

53rd Session of the APO Governing Body
19–21 April 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Welcome Remarks

APO Director for Malaysia Mr. Azman Hashim

Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry;
Honorable APO Governing Body Chairman Dr. Dong-Kyu Choi;
Honorable APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki;
Distinguished Heads of National Productivity Organizations;
Yang Berbahagia Tan Sri-Tan Sri, Dato'-Dato';
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Salam sejahtera and a very good afternoon. I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you, especially our international guests. My appreciation goes to Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed, our Minister of International Trade and Industry, for being here with us today despite his busy schedule.

In the wake of the recent devastating earthquake and tsunami, we would like to express our deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Japan. Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Japan during this difficult time.

I would like to welcome all APO Directors and their advisers from 20 member countries, observers from various national agencies and international organizations, APO Secretariat staff, and Heads of National Productivity Organizations (NPOs) to this important meeting. The MPC is honored to host this 53rd Session of the APO Governing Body as this session will provide the avenue for deliberation on a broad range of issues concerning the way forward for APO programs toward regional productivity development. We are confident that in the spirit of collaboration among APO member countries, this meeting will provide an opportunity for all of us to discuss issues concerning common experiences, challenges, and emerging needs, leading to the development of joint programs and initiatives.

Among the key agenda items of this Governing Body Meeting (GBM) is the election of the new APO Chair and Vice Chairs; receiving the Secretary-General's report and the auditor's financial report; formulating directions for the ensuing fiscal year's program; and approving the budget and financial guidelines. The APO total membership contributions for the 2011–2012 biennium and review of the APO thrust and subject areas will also be determined during this meeting.

The APO has made significant contributions to the expansion of opportunities for cooperation and greater socioeconomic development of countries in the Asia-Pacific region through its five key roles as a think tank, catalyst, regional advisor, institution builder, and clearinghouse for productivity information. These have all been made possible by the tireless efforts of the APO Secretariat headed by the Secretary-General and respective NPOs.

It is also encouraging that the APO is continuously improving and making innovations in the delivery of programs and projects introduced to optimize the benefits for all participating countries. To create multiplier effects for productivity initiatives to cascade at a faster rate,

the APO initiated the training of trainers' programs for productivity practitioners and professionals in the Asia-Pacific region, targeting those who will in turn be developing others. The innovative training modality of e-learning conducted on various e-platforms, including videoconferencing facilities, has also been adopted to maximize the benefit and impact of APO projects. I believe that with the full participation and continued cooperation of the Heads of NPOs, specific directions and more innovations will be generated in this GBM, thereby enabling member countries to position themselves to face bigger challenges and contribute to inclusive growth in the region.

The APO has made significant progress in Asia and a notable contribution by the APO is the strengthening of NPOs' focus on human capital development as the key component in nurturing productivity, competitiveness, creativity, and innovation. Malaysia actively supports all APO programs by sending both public- and private-sector participants, deputing technical experts, as well as hosting APO programs. In this context, the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC), which is the NPO of Malaysia, organized several programs, specifically in the areas of Knowledge Management, Green Productivity, Information Security Management System (ISO27000), Food Safety Management and Food Traceability, Energy Efficiency in SMEs, Agrofood Processing for SMEs, and International Conference on Green Technology for member countries. These programs are sponsored mostly by the APO and partially by the host country.

In 2010, the MP hosted four APO programs and two Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs study missions involving total of 98 international participants. I believe this fits well with the philosophy of "prosper thy neighbor" adopted by the APO, which is one of the key factors that has contributed to the success and sustainability of the APO family that has spanned 50 years.

The MPC, with its vision to be the leading organization in productivity enhancement for global competitiveness and innovation, has rebranded itself to assume new roles and responsibilities. With the aim of building a more responsive and dynamic MPC, five departments were established to integrate both innovation and productivity programs in enhancing the competitiveness of industries. The new departments are in the areas of Regulatory Review, Enterprise Innovation, Business Excellence, Global Competitiveness, and Knowledge Management.

The MPC targets substantially reducing the regulatory burden on businesses. This is indeed no easy task, and an achievement of this magnitude involves massive transformation processes across the entire strata of Malaysia's political, societal, and, most importantly, economic landscapes. To realize this initiative, various activities had been undertaken such as: comprehensive scanning of existing licenses to determine which licenses pose problems in terms of productivity, including administrative burdens; reviewing of existing regulations in two sectors, namely, oil, gas, and energy and electrical and electronics sectors; benchmarking on a one-stop center for business start-ups; and awareness programs for both the public and private sectors on the importance of a conducive business environment for national competitiveness in various venues throughout the country.

I am sure this meeting will bring about fresh and innovative ideas for the betterment of the APO and its members. I hope all of you will also take time off after the meeting to enjoy the various attractions of Kuala Lumpur.

I hope all of you will have a pleasant and enjoyable stay in Malaysia. Thank you.