



## GBM gives directions to expand the productivity movement

The APO Governing Body (GBM) held its 54th session in Singapore, 17–19 April 2012. Forty-seven delegates and advisers from 19 member countries as well as nine observers from the Colombo Plan, Pan African Productivity Association, Singapore Productivity Association, and Turkey attended. The guest of honor at the inaugural session was Minister of State for National Development and Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan, who introduced efforts by the Government of Singapore to promote a productivity culture, transforming it from a developing to a vibrant developed nation. He appreciated the assistance of the APO and Japan Productivity Center in developing Singapore's first national productivity campaign in 1981. Minister Lee emphasized that in 2012 the need for the productivity drive remained as relevant as ever, if not more so in the context of global competitiveness.

After welcoming all attendees, APO Director for Singapore Png Cheong Boon pointed out that SPRING Singapore had chosen the design for the GBM backdrop and collateral material to reflect the close, long-standing relationship between Singapore and the APO. The skyline of Singapore was juxtaposed against a garden filled with the Stamariaara APO, which was bred by Singapore to commemorate the organization's 40th anniversary. Juxtaposing the hardy APO orchid with the skyline of cosmopolitan Singapore symbolized the continuing progress and resilience of Singapore, the APO, and other member economies.

APO Director for Lao PDR Somdy Inmyxai presented the opening address as the APO Chair. He requested members to work together to overcome widening income disparities and ensure inclusive economic development. He called for greater regional integration for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific, and said that the APO's importance could not be over-emphasized. During the plenary session, APO Director for Malaysia Azman Hashim was elected APO Chair for 2012–2013, with APO Director for Mongolia Yamaaranz Erkhembayar and Acting APO Director for Nepal Narendra Raj Baral assuming the position of First and Second Vice Chairs, respectively.

In his annual report, Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki gave the background to Secretariat proposals submitted to the meeting. He explained how the Secretariat had improved its operational effectiveness and his plans to review and streamline processes with the help of IT. While he sought to reduce project implementation costs in collaboration with NPOs, the Secretary-General emphasized that training would remain a core APO activity. (See page 2 for a summary of the report.)

The main GBM agenda items were relocation of the APO Secretariat, membership contribution formula, and preliminary budget for 2013–2014. After a lively discussion of options, it was unanimously agreed that the Secretariat would remain within the Tokyo metropolitan area.

After examining the recommendations of the task force on the membership contribution formula, it was decided that discussions should continue, with Malaysia remaining the chair and Pakistan joining as a new member. The Secretariat was advised to facilitate the work of the task force efficiently so that it could be completed no later than the 55th Session of the GBM in 2013. The APO Preliminary Budget for 2013–2014 was related to the relocation of the Secretariat and new membership contribution formula. After careful consideration, the GBM unanimously approved a 0% budget increase with total membership contributions remaining the



Minister of State Lee Yi Shyan delivering his address. Photo courtesy of SPRING Singapore.

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# Summary of the annual report of the Secretary-General

Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki welcomed all present to the 54th session of the APO Governing Body and thanked the Government of Singapore and SPRING Singapore for hosting the meeting. He reminded the delegates that two critical decisions must be made.



Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki

First, the GBM had to decide on the Secretariat office relocation issue after the Government of Japan withdrew its voluntary contribution for rent from 2012. As directed by the previous GBM, the Secretariat explored several relocation options, as detailed in a reference paper provided. The Secretary-General urged the Governing Body to consider the options and their implications carefully and come to a definitive decision. Second, the Governing Body must decide on the membership contribution formula. In consultation with the APO Chair and Vice Chairs, a task force comprising APO Directors and chaired by the Government of Malaysia was formed to review the contribution formula and reach agreement. Secretary-General Yamazaki thanked the task force members for making recommendations to the GBM.

