovation is more than the Internet, but with 665 million people online throughout the world, the Internet may well serve as the vanguard of the revolution."

But wait. Former editor of the *Harvard Business Review* Nicholas G. Carr writes in his book *Does IT Matter? Technology and the Corrosion of Competitive Advantage* that the power of technology is beginning to fade. He proposes that any strategic advantage gained by adding the newest software and computers is diminishing. The important consideration nowadays, according to Carr, is to emphasize cost control and to consider risk carefully. Being a follower rather than a leader in technology applications is the smarter business plan, concludes Carr.

Singing a somewhat similar tune in a *Business Week* report, the CFO of Agilent Technologies

Inc. believes that the use of technology to increase productivity has run its course in many old-line industries. He uses the example of the aluminum industry, where productivity has been flat during the last decade. Other laggards (with less than 2% productivity growth) include furniture, food processing, paper products, printing, and metal products and machinery. (On the other hand, productivity in information technology showed a gain of over 30%.) Without profits to justify investment in technology and facing stiff overseas competition in many sectors, US industry is looking to survive through minor adjustments, one of which is squeezing profits from labor. Investment in technology and bringing down unit labor costs is not the monopoly of US industry. However, diminished profits due to low productivity growth and low investment in technology relative to foreign competition might best explain the decline in output by old-line US industries.

Getting hired no longer means putting on your freshly pressed white shirt and your shiny black shoes to impress an interviewer. You would be better off checking out what a Google search brings up on the screen about you. One estimate claims that 23% of people search the Web for the name of a potential employee or business colleague before meeting them. The experts suggest preemptive action in the form of a press release about yourself. Or even better, become a blogger (a writer and maintainer of a Web log) and make sure that your blog has a link to your Web site. Feel overwhelmed by those technological challenges? Then hire a professional service that will give you a flattering Web presence. One such service provider has over one million profiles online and expects more than three million by next year.

Do not be shy about blogging. Microsoft Corporation allows its employees to blog away. In one year's time 100 Microsoft bloggers increased to 800. Other companies like Sun Microsystems and Dell are finding that the open ranges of the Internet provide useful feedback to engineers and

programmers about product development. Blogging is good for public relations as well. Customers have warmed up to companies via the in-house bloggers who not only talk about technical issues but also personal matters like favorite sports teams and fashion preferences. It is estimated that bloggers number close to three million today.

Show me which boxes you checked on the quiz to describe your personality, and I will tell you if you were hired. Companies are increasingly turning to personality questionnaires to determine the potential fit of applicants with company goals. Employee turnover because the wrong person was hired costs companies millions, and anything to trim these costs is welcomed. The personality tests can be lengthy (sometimes requiring up to three hours) or brief, but the objective remains the same: to determine what an applicant is really like and whether he/she fits the personality profile the employer is looking for. Some 50% of hiring managers surveyed report that the personality they hired was not the same personality who showed up for work. Picking the wrong hire hurts both productivity and morale.

Can the USA continue to depend on productivity increases to bolster its economy and eventually benefit workers with fatter paychecks? The profits of productivity fueled by a 4.5% annual rate of increase over the past three years have accrued primarily to business owners (including stockholders),

but now more workers are being hired to meet increased demand. What impact will this have on productivity growth over the next few years? This was the question posed to several productivity gurus, whose answers ranged from 3.3% to 2.75% growth, with the mean response of the nine surveyed being 2.75%. This perhaps optimistic prediction by historical standards (compared with 1.5% from 1975 to 1995) bodes well for the economy and country. Strong productivity growth allows the government to pay its formidable bills more easily and keeps inflation in check. How close were the experts' predictions when looking at the year ended in September 2004? Productivity growth was reported to be 3.1% for those 12 months, markedly higher than the 2.75% long-term forecast. It is still too early to tell precisely how much of that 3.1% was directly attributable to technology applications. Meanwhile, the revolution rolls on. ☺

