



## Asian Productivity Organization (APO)

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# Press Release

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## Pakistan Minister Ahsan Iqbal calls on Dr. Kanoktanaporn

- › APO to help Pakistan drive its PQI (productivity, quality, and innovation) initiative
- › Improvement of national productivity key to Pakistan's Vision 2025 goals: Prof. Iqbal
- › Smart industries, smart agriculture, smart society key to digital era growth: Dr. Kanoktanaporn

**TOKYO:** Pakistan's Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal met Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Secretary-General Santhi Kanoktanaporn at Secretariat headquarters in Tokyo on 11 October 2016. Paying a courtesy visit to the newly appointed Secretary-General, Minister Iqbal highlighted his long-term association with the APO and indicated that the Government of Pakistan was aggressively pursuing initiatives to improve all productivity indicators in the country in the run-up to its Vision 2025.

“Vision 2025 is Pakistan's long-term development blueprint that aims to create a globally competitive, prosperous country and provide a high-quality life to its citizens,” the minister said, adding that with the country focusing on increasing exports to improve its share in the global marketplace, it was imperative for Pakistan to improve national productivity.

“It is fundamental to competitiveness and we need to focus on it more than ever before to meet our Vision 2025 goal,” he stressed. Minister Iqbal also informed the Secretary-General that the Government of Pakistan had decided to dedicate 2017 to productivity, quality, and innovation (PQI) and sought the APO's support in drafting the national PQI framework to drive the initiative.

Expressing his appreciation for the constant support that the APO has received from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Secretary-General Kanoktanaporn assured the minister of APO assistance and suggested a three-pronged approach to PQI. “The key to driving the entire productivity

movement should rest on a standardization initiative,” he suggested. Secretary-General Kanoktanaporn explained that while the standardization of processes brings efficiency and helps reduce wastage, thereby resulting in substantial productivity gains, it also leads to further process improvements and innovations in the long term.

The APO Secretary-General also shared his vision of assisting member countries in enhancing productivity and competitiveness in the digital era by helping them set up smart industries, pursue smart agriculture, and developing smart, connected societies. “In future, everything will be connected and networked and that will lead to automation, which will drive productivity improvements in the global economy. The era of benefiting from cheap labor resources is over,” Secretary-General Kanoktanaporn commented, highlighting how information technology will shape the future growth scenario.

He pointed out that promoting development of the SME sector was another key focus area for the APO. “We are looking ahead to playing an important role in accelerating the growth of the SME sector, going beyond the training and capacity-building role that the APO has so far taken. This is the sector that will drive economic growth and entrepreneurship for member economies. Productivity enhancement at the SME level can help countries reap great benefits,” the Secretary-General stated.

Thanking the Secretary-General for the APO’s contribution to the economic development and productivity growth of Pakistan and other member countries, Minister Iqbal hoped that the APO could strengthen its knowledge-sharing initiatives and create more opportunities for member countries to learn and benefit from each other. He also urged the APO Secretariat to create a repository of resources, including best practices, success stories, productivity frameworks, and benchmarks for member economies.

Pakistan’s Federal Minister is visiting Tokyo to attend the two-day World Marketing Summit Japan 2016. During his visit to the APO Secretariat, he was accompanied by Ambassador to Japan Farukh Amil, Deputy Chief of Mission Mirza Salman Babar Beg, Commercial Counsellor Muhammad Abu Bakar Siddique, and Third Secretary Gul Qaiser Sarwani. The APO team was represented by Agriculture Department Director Dr. Muhammad Saeed and Administration and Finance Director Sherman Loo.

**Note:** Click [here](#) to access high-resolution photographs of the meeting.



**Photo Caption:** APO Secretary-General Santhi Kanoktanaporn (R) with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal during the courtesy visit to the APO Secretariat, Tokyo.



**Photo Caption:** (clockwise from L-R) Pakistan's Ambassador to Japan Farukh Amil, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Deputy Chief of Mission Mirza Salman Babar Beg, Third Secretary Gul Qaiser Sarwani, Agriculture Department Director Dr. Muhammad Saeed, and APO Secretary-General Santhi Kanoktanaporn during the meeting at the APO Secretariat in Tokyo.

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## About the APO

The Asian Productivity Organization (APO) is the sole nonprofit international organization in the Asia-Pacific devoted to productivity enhancement. Established in 1961 as a regional intergovernmental organization, the APO contributes to the sustainable socioeconomic development of the Asia-Pacific through productivity enhancement. The current membership comprises 20 economies. Three strategic directions guide the APO: strengthen NPOs and promote the development of SMEs and communities; catalyze innovation-led productivity growth; and promote Green Productivity. The main activities of the APO are capacity building of institutions and human resources development.