Noting that APO Directors had approved the Program and Financial Estimates for 2012, the Secretary-General said that apart from minor changes in the project lineup, the major change in the financial estimates was the revision of the yen-dollar exchange rate from ¥85 to ¥75. The strong yen and withdrawal of Japan's rental cash grant combined to reduce the 2012 budget by US\$1.6 million (about 12%) compared with 2011. Having anticipated this, the Secretariat took further cost-cutting measures that reduced administrative and project costs, and cancelled two projects in 2011, to maintain the same number of projects for 2012 as proposed at the 2011 GBM. Administrative costs were reduced by about 20% compared with 2010, mainly due to drastic cuts in staff salaries from July 2010. The Secretariat also delayed filling vacant staff positions while the office location remained uncertain. This situation is not tenable if the APO wants to maintain its professionalism.

The roles of Secretariat staff have expanded, stated Secretary-General Yamazaki. They plan and carry out projects, serve as speakers and experts in projects, and seek opportunities for collaboration with other organizations. Examples of collaboration, which also raise the visibility of the APO, with expenses paid by the host organizations included serving as an expert at an international forum organized by the UN Centre for Regional Development, National Environment Agency of Singapore, and Japan's Ministry of the Environment; validating a UN study at a roundtable organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization; and speaking at a conference organized by the UAE's Dubai

Chamber of Commerce and Industry on promoting corporate social responsibility. He emphasized that to continue playing such demanding, diverse roles, staff must be developed and the talent pool expanded. Continuing salary cuts would deprive the Secretariat of the ability to attract and retain talent. However, the Secretary-General had decided not to review the salary cuts until the office location was finalized and a comprehensive organizational review performed.

Secretary-General Yamazaki went on to highlight some activities in 2011, such as the 50th anniversary publication project generously funded by the ROC, center of excellence within SPRING Singapore for business excellence, Eco-products International Fair in India, publication of the Eco-products Database and *Eco-products Directory*, and expanded scope of the *APO Productivity Databook*. He also cited projects focusing on knowledge management and lean management techniques for the public sector, the impact of climate change on agricultural productivity, food safety management systems, community-based rural tourism, and the One Village, One Product movement.

As requested by the 2011 GBM, the Secretariat sought additional funding from members and other organizations. In addition to funding from the Colombo Plan and the UN Environment Programme, the APO collaborated with the Food and Agriculture Organization and Asian Development Bank Institute to train more participants from member countries and enhance the visibility of the APO and NPOs. Secretary-General Yamazaki expressed gratitude for special cash grants provided by the ROC, Japan, ROK, and Thailand which helped fund new programs and partially made up for the budget shortfall caused by withdrawal of the rental cash grant. While understanding current budgetary constraints, he hoped that members could continue to give cash grants. The Secretary-General also thanked countries that had paid membership contributions early.

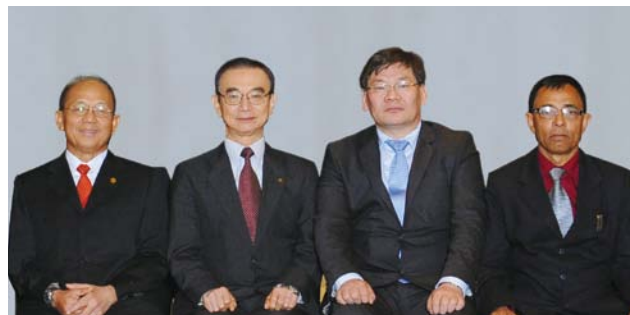
The Secretariat improved operational effectiveness in 2011. The strategic planning process ensured that projects would achieve planned objectives and provide value to taxpayers in member countries. Processes will continue to be reviewed and streamlined with the help of IT and Internet technologies including social media. Web-based self-learning courses attract widespread interest and are a cost-effective way to disseminate knowledge; more are planned. After the GBM approved the new strategic directions last year, a plan was drafted at the WSM to reflect them. To increase the number of videoconferencing e-learning courses, the Secretariat proposed that local implementation costs be borne by participating member countries following the practice for multicountry projects. However, most member countries were

not in favor, and the number of e-learning courses was reduced. The views of APO Directors and NPO Heads on shortening both the GBM and WSM to reduce costs would be sought, the Secretary-General noted.