Michael Manson had a long and close association with the APO when he was the Assistant Director of the East-West Center's Institute of Economic Development and Politics in Honolulu. He helped to initiate a number of collaboration programs between the APO and the East-West Center. Manson also served in the Asian Development Bank, and was Director of Communications with the State of Hawaii's Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. He is presently an educator, and a regular contributor to this column.



p-TIPS

Don't just talk (Communicate)

Everyone agrees that good communication in an enterprise is important in launching a new productivity initiative or sustaining an established one. It boosts morale, contributes to customer satisfaction, and smooths labor-management relations. But how can managers communicate most effectively to complement productivity efforts? The following tips were gleaned from a variety of sources:

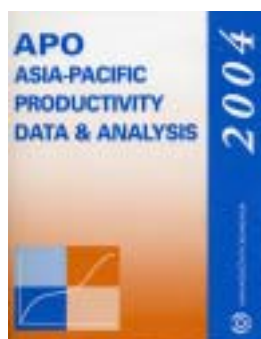
- 1) Listen actively. Concentrate on the speaker's message and keep an open mind. Don't stop listening if you hear something that you disagree with. Rephrase the key points to ensure that you understand: "If I understand you correctly, you mean that...."
- 2) Watch your language. This not only means avoiding the offensive but also battlefield (kill the competition) or sports metaphors (let's bowl out Company X) that reinforce a win-lose rather than collaborative attitude. Clear, positive language delivered sincerely fosters shared understanding and group support.
- 3) Invite participation. Hold meetings that include employees from different areas and encourage contributions. Never ridicule a question and respond to all queries.
- 4) Be honest. Convey bad news as well as good. Don't be afraid to talk about

failures but create the feeling that failures are just part of organizational life. The only true failures are mistakes that are made over and over without learning from them.

- 5) Follow through. If a promise is made or an agreement reached, follow it up with action, even if the action ends up being an explanation of why the promise can't be kept in its original form.
- 6) Give positive feedback. Too many people forget that feedback can be positive as well as negative. Everyone in an enterprise realizes when a major project is successful, but note small things too, like who worked well together on a project, who stayed late in a deadline crunch, or who voluntarily took on extra responsibility, and single them out for praise.
- 7) Connect personally. Some employees are not in frequent contact with managers or each other. Occasional face-to-face interactions give more weight to subsequent telephone conversations, e-mail messages, or memos between meetings.
- 8) Apply externally. Finally, try to ensure that good within-enterprise communication is carried over to outside parties like customers and suppliers.



New APO publication



APO ASIA-PACIFIC PRODUCTIVITY DATA AND ANALYSIS 2004

APO 232 pp. January 2005
ISBN 92-833-1145-0 (limp bound) US\$35.00

This is the fourth year that the APO is publishing this important collection of economic and productivity data on its member countries. Eighteen countries are covered in this report. A unique feature is the inclusion of an analysis report on each country's data, with the exception of Fiji and Sri Lanka, by one of its own experts. This publication is beginning to have a definitive framework with a specific core substance that will prove invaluable to public policymakers and business executives in the participating countries as well as to researchers interested in socioeconomic growth and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

In each edition, conscientious efforts were made to enhance further the book's value and usefulness. This 2004 edition is no exception. The new inputs include:

1. The number of indicators for which data were collected increased substantially. It started with 42 in the first edition in 2001. This was increased to 71 in 2002 and 77 in 2003. This volume contains 94. For the first time, some data are provided in absolute terms to make it possible to compute economic productivity.
2. A special feature is an introduction to the economic productivity concept by Dr. Melkote R. Ramsay. He is not only an acknowledged authority on the subject but also passionate about it. His article will generate even more interest in enterprise productivity measurement.
3. An integrated analysis by the chief expert, Dr. Noriyoshi Oguchi.
4. The scope of the country analysis reports was expanded by including the special theme of human resources development (HRD) for in-depth analysis based on the data collected.

