



## Asian Productivity Organization “The APO in the News”

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### Colombo venue for APO course training - Value addition to agricultural products

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#### By Harsha Udayakantha Peiris

Sri Lanka will host a training course themed Value Addition to Agricultural Products for Increasing Productivity, sponsored by Asian Productivity Organization (APO) with foreign participation on 7 to 13 September. The collaborator for the programme is the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Productivity Secretariat (NPS).

The training course that equally highlights Sri Lanka as one of the most preferred destinations for MICE tourism in the region will attract the participation of more than 18 qualified participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Republic of China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Around six qualified participants from Sri Lanka will also participate.

Managers and product development officers of SMEs in agribusiness and food-processing enterprises, officers of industry associations, consultants of NPOs, and extension officers of government agencies and NGOs involved in training farmers and rural entrepreneurs will be the main target participants for the training. The course is expected provide new tools and techniques in value addition to agricultural products for optimizing the use of raw materials, reducing waste, and increasing the productivity and

rural entrepreneurs will be the main target participants for the training. The course is expected provide new tools and techniques in value addition to agricultural products for optimizing the use of raw materials, reducing waste, and increasing the productivity and profitability of enterprises. It will also focus on value addition to agricultural products considering the wide range of agricultural items produced in most APO member countries.

The course components consist of nine modules that include value addition of cold chains and logistics for perishable agri-food products, product development, innovation, and value addition, functional and nutraceutical foods, value addition, packaging and labeling for more product information and value addition, utilization of by-products and farm waste to create new products for value addition, emerging R&D on utilization of by-products and waste products, foods produced with natural ingredients and food ingredients derived from by-products/ waste, emerging global trends in new and value-added products with success stories and value addition through quality, safety, and quality assurance certification system.

The training course will consist of interactive sessions, case studies, individual and group exercises, and field visits.

Value addition to agricultural products has enormous potential for increasing productivity, incomes, and off-farm employment opportunities in developing countries. However, in many APO member countries, this has not been consciously practiced, especially at the level of small farms and small enterprises. In many instances, agriculture products are sold in their basic raw form in local as well as some export markets. Some of the reasons for this pervading practice include the lack of post-harvest and handling facilities at the farm or rural community levels and the lack of knowledge of small farmers and small merchants on value-adding tools and techniques. If properly promoted and adopted, value addition can encourage intensive, diversified use of local agricultural raw materials, development of collateral and/or complementary enterprises, and thus, job creation, especially in rural areas.

This course will be followed by a self e-learning Course on Value Addition to Agriculture Products that will be implemented from 1 April to 31 August 2015 by the APO.

Participants, at the end of the course will prepare action plans and share them with respective National Productivity Organizations or Secretariats in each member country.

The APO will also request participants to submit progress reports six months after completion of the project.

In an exclusive interview with Rann Reuy – Television News Producer for Cambodia Television Network (CTN) early this month, on APO's role in helping build capacity of entrepreneurs, during a special training session of the APO in Cambodia, the Secretary General of APO Mari Amano stated that the APO over the past 50 plus years had been doing its best to address the productivity issues by organizing seminars, symposiums, study missions and so on for those who were actually on the focus. "It was mainly from the small and medium industries but we have paid a lot of attention from the agriculture sector as well. And those people who attended the projects have found them very much useful because back at home, they can spread the knowledge and experience they gained with their colleagues," he said.

Asian Productivity organization (APO) that organizes and conducts the oncoming international training programme in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and National Productivity Secretariat (NPS) was established on 11 May 1961 as a Regional Inter-Governmental organization. Its mission is to contribute to the socio-economic development of Asia and the Pacific through enhancing productivity.

The APO membership is open to countries in Asia and the Pacific which are members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Current membership comprises Bangladesh, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In serving its member countries, the APO also performs five key roles as a think tank, catalyst, regional adviser, institution builder and clearing-house for productivity information.

The APO Secretariat, the executive arm of the APO, is headed by the Secretary General, Mari Amano and carries out the decisions and policy directives of the governing body. In collaboration with the National Productivity Organizations of the member countries, it plans and implements a two-year plan and annual programmes.

APO programmes cover the industry, service and agriculture sectors, with special focus on socio-economic development, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) development, human resources management, productivity measurement and analysis, knowledge management, production and technology management, information technology, development of NPOs, green productivity, integrated community development, agribusiness, agricultural development and policies, resources and technology as well as agricultural marketing and institutions. Its activities include research, forums, conferences and study missions, workshops, training courses, seminars, observational study missions and demonstration projects.

Joselito C. Bernado serves the Director Agriculture Department of the APO and Sri Lanka's J.M.Thilaka Jayasundara serves the Director – Industrial Department of the APO.