He asked the delegates to review documents containing the preliminary project lineup for 2013 and 2014 and the budget. Given the uncertain outlook for the US dollar, the Secretariat proposed that the 2012 exchange rate of ¥75 be maintained for the 2013/2014 biennium. He explained the two budget options prepared for consideration, which were contingent on four possible scenarios involving the office rent. He felt confident that the Governing Body would reach a consensus on the budgetary issue and the related Secretariat office move. The decisions made at this GBM would define the next chapter of the APO and Asia-Pacific productivity movement, he added.

In concluding, Secretary-General Yamazaki stated, “My annual report has one consistent theme: expect changes. Changes are necessary to transform the APO and prepare the organization to expand its activities and membership. I look forward to hearing innovative ideas to lead the APO into its next phase of growth.” 🌀

## APO Chair and Vice Chairs for 2012–2013



(L–R): APO Chair Azman Hashim, Secretary-General Yamazaki, 1st Vice Chair Yamaaranz Erkhembayar, and 2nd Vice Chair and Acting APO Director for Nepal Narendra Raj Baral. Photo courtesy of SPRING Singapore.

## Knowledge management clusters for SMEs

**T**he cluster approach has worked to augment the power of small entities through synergy and collaboration. Knowledge management (KM), a powerful tool to enhance SME productivity, is an area where clustering makes sense. In response to the continuing interest in KM in member countries, the APO in conjunction with the China Productivity Center (CPC) held a study meeting on Knowledge Clusters for SMEs in Asia in Taipei, 13–16 December 2011. Dr. Pao-Cheng Chang, President of the CPC, opened the meeting by addressing the 21 participants from 14 member countries. He emphasized that, “KM and related IT applications now make it possible for SMEs to establish strategic alliances and work more closely together than ever before.” Most participants represented SMEs, followed by NPOs, governmental agencies, NGOs, and business associations. They examined KM applications in SME clusters, analyzed the benefits and pitfalls of KM cluster approaches, and developed a methodology and steps for KM in SME clusters to enhance productivity.

Three resource persons, Ma. Theresa A. Agustin from the Philippines, Praba Nair from Singapore, and Dr. Atichart Harnchamchai from Thailand, provided theoretical and practical viewpoints on SME clusters, the APO KM framework for SMEs, and KM applications in SME clusters. Several key findings emerged from the study meeting. First, a majority of large firms in member countries practice KM although it is a newer endeavor for SMEs, fewer than half of which undertake KM at the cluster level. Second, in some cases SME clusters spontaneously form communities of practice by exchanging ideas without realizing that it is an element of KM. Third, most participants confirmed that their governments had policies to strengthen the capabilities of SMEs but fewer



Resource persons fielding questions. (L–R): Resource Persons Agustin and Nair, CPC President Chang, Secretariat Program Officer Masaya Amau, and Resource Person Atichart. Photo courtesy of CPC.

reported policies in place to support SME clusters in general or KM clusters specifically.

Study meeting participants recognized anew that KM can result in innovative, systematic approaches to strengthen SME clusters. Government and NPO participants hoped to promote KM under existing government and NPO schemes to develop SME clusters, as those schemes have already contributed significantly to increasing productivity. Based on inputs from the meeting, the APO Secretariat Research and Planning Department will conduct research on The Cluster Approach for SMEs in 2013, which will review the status of SME clusters in member countries, assess the roles of governments and NPOs in developing SME clusters, and make policy recommendations to member governments. The research results will also be used in planning future APO and NPO projects. 🌀



## Switching bulbs in IR Iran: A national effort for improving energy productivity

**E**nergy is a key component of daily life. It is estimated that energy consumption will increase by about 33% over the next two decades. Escalating demand for energy worldwide and continuous depletion of fossil fuel resources have created major global concern. Greater consumption of energy resulting from population growth and industrialization has had serious environmental impacts, i.e., anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions and global warming, that have led to numerous initiatives to investigate energy supply chain issues and find solutions. There is growing interest in eco-friendly and sustainable alternative energy sources. While exploiting energy from renewable resources such as wind, solar, tidal, etc. is desirable, another effective approach is enhancing energy productivity and efficiency.

