

**54th Session of the APO Governing Body  
17–19 April 2012, Singapore**

**Welcome Remarks**

**APO Director for Singapore Png Cheong Boon**

Minister of State for Trade and Industry & National Development Lee Yi Shyan,

APO Chair Somdy Inmyxai,  
APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki,

APO Directors and Delegates,  
Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to Singapore. On behalf of the APO, I would like to thank Minister Lee Yi Shyan for gracing this 54th Session of the APO Governing Body despite his busy schedule.

Since its inception 51 years ago, the APO has contributed significantly to the economic development of many countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It has also helped governments and national productivity organizations (NPOs) develop and drive productivity initiatives to upgrade industries, enterprises, and people. Singapore too has benefited significantly from its partnership with the APO and fellow APO members. Given its limited natural resources and small domestic market, Singapore's economic growth has been based on continuously making better use of what we have. In other words, increasing productivity in our industries, companies, and people.

We appreciate the strong support that we have received from the APO and various NPOs through training programs, seminars, workshops, and conferences and access to technical experts and resources. Through the APO and fellow members, we have been able to visit excellent organizations; look at best practices; learn the latest in productivity policies, methodologies, and tools; and, in the process, develop strong partnerships and friendships within the APO community. It is with gratitude that we are pleased and honored to host the 54th Session of the APO Governing Body. The last time we hosted such a meeting was 16 years ago in 1996.

For this meeting, we have chosen a design for the backdrop and the collaterals that reflects the close and long-standing relationship between Singapore and the APO. As you can see, the backdrop shows the skyline of Singapore juxtaposed against a garden symbolized by the APO flower, called the Stamariaara APO. I am not sure how many of you recall or know of the existence of the Stamariaara APO. This flower was presented by Singapore to the APO in 2001 to commemorate its 40th anniversary. It is an orchid specially selected for its resilience and flowering ability to signify the APO's ability to support and contribute continuously to the socioeconomic development of the Asia-Pacific region. Its orange-red color is a shade close to the APO corporate color. Juxtaposing the APO flower with the skyline of

cosmopolitan Singapore symbolizes the close, symbiotic relationship between Singapore, the APO, and APO members. We look forward to strengthening this relationship in the years ahead.

It is therefore important that we use this Governing Body Meeting to discuss and exchange ideas on critical and strategic issues faced by the APO and fellow NPOs. We should go beyond the usual reporting formalities and leverage this gathering of NPO leaders to discuss the future directions of the APO, how they can be translated into actions, and how the APO and its members could better support the needs of fellow members as well as contribute more effectively to the socioeconomic development of Asia-Pacific countries. We should take this opportunity to learn from one another and discuss collaboration opportunities.

This is the reason why the APO Centre of Excellence for Business Excellence, housed in SPRING, has organized a Business Excellence Sharing Session in conjunction with the Governing Body Meeting. The Business Excellence Sharing Session will start tomorrow afternoon. We invite all of you to attend the session so that you can participate in discussions on business excellence and gain insights on the best practices and experiences of excellent organizations.

Beyond the official meetings, I hope that you have some time to enjoy the beautiful sights and attractions that Singapore has to offer. We have specially arranged for a city tour for all delegates tomorrow evening. Once again, welcome to Singapore. I look forward to a productive discussion over the next few days and I wish all of you an enjoyable stay in Singapore. Should you need any assistance, my SPRING colleagues will be glad to help.