

**62nd Session of the APO Governing Body
8 June 2020, Virtual Session**

**Agenda 5: Inaugural Address by Outgoing APO Chair
Dr. Phanit Laosirirat (Thailand)**

Today, we open the 62nd Session of the Governing Body of the Asian Productivity Organization. I would like to welcome everyone, especially the representatives from Turkey, the newest member of the APO. As you are all aware, this meeting will be a little different from other Governing Body Meetings because of the COVID-19 situation. This marks the first time that the GBM has been hosted virtually, an unexpected milestone in the APO's history.

This pandemic has been difficult, to say the least, but it has also provided clarity on a few things. First, it is clearer than ever that the world and our region are deeply interconnected, and that international cooperation is essential in dealing with crises like the current pandemic. Second, with a likely global recession, it is clear that productivity enhancement will be key for long-term recovery. This economic situation has been hard for businesses and households across the region. However, it is also an opportunity to remake our businesses and economies to be fairer and more productive. I think that this situation with COVID-19 has shown us that the mission of the APO is more important now than ever.

The GBM is a good opportunity to review the progress and achievements of the last year and to discuss how to better work together to deal with our collective challenges in 2020 and the years to come. I am confident that with the contributions and active participation from all APO Directors and advisers, this GBM will be a great success.

I am glad that our country, with the Thailand Productivity Institute as our focal organization in the APO, was able to serve as APO Chair from 2019 to 2020. I would like to thank member countries and the Secretariat for supporting Thailand during its tenure as we went through the drafting and review process for the APO Vision 2025.

I would like to congratulate the new Chair and Vice Chairs, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Cambodia, and request that APO Directors give their support to them.

Thank you.