IR Iran, despite being located in an energy-rich region, has been examining means to enhance energy productivity, as its energy consumption is relatively high. IR Iran's annual share of world energy consumption is about 5.2%, with only 1% of the global population. The government has subsidized the consumption of energy resources for years. Based on the International Energy Outlook report by the International Energy Agency, the Iranian government spent more than US\$66 billion in 2009 on fossil fuel energy subsidies, with most going to the electricity sector.

Currently, almost 23% of governmental energy subsidies are paid to the electricity sector. The increased demand for electricity has resulted in considerable investments in the power generation industry. During peak hours, the share of electricity consumption in housing and buildings is almost 47%, with lighting accounting for about 30%. Until a few years ago, most lighting in Iranian homes was from conventional incandescent bulbs, mainly in the range of 60 to 100 W. These bulbs consume large amounts of electricity and are low in efficiency since they convert only about 10% of the electricity into light, with the remainder wasted as heat. In addition, they have a relatively short service life. With global inflation and higher energy prices, the cost of bulb replacement and electricity bills have pushed consumers

to consider alternative lighting options. This coincided with the technological development and full commercialization of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

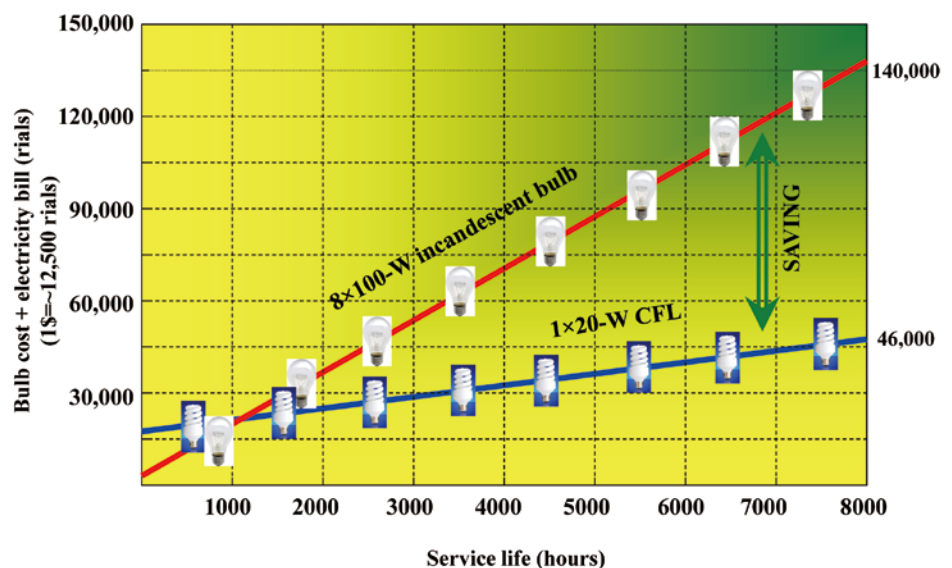
CFLs can contribute to reductions in both demand for energy production and greenhouse gas emissions. On average, each CFL prevents the release of about 367 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere with financial benefits of ~\$5.5 (assuming \$15/ton of CO<sub>2</sub>) during service life of ~8,000 hours. However, the overall cost of production and distribution of each CFL unit is about \$1.7. Some countries use CFLs as part of their clean development mechanisms. Based on the above figures, if CFLs were produced by the government and distributed free among consumers, the rate of return on investment could reach 30%.

In IR Iran, studies on the use of CFLs started in 1997. Two local factories started to produce high-quality energy-saving lights according to the specifications set by the Ministry of Power and certified by the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Research. About 15 million CFL lights were produced from 1997 to 2005. Due to the benefits of CFLs and their role in enhancing energy productivity nationwide, the

Iranian government initiated a program to replace conventional incandescent bulbs with CFLs. The program aimed to lower consumers' electricity bills, reduce investment in extending the electricity supply and distribution grid, and save the environment by using less energy. Although the cost of a CFL unit is higher (average 3- to 5-fold) compared with a conventional incandescent bulb, it has a much longer (8- to 16-fold) service life. The use of CFLs can save up to 45% on electricity bills. Since the lighting intensity of a 20-W CFL is equivalent to a 100-W filament bulb, switching light bulbs can save up to 120 KWh.

