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**Press
Release**

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Reskilling policies a productivity must in Industry 4.0 era, says APO Secretary-General

- *APO's 58th Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organizations begins in Seoul, Republic of Korea.*
- *The annual strategic planning meeting to review initiatives for 2018 and deliberate on the program plan for the 2019–20 biennium.*

Seoul: Countries in the Asia-Pacific region need to gear up and prepare themselves for transition to the Industry 4.0 era that will have a major impact on their economies and productivity.

“With dramatic advances in technology shaping the economy of the future, we need to rethink how we can also shape the national productivity agendas of member countries,” said Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Secretary-General Santhi Kanoktanaporn at the opening plenary session of the 58th Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organizations (NPOs) in Seoul, Republic of Korea (ROK).

The WSM is the annual strategic planning meeting where APO member countries deliberate on the biennial program plan and review initiatives to ensure that they respond effectively to the needs of their economies. A current key APO focus area is building the capacity of member countries for strategic foresight planning, enabling them to anticipate changes in the dynamic global environment.



(L–R) APO Secretary-General Santhi Kanoktanaporn, ROK Deputy Minister for Industrial Policy, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy Dr. Gunsu Park, and Korean Productivity Center Chairman and CEO Dr. Soon Jick Hong at the inaugural session of the 58th Workshop Meeting of Heads of National Productivity Organizations in Seoul, Republic of Korea, 24 October 2017.

Highlighting the need for APO members to acquire foresight capabilities, Dr. Santhi pointed out that the disappearance of old jobs and the creation of new ones had been a constant since the birth of the modern economy, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution would be no exception.

“While it may be inconceivable that the technological revolution will leave no role for humans, we need to understand the key drivers of change well before the trends develop. Only then can we develop strategies to build flexibility into our policies to ensure that our economies are prepared for the transition to the digital economy,” he stressed.

ROK Deputy Minister for Industrial Policy, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy Dr. Gunsu Park graced the WSM as its guest of honor. During his inaugural address, he stated that the adoption of recent technologies like the Internet of Things, big data, and artificial intelligence had transformed facets of productivity enhancement. “It has become more common for productivity enhancement to significantly enhance value added through new services such as preemptive responses as accuracy in predictability increases, while maximizing efficiency in individual input factors,” he noted.

Emphasizing that the role of the APO and NPOs had become more important than ever before the seamless spread of the 4th Industrial Revolution throughout Asia, including the ROK, as well as to achieve productivity enhancement and economic growth, the Deputy Minister pointed out the need to create a new productivity paradigm befitting the upcoming era of super connectivity or intelligence driven by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Deputy Minister Park also highlighted the joint establishment of the Manufacturing Innovation 3.0 initiative by the government and private sector in 2013, before discussions on the 4th Industrial Revolution started. “This has initiated the industrial innovation movement to support productivity innovation by SMEs. Setting up smart factories through the convergence of manufacturing and ICT was a major achievement of the industry innovation movement. The concept had been applied to a total of 2,800 smart factories by the end of 2016, and the target is to support 20,000 companies by 2022,” the Deputy Minister reported.

In welcoming WSM delegates, Korean Productivity Center Chairman and CEO Dr. Soon Jick Hong said that the world was “standing at an inflection point in human history,” with advanced countries competing fiercely to dominate the 4th Industrial Revolution stage. “It is necessary for Korea and all APO member countries to take advantage of these changing times to take a leap forward,” he explained, while appreciating the APO’s contribution to expanding opportunities for cooperation and greater socioeconomic development of its members.

The three-day WSM, which commenced on 24 October, is attended by NPO representatives, agriculture delegates, and advisers from 19 APO members, along with observers from international partner organizations.

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