

**61st Session of the APO Governing Body
10–12 April 2019, Manila, the Philippines
Opening Address
APO Chair and APO Director for Sri Lanka J.J. Ratnasiri**

Fellow APO Directors,
Cabinet Secretary Karlo Alexie B. Nograles, Office of the President of the Philippines,
APO Secretary-General Dr. Santhi Kanoktanaporn,
Distinguished Guests, Advisers, and Observers, and
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Ayubowan!

I am so excited and delighted to be here today as the Chair of the APO to welcome you to the inaugural session of the 61st Session of the APO Governing Body. We are honored by the presence of Cabinet Secretary Karlo Alexie B. Nograles. I warmly welcome you on this occasion on behalf of the APO Governing Body. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for hosting this important meeting, and the staff of the Development Academy of Philippines for their hospitality and the arrangements to make this event happen in grand style.

There is no doubt that the Asia-Pacific region has shown a significant growth in social and economic development factors over the last few decades. Since the world's economic center of gravity is moving toward the Asia-Pacific region, there will be many opportunities for all member countries to strive hard and develop their economies and prosperity during the next two decades with the application of productivity concepts. Therefore, it is very important for us to have a clear path with a clear vision.

We gather here at this meeting today with several important matters to be discussed and decided. Among other agenda items, the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) will be called upon to approve the Financial Report for the Year 2018 and the APO Revised Budget for the 2019–2020 Biennium as well as to discuss the proposals on new Centers of Excellence, the membership contribution formula for 2021–22, forming a task force to develop a new APO vision and strategy 2025, and the APO Regional Awards and National Awards. Also, an interim report will be presented with regard to the fire incident in the Secretariat building. Most importantly, the appointment of the Secretary-General for the period 2019–22 is one of the key items on the agenda.

It has been a great honor for my motherland Sri Lanka and for me to serve as the APO Chair since the last GBM. Many changes have taken place at the Ministry of Public Administration and National Productivity Secretariat in the last year. I am very thankful to all member countries for understanding that situation and giving us your valuable cooperation. Especially, I express my gratitude to the APO Secretariat for

assistance in the selection process of the Secretary-General. Later today, a new APO Chair will be appointed. I take this opportunity to wish him well and ask all member countries to provide their fullest support to him.

I wish to conclude here with the hope that this 61st GBM will be a great success. We gather here to set directions for the future of the APO, while not forgetting to enjoy this beautiful city of Manila and the hospitality of the Filipinos. Once again, I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Philippines and the staff of the Development Academy of the Philippines as well as APO Secretariat staff for working very hard over the past few months to make this GBM happen successfully. Finally, I hope that our stay will be pleasant and memorable, as I began my address with "*Ayubowan*." I wish you, your loved ones, and the APO a long life!

Thank you.