The government launched the Office of Energy-Saving Lights under the auspices of the Iran Energy Efficiency Organization to manage the program. Between 2000 and 2005, over 15 million subsidized CFLs were distributed among consumers, saving 250 MW in power consumption and 550 million KWh in energy. Figure 1 shows that replacement of conventional incandescent bulbs with CFLs can save 94,000 rials (~\$7.8) per unit during 8,000 hours of operation.

From 2005 to 2008, another 93 million CFL units were distributed, saving 1,750 MW in power consumption and 3.8 billion KWh in energy. It is



**Figure 1.** Difference between the use of conventional incandescent bulbs and CFLs and amount of savings during service life.

estimated that switching bulbs under this program prevented emission of at least 2.8 million tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In addition, each CFL contributes almost 600,000 rials (~\$50) to the national economy.

The Iranian government urges installation of CFLs in all governmental buildings, wherever technically possible. People become more interested in using CFLs as they learn more about the gains and benefits. Interest escalated after a new governmental act under which subsidies will be reduced gradually, including energy subsidies, and people will see hikes in electricity bills if no action is taken.

If half of Iranian households (currently almost 16 million) replaced three conventional 100-W bulbs with CFLs and assuming usage intensity of 60% during peak hours, almost 1,000 MW of power consumption could be saved, equivalent to an almost 1,300-MW saving in power generation. This is about \$1.3 billion saved in additional investment for electricity generation. Assuming the release of 150g of noxious gases per kilowatt hour of electricity generated, the replacement plan will prevent the release of about 400,000

tons of polluting gases into the atmosphere.

After several CFL bulb distributions, the government is carrying out in-depth analysis of environmental aspects and health and safety issues. Critics say that traces of mercury present in the bulbs cause environmental harm, which must be addressed. Currently, environmentally friendly LEDs with a longer service life are receiving attention. ☺



*Dr. S. Saeid Hosseini is Assistant Professor at Tarbiat Modares University and adviser to the National Iranian Productivity Organization. He received a BSc from Isfahan University of Technology and PhD in Chemical Engineering with specialization in energy and environmental technological solutions from the National University of Singapore. Among his interests are promoting joint academic-industry R&D through technological innovation to improve productivity.*

**GBM gives guidelines for productivity movement expansion** ..... (Continued from page 1)

same as for the 2011–2012 biennium. The Secretariat will prepare a revised budget for 2013–2014 and circulate it for the Directors’ approval.

APO Directors made presentations on the theme Strategies for Growing the APO. An expanded membership would enable the APO to share the wealth of knowledge and experience accumulated over the past 51 years with more Asia-Pacific countries in line with its vision “to be the leading international organization on productivity enhancement, enabling APO economies to be more productive and competitive by 2020.”

Presenting the vote of thanks, APO Director for Fiji Taito Waqa appreciated the Government of Singapore for hosting the meeting, APO Director for Singapore Png Cheong Boon for his leadership, and the entire team of SPRING for organizing the meeting so meticulously. In his closing statement, Secretary-General Yamazaki remarked, “An important issue that was resolved was the location of the Secretariat office thanks to the decisiveness of APO Directors.” He thanked the Directors for the useful ideas in their policy statements and said that, “The direction from the Chair to focus on not more than six key areas to develop action plans was a timely reminder that, with our limited resources, the APO must always focus on what generates the greatest benefits for members.” In acknowledging the observers, the Secretary-General expressed special gratitude to the representative of the Government of Turkey for indicating his country’s interest in joining the APO after Chair Azam Hashim’s invitation. “With emphasis on the APO increasing its international partnerships and expanding the membership, I hope to see even more observers at the next GBM,” Secretary-General Yamazaki concluded.



“This session of the Governing Body will go down in the history of the APO as one of the most important sessions because we made some historical decisions,” stated APO First Vice-Chair Erkhembayar. The First Vice-Chair continued, “A lot of suggestions promised to energize the productivity movement in member countries, strengthen the roles of the APO in the region, and propel it to greater heights in the global arena” before declaring the meeting closed.

