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Tokyo Statement on the Centrality of Productivity

Tokyo, Japan: As the economic and humanitarian crises in the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic escalate to epic proportions and the world reels at the grim prospects of viral variants described as “far more deadly” by the WHO, the 21 countries that make up the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) offer a sliver of hope by declaring their resolve to continue the productivity movement, leveraging it to guide the region through new, harsh challenges in the years ahead.

Survival is paramount. Enterprises and SMEs must be resilient and the workforce adaptable to new workstyles and new types of business. Productivity is the foundation of this survival, not only for becoming more competitive but also in the broader, philosophical sense of “making tomorrow better than today.”

Drawing upon its 60 years of engagement in Asia and the Pacific, the APO crystallizes the key lessons of its six decades of journey in a joint statement, “The Tokyo Statement on the Centrality of Productivity.” Issued at the conclusion of its 63rd Governing Body Meeting on 9 June 2021, the statement serves as a beacon to traverse a turbulent future.

The statement outlines key priority targets of the APO for 2021–2025. Those targets support the APO Vision 2025 in striving for “inclusive, innovation-led productivity growth in Asia and the Pacific.”

The priority targets cover four broad areas. The first is leveraging new drivers of productivity. In today’s extraordinary circumstances, productivity improvement efforts must yield extraordinary results. New drivers that include innovation, advanced technologies, and digitalization are expected to lead to exponential productivity gains.

The second involves enhancing productivity tools, techniques, and methodologies. Upgrading and upskilling are imperative given ongoing rapid, dynamic changes. New business styles, new work styles, and new business platforms have become the norms. Productivity tools, techniques, and methodologies must therefore be continuously updated to support the latest trends.

Third is making productivity more inclusive. This means broadening the outreach and applications of productivity to embrace persons with different abilities, in addition to women, youth, and socially vulnerable groups.

The fourth priority is strengthening National Productivity Organizations as the premiere productivity-promoting institutions, equipping them to be policy partners for their governments.

The Tokyo Statement underlines a renewed commitment to the mutual cooperation that has been the hallmark of the APO. The full text is available at: www.apo-tokyo.org.

About the APO

The Asian Productivity Organization (APO) is an intergovernmental organization committed to improving productivity in Asia and the Pacific. Established in 1961, the APO contributes to the sustainable socioeconomic development of the region through policy advisory services, institutional capacity-building efforts, sharing of productivity best practices, and dissemination of productivity data and analyses.

The current APO membership comprises 21 economies: Bangladesh; Cambodia; 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; Turkey; and Vietnam.

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