Writing on this theme in his Introduction, Dr. Oguchi said: "HRD is one of the most important factors in improving productivity and many countries have given it special attention. In many Asian countries, education and job training have been developing rapidly. However, there still remains plenty of room for improvement. This special feature was included to provide additional information."

The book comes with a CD-ROM of the complete text.

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Information and Public Relations Department, Asian Productivity Organization, Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F, 1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan. Phone number: (81-3) 5226-3927, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3957, e-Mail: ipr@apo-tokyo.org

COMMON SENSE TALK



"Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know that you trust him."

Booker T. Washington

"Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action."

Benjamin Disraeli

"There are two kinds of people who never amount to much: those who cannot do what they are told and those who can do nothing else."

Cyrus Curtis

"I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it."

Thomas Jefferson

"The simple act of paying positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity."

Tom Peters

"It takes humility to seek feedback. It takes wisdom to understand it, analyze it, and appropriately act on it."

Stephen R. Covey

"The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether or not it is the same problem you had last year."

John Foster Dulles

"If you have always done it that way, it is probably wrong."

Charles Kettering

"Those who make the worst use of their time are the first to complain of its shortness."

Jean de la Bruyere

Seaport productivity

Seaports are important elements of public infrastructure as they have multiple functions in both domestic and international transportation, trade, and tourism. The APO's "Productivity Management of Public Infrastructure" initiative to identify innovative ideas for productivity improvement in public services brought together 15 senior seaport administrators and policymakers at a study meeting in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 7–10 December 2004, for the first study meeting in the series on the Productivity of Seaports.

The chief resource person, Economic Affairs Officer, Transport, Carlos Canamero, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), who coordinates UNCTAD's annual *Maritime Review*, first spoke on "Competitive advantage, value additions and present-day potential of seaports." He noted that Asian seaports are progressing rapidly and most have been transformed into modern, highly mechanized terminals. This has led to tremendous increases in capacity, as indicated by rises in total tonnage handled.

Canamero was quick to add that the competitiveness of seaports is not determined only by location and availability of infrastructure. Other important factors are cost leadership and differentiation in services provided. To ensure the overall competitiveness of seaports, Canamero proposed a holistic, multifaceted approach integrating all the critical elements involved in seaport operations: finances; human resources; administrative and regulatory environment; technology; and safety and security.

Two guest speakers, Dr. Siti Malkhamah and Dr. Nizam, of Gajah Mada University, provided overviews of public transportation and seaport administration and management in Indonesia. Based on her research findings, Dr. Malkhamah reported that a number of general problems persist, centering on inefficiency, high costs, and low operating ratios, resulting in a negative cycle influencing service reliability, transfer times, berth waits, and actual journey times. Both speakers concurred that establishing a smooth, integrated system between land and seaborne transportation remained a major challenge for Indonesia.

Confirming the observations by Canamero, participants agreed that their countries' seaports had undergone upgrades. Most now provide multipurpose services, catering to domestic needs and international trade. Many are planning expansions of facilities or newer, bigger terminals to meet increasing demand. Cambodia's Kompong Som/Sihanoukville port, for example, is building an Economic Processing Zone as an addition to the port complex, making it an integrated economic center. Pakistan is building a modern seaport to ease congestion in the port of Karachi.



(L-R) Canamero, Kirnadi, APO Director for Indonesia, and A.K.P. Mochtan, APO Secretariat, at the opening of the study meeting

An issue raised at the meeting was how to raise productivity at seaports after improvements in physical facilities and infrastructure. While new infrastructure boosts productivity significantly, as seen on a site visit to Semarang's Tanjung Mas Port that had newly installed four cranes only one week before the study meeting, participants agreed that relying on injections of capital and purchases of technology and machinery may not always prove sufficient. Physical facilities require regular, attentive maintenance. The meeting concurred that productivity improvement initiatives involving administrators, authorities, operators, cargo owners, and laborers are critical to sustain the performance and competitiveness of seaports.