GBM delegates also attended the 2012 Business Excellence (BE) Sharing Conference, an initiative launched by SPRING Singapore, where 2011 BE Award Winners and other outstanding organizations shared their best practices in productivity and BE. A city tour was also offered to introduce the colorfully diverse culture of Singapore. ☺

# 10th annual GPAC meeting confirms continued support for Green Productivity

The 10th annual meeting of the Green Productivity Advisory Committee (GPAC) was held in Tokyo, 24 February 2012. The GPAC comprises high-level representatives from over 60 leading Japanese corporations that have demonstrated excellence and innovation in environmental products, technologies, and services and supported the APO's GP activities in the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting was chaired by Teisuke Kitayama, Chairman of the Board of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

In his opening remarks, Chairperson Kitayama stated that he had witnessed how the APO's GP activities contributed to international cooperation in the Japanese business sector during the four years he had been involved in the GPAC. He added that GP was imperative in efforts to improve resource productivity and efficiency.


The annual meeting focused on three agenda items. The first was confirmation of the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons. Current Chairperson Kitayama and Vice-Chairpersons Yukio Yanase, Senior Advisor of ORIX Corporation; Hajime Bada, President and CEO of JFE Holdings, Inc.; Takashi Yamagishi, Senior Executive Advisor of Teijin Limited; Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto, Emeritus Professor of the University of Tokyo; and Tsuneaki Taniguchi, Special Adviser to the Japan Productivity Center, agreed to serve an additional term (2012–14), and the meeting unanimously confirmed their reappointment.

The second item was the flagship *Eco-products Directory* series published by the APO in cooperation with the GPAC since 2004 to publicize eco-products and -services available in the Asia-Pacific. GPAC Vice-Chairperson Yamamoto stressed the importance of efforts like the *Eco-products Directory* which help businesses and the public respond to climate change.



GPAC Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons for 2012–14: (L–R) APO Secretary-General Yamazaki, Vice-Chairperson Yamagishi, Vice-Chairperson Bada, Chairperson Kitayama, Vice-Chairperson Yanase, Vice-Chairperson Yamamoto, and Vice-Chairperson Taniguchi.

The third agenda item was a briefing on another flagship project, the Eco-products International Fairs (EPIFs). An update on preparations for the 8th EPIF in Singapore including the venue (Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre) and timing (14–16 March 2013) was given by Michael Ho, Honorary Chairman of the Waste Management and Recycling Association of Singapore, and Jan Tan, Director of Enterprise Promotion Centres Pte. Ltd. GPAC Vice Chairperson Yamagishi commented that the EPIF is an effective platform to create networks of green businesses, for large corporations and SMEs alike.

The meeting unanimously agreed to support the APO's GP Program, including the two flagship projects. Chairperson Kitayama stressed that both were necessary to respond to the needs of business sectors in Japan and the Asia-Pacific as they face various environmental challenges due to rapid changes in global economic dynamics. 


## Logistics management for successful agribusiness

Logistics management for agrifood products is about how organizations fulfill market demand by getting the right product, in the right quantity and quality, at the right time and place as efficiently as possible to meet customer requirements. Logistics management coordinates and optimizes all those activities and integrates them with marketing, sales, manufacturing, finance, and IT. Providing dependable, error-free logistics service while controlling costs is the primary goal of logistics and agribusiness managers. While no single model will fit the needs of all agribusinesses, safety, quality, and the environment should constitute an integral part of any strategy. For developing effective logistics, bottlenecks in transport, fleet, storage, warehousing and inventory, and supply/demand planning must be resolved, especially

in SMEs that constitute a large portion of Asian agribusiness but are often inefficient in logistics management. A well-designed logistics management scheme enables agribusinesses to minimize costs, maximize profits, and sustain operations.

To equip participants with skills and knowledge in designing

and conducting effective logistics management and enhance their understanding of emerging issues and critical factors in agribusiness logistics management, the APO in collaboration with the Iranian Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture and National Iranian Productivity Organization organized a training course on Logistics Management in Agribusiness, 28 January–3 February 2012, in Tehran. Eighteen participants from 10 member economies, along with five local observers, attended.

