

58th Session of the APO Governing Body

19–21 April 2016, Jakarta, Indonesia

Opening Address

APO Chair and APO Alternate Director for Pakistan

Shafqut-ur-Rehman Ranjha

Distinguished Guest of Honor His Excellency Hanif Dhakiri, Minister of Manpower of Indonesia,

Honorable APO Directors,

Respected Secretary-General Mari Amano,

Worthy Advisers and Observers, and

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Asalam O'Alaikum, Good Afternoon, and *Selamat Sore*

It is indeed an honor for me to be here today as the Chair of the APO Governing Body and it gives me immense pleasure to be part of this august gathering. I am delighted to welcome you to the Inaugural Ceremony of the 58th Session of the APO Governing Body Meeting. We are deeply honored to have with us His Excellency Hanif Dhakiri, Minister of Manpower, and other dignitaries from Indonesia. We are thankful to you for gracing the occasion with your valuable presence. Allow me to express my gratitude to the Government of Indonesia for hosting this important meeting in Jakarta, as well as my sincere appreciation for the friendly welcome, warm hospitality, and excellent arrangements made by the Directorate General of Training and Productivity, Ministry of Manpower.

In recent years, Asia-Pacific member economies have shown great resilience and strength. While a handful of countries in the region continue to register stellar economic growth, there is a bigger dilemma that governments have to face: achieving inclusive development and continuing to strengthen economies, while protecting the environment through the use of cleaner energies. We know that long-term economic development can only be sustained through higher productivity, and it remains fundamental to the prosperity of all member countries. Using the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework and productivity as a driver of economic growth can help us significantly in facilitating this balancing act, but collaboration in terms of resources and expertise remains essential. Greater regional integration will also be necessary for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region. In this endeavor, the APO's influence and importance cannot be undermined.

Since its inception in 1961, the APO has made valuable and significant contributions to greater socioeconomic development in the Asia-Pacific region. It has remained true to its fundamental mandate and functioned effectively in carrying out its mission and objectives. It is my hope that the APO will continue to expand and prosper focusing on its three main goals of improving the productivity of member countries, raising the competitiveness of member economies, and achieving recognition as the leading international organization on productivity enhancement while following its three strategic directions of strengthening NPOs and promoting the development of SMEs and communities, catalyzing innovation-led productivity growth, and promoting Green Productivity in the region.

We are gathered here at this year's GBM with several important matters to be discussed and key decisions to be made. Throughout the years, the APO has been able to resolve issues by agreement and consensus among all members through its strong spirit of mutual cooperation. APO Directors will be called upon to review, endorse, and approve the Annual Report of the Secretary-General, APO Financial Report for the Year 2015, Appointment of the Secretary-General for 2016–2019, Appointment of Auditors for 2016, Report of the 56th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs, Proposed Roadmap to Achieve the APO Vision 2020, Report of the Task Force Meeting, Proposal for Expansion of the APO Digital Learning Program, and APO Preliminary Budget for the 2017–2018 Biennium.

We are also here to look ahead and share with fellow members the directions that our countries are taking to boost productivity, particularly in areas like the public sector, Green Productivity, and SMEs, amid multiple economic challenges. A lot has been achieved. A lot remains to be done. But I am confident that with our strong cooperation and commitment, we will overcome these challenges.

It has been a great honor for Pakistan and for me in particular to serve as the APO Chair during the past year. I am thankful for the honor and support rendered to me during this time from member countries and the APO Secretariat.

Ladies and gentlemen, later today, we will elect a new Chair and I will hand over the responsibilities to the APO Director for the Philippines. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to APO Secretary-General Mari Amano for his contributions, support, and commitment to the organization throughout his tenure. I urge you to provide your fullest support to the new Chair and to the Secretary-General in dealing with the many challenges that lie ahead.

I wish to conclude here with the hope that this 58th GBM will be a great success and we will all have a productive meeting and a memorable stay in Jakarta. Once again, I would like to thank the Government of Indonesia, the staff of the Directorate General of Training and Productivity, Ministry of Manpower, Indonesia, and APO Secretariat for working hard behind the scenes in preparation for this GBM and making our experience here worthwhile.

Thank you.