The need for concrete indicators and benchmarks, such as berth productivity, crane productivity, container turnaround times, warehouse productivity, and yard occupancy ratio, for measuring seaport productivity was pointed out. Therefore the APO, UNCTAD, and other seaport experts were requested to develop a practical seaport productivity measurement index for use by all interested parties.

This study meeting series focusing on the productivity management of public infrastructure will continue. In 2005, it will examine utility companies; subsequent topics will include railways and postal services. ☺

Development of NPOs: A continuous process(Continued from page 1)

forum: i) repositioning and branding of NPOs; ii) public-private partnerships and implications for NPOs; iii) business consulting services; and iv) NPO continuity and enhancement of program offerings.

During his visit to Fiji, Takenaka also paid courtesy calls on Minister of Labor, Industrial Relations and Productivity Zinck; Minister of Commerce, Business Development and Investment Tom Vuetilovoni; and

Minister of Agriculture, Sugar and Land Resettlement Jonetani K. Galuinadi in their respective ministries. Takenaka also visited a Green Productivity demonstration project at Fletcher Steel Mills in Suva and received a briefing on APO GDPD activities. Takenaka called on the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF) headquarters where he was received by Jone Ushamate, Director-General of the TPAF. ☺

Productivity measurement in government

Although previous APO training courses focused on techniques for measuring and improving productivity in the industry and service sectors, the first training course on Productivity Measurement in the Government Sector was held in Lahore, Pakistan, 13–17 December. The course was hosted by the National Productivity Organisation, Pakistan, at the Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Central Punjab. Opening the gathering, Mr. Hassan Akhtar Mokhal, Minister for Management and Professional Development, Government of Punjab, noted that a course of this type was needed to assist governments in the Asia-Pacific region to their measure productivity. He added that, if widely understood and accepted, such indicators of performance could potentially help governments not only to measure productivity but also serve as the basis for improved services in the sector.



Participants in the training course

Seventeen participants from 12 member countries attempted to determine appropriate approaches and guidelines for the measurement of productivity in government and to formulate methods to increase productivity in the sector. Discussion topics included: Conceptual issues related to productivity measurement in the government sector; Methodology for and approaches to productivity measurement in the government sector; Initiatives and approaches to

improve productivity in the government sector; and Setting goals for productivity improvement.

Dr. Abdul Wahab, Deputy Director General, and Mrs. Rauzah bt. Zainal Abidin, Manager, Public Sector Productivity, NPC, Malaysia served as experts in the course. Guest speakers from Pakistan included Mr. Syed Hussain Haider, Principal Management Consultant, Research and Development Centre, University of Central Punjab; and Mr. Asad-Ullah Khan Sumbal, Project Coordinator, Punjab Resource Management Centre, Lahore. ☺

APO and TDLC (Continued from page 8)

presentations. On the final day, Arakawa continued coverage of additional aspects of TQM and concluded the seminar.

Participant feedback indicated satisfaction with the experience because they were able to grasp the basic principles of TQM and broaden their knowledge of its implementation not only through the resource persons but also from other participating member countries. Based on the participants' evaluation it was felt that the seminar content provided a comprehensive explanation of TQM, which they found enlightening, inspiring, and refreshing. The exercises, story-telling approach, integration and management of learning at the end of the day, and particularly the Q&A sessions when participants were encouraged to ask questions directly were considered high points of the seminar. Lanlan, the coordinator in the Philippines, wrote: "...Nothing beats, of course, a face-to-face, classroom type of learning environment where discussions can be spontaneous and freewheeling. However, when it comes to numbers, the multiplier effects of a videoconference can be remarkable. Imagine reaching out to some 80 participants from five NPOs at one time instead of the usual 18 or 20. And, in terms of cost, there are substantial savings in airfare and per diem allowances." ☺

Thailand to host Eco-Products International Fair 2005

The Eco-Products International Fair 2005 will be held in Thailand, 6–9 October, announced the APO Green Productivity Advisory Committee (GPAC) at its meeting in Tokyo on 24 January 2005. The event will be jointly organized by the APO, Federation of Thai Industries (FTI), and Thailand Productivity Institute. FTI Chairman Praphad Phodhivorakhun spoke to the GPAC meeting on the plans being made for the fair. He explained that it will run in parallel with the Machinery Mart trade show and that both events will be held at the IMPACT Exhibition Center near Bangkok. This will enhance attendance at the fair. Praphad expects about 120 companies from Thailand, Japan, and other countries to take part.