To observe good practices of logistics management in agribusiness, the participants visited Madan-e-Markazi Miveh va Tarebar (Central Market for Fruit and Fresh Produce, Tehran) and the milk-processing and packaging plant of Tehran Pegah Dairy Company. The participants also drafted a list of follow-up actions needed to develop efficient logistics systems for agribusiness in their countries. As one follow-up, Managing Director Chan Seng Kit of K-Farm Sdn. Bhd., Malaysia, suggested that there was a need for subsequent communication between the resource persons and participants to enhance the impact of the course on their job environment. He also recommended more detailed practical training during field/company visits with explanations of business models. As often noted, many, including Dr. Abdul Ghafoor of Pakistan, thought that the schedule was tight. Iranian Masood Malekhani was appreciated of both course content and the enthusiasm of the resource persons, while Indonesian Yuli Sri Wilantim felt that one of the high points was that the methodology encouraged actual application. 



Observing the processing of fruit and vegetable waste into cattle feed at Madan-e-Markazi Miveh va Tarebar.

## APO/NPO update

### India

New e-mail and website address of the National Productivity Council, India

e-Mail: [isg@npcindia.gov.in](mailto:isg@npcindia.gov.in)

Website: [www.npcindia.gov.in](http://www.npcindia.gov.in)

### Mongolia

New addresses of the Mongolian Productivity Organization

Bayangol District, Peace Avenue, 20th Khoroo, Ulaanbaatar 210526

(Post Office 26, Box 354, Ulaanbaatar 16081)



## New APO publication

### Eco-products Directory 2012

ISBN: 978-92-833-2428-7 (print edition)

ISBN: 978-92-833-2429-4 (e-edition)

The *Eco-products Directory 2012* is the latest edition of this unique publication, showcasing 900 green products and services developed by enterprises in the Asia-Pacific designed to help minimize impacts on the environment and mitigate the effects of global warming.



## Interview with SR Asia founder now available on our website

The APO always seeks multiplier effects from its projects so that as many as possible can benefit from them. A prime example of an individual inspired to spread the benefits is Birendra D. Raturi, who was one of the founders of SR Asia after attending two APO projects on social responsibility (SR; ISO 26000). Secretariat Industry Department Senior Program Officer K.D. Bhardwaj, who was in charge of those projects, interviewed Raturi via e-mail on behalf of the *APO News*. Raturi's replies show a holistic approach to sustainability and a clear-eyed view of the links between SR and productivity. The interview is available in full on the APO website at <http://www.apo-tokyo.org/wp/alumni>.

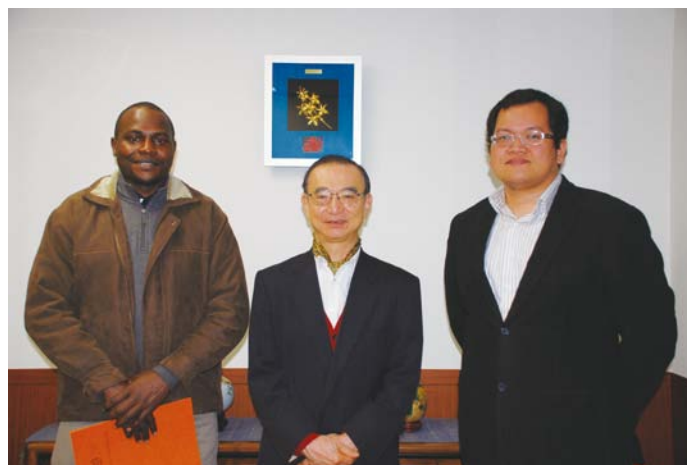
## Photo news



National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Director Prakash (L) presenting the APO Honorary Fellow certificate to Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Usamate, 30 March 2012 (see page 8 for details). Photo courtesy of NTPC.



Secretary-General Yamazaki (center) preparing to cut the fruit-laden APO birthday cake arranged by SPRING for the GBM. Photo courtesy of SPRING Singapore.



