

65th Session of the APO Governing Body
24–26 May 2023, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Opening Address

Opening of 65th APO GBM by APO Chair

Fellow APO Directors,
Vice Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Government of Mongolia H.E. Byambasuren Urgamal,
Secretary-General Dr. Indra Pradana Singawinata,
Distinguished Advisers,
Observers, and
Ladies and Gentlemen:

First, allow me to share my enthusiasm for meeting you all today in person. I think that we all agree that face-to-face interactions such as today's occasion now have new meaning. After three years of meeting virtually, I am delighted to welcome all delegates to the 65th Session of the Governing Body (GBM) of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) in person.

Second, on behalf of all delegates, I extend deepest gratitude to the Government of Mongolia for hosting this GBM and to the Secretariat for its excellent coordination.

Despite the pressing, ever-changing challenges confronting the region and the world in general, including the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate crisis, conflicts, and disasters, I am proud of the steady strides we have made as an organization, as reflected in both our programs and projects and initiatives of the Secretariat. Our agenda for the next two days speaks of the efforts we have made in the past year. Today is both an opportunity to take pride in our achievements and reflect on points we can improve.

The 65th GBM has several important matters to be discussed and decided. As one of the agenda items, we will be called upon to approve the Financial Report for the Year 2022, APO Revised Budget for 2024, and Introduction of an Independent Evaluation System by a Third Party as well as to discuss proposals on Revisions to the Financial Regulations and Project Regulations, Revisions to APO Regional and National Awards Conditions, and Utilization of the Unappropriated Surplus. Progress reports will also be presented on the Membership Contribution Formula, APO Vision 2025, Strengthening the APO's Digital Capability, Update on the APO Centers of Excellence, Development of GP 2.0, and Update on the APO Accreditation Program.

It has been a great honor for Cambodia and for me to serve as the APO Chair for 2022–23. Many challenges were encountered in the last year due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic. I am very thankful to all APO members for understanding that situation and giving us your valuable cooperation and support.

In particular, I am grateful for the leadership of Secretary-General Dr. Indra and assistance of the APO Secretariat in preparing for and implementing the Independent Evaluation System by a Third Party, which was the first such exercise since the founding of the APO in 1961.

I understand that the process has not been easy for the Secretary-General and APO Secretariat as they examined comments on weaknesses and/or points for improvement. As the APO Chair, I was, somehow, involved in the series of third-party evaluation discussions and processes and would like to commend their sincere attitude and commitment to providing better services to APO member economies. I hope that all APO Directors appreciate the efforts made so far.

Later today, a new APO Chair will be appointed. I wish him well and ask all member countries to provide their fullest support to him.

I hope that this 65th GBM will be a great success. As we work to set directions for the future of the APO, please do not forget to enjoy the beautiful nature and hospitality of our host Mongolia. I would like to thank the Government of Mongolia and staff of the Mongolian Productivity Organization as well as APO Secretariat staff for working very hard over the past few months to prepare for this face-to-face GBM. Finally, I hope that our stay will be productive, pleasant, and memorable.

Thank you.