For more information on the Eco-Products International Fair in Thailand, please contact the Environment Department, APO Secretariat, at: (phone) +81-3-5226-3925; (fax) +81-3-5226-3955; or (e-mail) env@apo-tokyo.org.



p-Experts deputed by the APO

REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Masao Miyazaki, Deputy Director, Rural Policy Division, Rural Development Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan; and **Mr. Katsumi Kouma**, Ex-Deputy Mayor of Miyama-cho, and Specialist in Charismatic Rural Development, Japan, were deputed to provide consultancy services in the International Seminar on Agricultural Regional Reintegration and Demo Project, 11–13 January 2005.

INDIA

Mr. Kiyoji Suzuki, Consultant, Suzuki Consulting Office, Japan, was deputed to serve as resource person in the Green Productivity Demonstration Project Extension and Expansion Services for Multiplier Effects: Extension and Expansion of GPDP at Rama Phosphate Ltd. for Establishment of Best Practices in Soy Oil Processing, 10–22 January 2005.

APO/NPO update

New APO Director/NPO Head for Islamic Republic of Iran

Dr. Ghasem Ansari Ranani, Managing Director, National Iranian Productivity Organization, was appointed as the new APO Director for the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of NIPO, w.e.f. 18 December 2004.

New APO Alternate Director for Islamic Republic of Iran

Dr. Hamid Reza Nayebi, Network Development Director, National Iranian Productivity Organization, was appointed as the new Alternate Director for the Islamic Republic of Iran, w.e.f. 1 December 2004, in place of Dr. Ghasem Ansari Ranani.

New APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia

Mr. Zainuri Juri, Consultant, Joint Venture Programme, National Productivity Corporation, was appointed as the new APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia, w.e.f. 1 February 2005, in place of Mr. Hamdi Othman.

NEPAL

The following were deputed to serve as resource persons in the workshop on Green Productivity: Consultancy Development for SMEs and Cottage Industries, 17–20 January 2005: **Mr. R.C. Monga**, Consultant, India; **Dr. Peck Thian Guan**, Director, Office of Safety, Health & Environment, National University of Singapore; **Mr. Chung-Yi Lo**, Administrative Representative, Super Textile Corp., Republic of China; and **Mr. Yun-Chung Tsai**, Deputy Director, Knowledge Services Division, Industrial Development Bureau, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Republic of China.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Hiroshi Iwayama, President/CEO, RIIM Chu-San-Ren, Inc., Japan, was deputed to conduct seminars/workshops on Japanese-style Management, 10–22 January 2005.

THAILAND

Dr. Bongjin Cho, Professor, Keimyung University, Republic of Korea, was deputed to lecture at the seminar on Niche Market Development, 24–28 January 2005.

Dr. Saburo Yamada, Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo, Japan, was deputed to serve as consultant for the symposium on the Agricultural Productivity Index, 28 November–3 December 2004.

VIETNAM

Dr. Joseph Prokopenko, Consultant, France, was deputed to provide consultancy services on Privatization and Business Process Reengineering, 29 November–10 December 2004.

Prof. Ryoichi Yamamoto, International Research Center for Sustainable Materials, Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo, Japan, was deputed to serve as resource person in the 9th Productivity and Quality Forum, 22–24 September 2004.

Program calendar

Republic of China

Multi-country Study Mission on Business Potential for Agricultural Biotechnology Products, 23–28 May 2005.