Kamei Jackson Kiprono (L) and Angga E. Wirastomo (R) flank Secretary-General Yamazaki after receiving certificates for completing their internships at the Secretariat.

## Type I ecolabeling: getting off the ground

The APO, through its Green Productivity Program, has been actively involved in promoting effective strategies for increasing green purchasing and creating greater market demand for green products and services. As a follow-up to the annual *Eco-products Directory/Database*, the APO organized projects in 2010 and 2011 designed not only to review the breadth and scope of the directory/database and identify measures for improvement but also to study recent green strategies of member countries and identify their current needs. In extensive discussions between participants, experts, and APO program officers, national type I (ISO 14024) ecolabeling schemes were recognized as one effective green purchasing strategy for the entire region. However, individual APO member countries require significant levels of technical assistance in the development and enhancement of type I ecolabeling schemes as national initiatives that would allow them to address environmental concerns and secure broad-based commitment on the part of corporations and individuals to greening the economy.

For the first time in its 50-year-plus history, the APO cooperated with the Department of Technology, Industry and Economy of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to cohost an interregional workshop to provide technical training and assistance for the development of national type I ecolabeling schemes based on the ISO 14024 standard. The Capacity-building Workshop on Type I Ecolabeling, held 5 to 7 March in Bangkok, Thailand, in collaboration with other external bodies such as the Global Ecolabelling Network and Thailand Environmental Institute, brought together representatives of



Experts John Polak (L) and Dr. Chaiyod Bunyagidj (R) assist participants in a group exercise.

selected member countries of both the APO and UNEP who are currently involved in the development or operation of national type I ecolabeling programs in their countries. International experts with diverse backgrounds gave presentations on experiences, best practices, and insights on trends from Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Sweden, and Thailand to guide the participants through detailed aspects of establishing and operating a national type I ecolabeling program, including the development of certification criteria, conducting life cycle assessments, quality management, and marketing strategies. “Valuable learning sessions and exchanges during the workshop should be maintained to exchange/build programs,” noted one delegate in attendance. The APO intends to continue seeking other opportunities to provide its member countries with assistance and support in ecolabeling and certification efforts. 🌀

APO  
alumni  
news

### APO Alumni Fiji established

The inaugural APO Alumni Fiji meeting was held at the National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) headquarters on the campus of Fiji National University in Suva on 30 March 2012. Over 100 APO project alumni in attendance welcomed presentations from Ranju Kumar on the development of productivity specialists, Ravinesh Krishna on Green Productivity, Viliame Waqalaivi on best practices in business excellence, and Ratu Meli Nacuva on lean manufacturing. The APO Alumni Fiji Steering Committee was also elected to provide directions and develop the formal structures and strategies for the alumni body.

Adding significance to the event, APO Alternate Director for Fiji and NTPC Director Kamlesh Prakash conferred the APO Honorary Fellow Award on Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Jone Usamate in recognition of long service in promoting productivity in APO member countries. Reflecting on his more than 20 years in promoting and raising productivity in Fiji through his involvement with the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (rebranded as the NTPC), Minister Usamate said, “Promoting productivity and raising productivity requires champions, people who will go out of their way to not only talk about ways of improving productivity, but will actually start and complete productivity improvement projects, people who will spread

information about productivity and help others to improve their own productivity. Such alumni will become the beginning of a network that speaks and breathes productivity.” He asserted that future productivity growth on two levels could help cushion the impacts of global economic crises, which the world and especially smaller nations like Fiji had been rocked by over the past several years; the sociocultural values that influence attitudes toward productive work; and macroeconomic policies that create an enabling environment for economic actors and enterprises to be productive and competitive.

NTPC Director Prakash noted that over 1,000 persons in Fiji had attended APO projects and the country already had the critical mass that could help effect needed changes in industry. “Fijians in industry, agriculture, government, academia, and NGOs have gained tremendously from attending those APO projects, and many organizations have profited from the learning and exposure they acquired.” Director Prakash added that while, “A loose coalition of productivity champions is admirable, more formal structures need to be in place to develop systematic plans and actions to advance the national productivity agenda.” APO Alumni Fiji will assist the NTPC in promoting productivity nationally and augment training resources 🌀