India

Study Meeting on Employment Generation in Rural Areas through the Development of Agro-industries, 26 April–2 May 2005.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Training Course on e-Business for SMEs to Access Global Markets, 7–11 May 2005.

Japan

Web-based Training Course on Social Accountability, 11–29 April 2005.

Republic of Korea

Symposium on the Role of Knowledge Technologists, 24–27 May 2005.

Seminar on Relationship Marketing, 5–8 July 2005.

Thailand

Seminar on Strengthening of Market Research for Development of Agricultural Export Markets, 26–30 September 2005.

Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. If you need the address of your NPO, it is available from the APO Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.



APO and TDLC/World Bank collaborate in distance-learning seminar in TQM

With advances in information and communication technology (ICT), distance e-learning has emerged as a powerful tool for knowledge dissemination, reaching a wide range of people very cost-effectively. The APO is maximizing its efforts to utilize all possible e-learning-based modalities and has established its own Internet-based e-Learning Portal. In 2004, six e-learning projects were conducted utilizing the portal. On the other hand, the APO is also collaborating with other organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, World Bank-initiated Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), etc. to offer e-learning activities using different platforms. From 13–16 December 2004, the APO in collaboration with the Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC), a partner in the GDLN, organized a seminar on Total Quality Management (TQM).

The seminar was the third such collaboration with the TDLC. The previous two endeavors were attempts to utilize a videoconference-based e-learning component in an ongoing face-to-face APO project. The seminar on TQM, however, was a project entirely based on videoconferencing methodology. Participants from the five member countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam attended the seminar. Three resource persons made their presentations to the seminar utilizing the TDLC.

The seminar was made possible by the network of GDLN videoconferencing centers in the capital cities of five APO member countries: Bangkok (Thailand), Hanoi (Vietnam), Jakarta (Indonesia), Manila (the Philippines), and Tokyo (Japan). Kuala Lumpur was connected using the videoconferencing center of the Association of Technical Scholarships, Japan. Altogether, 81 productivity practitioners attended the seminar: 21 from Indonesia, 11 from Malaysia, 20 from the Philippines, eight from Thailand, and 21 from Vietnam. They came from private-sector corporations, public-sector institutions, academia, and NPOs. In each center except for Indonesia, with two local coordinators, a local technical expert served as the coordinator. That a single transmission can reach 81 people located in five different countries simultaneously is one of the compelling reasons for using e-learning as a training and information dissemination tool, in addition to its cost-effectiveness and great potential multiplier effects.

The opening session of the seminar was officiated by APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka and World Bank Vice-President and Special Representative to Japan Yukio Yoshimura. Takenaka, in his address, expressed the hope that the seminar would result in new professional breakthroughs as we face challenges while thriving in the 21st century. He also mentioned that the impact of ICT/Internet use in learning and experience sharing for the promotion of productivity and quality is enormous and the APO will continue its efforts to use ICT to the maximum possible extent. Yoshimura stated that the seminar would contribute to the establishment of a solid long-term partnership to deliver high-quality distance-learning programs to Asia-Pacific countries.

The four-day e-learning project included a half-day presentation on the concept of TQM by Prof. Kosaku Yoshida, Aoyama Gakuin University Graduate School of International Management, an authority on TQM who worked with the quality legend W. Edwards Deming. The second half of the first day was devoted to a case study of TQM activities in a Japanese company. The session



(L-R) S. Ferdousi, APO Secretariat, Ken Inoue, APO Secretariat, Takenaka, Yoshimura, and M. Bhattarai, APO Secretariat, at the opening session

was conducted by Keizo Ninomiya, General Manager, Consulting Department, Furukawa Techno-Research Company of Japan. The participants in each center were escorted on a company visit on the second day to observe firsthand the actual application of the concepts and techniques of TQM. On day three, a participant from each of the centers presented a report of that visit. The presentations were coordinated by Masakhiko Arkawa, Councilor of the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development, who also reviewed the

(Continued on page 6)

