

APO 50th anniversary and New Year message from Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki

Let me first wish all APO News readers a very happy and prosperous New Year. 2011 is indeed an auspicious year for the APO as it marks its 50th anniversary since its inception in April 1961. Article 1 of the APO Convention states: "The objective of the Organization is, by mutual cooperation, to increase productivity in the countries of Asia." The APO has consistently lived up to this mission, and we in the Secretariat are ready to continue meeting the needs of member countries in order to accelerate their socioeconomic development through even more effective productivity enhancement programs.

2011 is also the start of the second biennium of APO programs since this budget system was adopted in 2009. The APO Directors approved the program plans for the 2011–2012 biennium last April at the Governing Body Meeting in Kuala Lumpur and they were refined at the annual Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Bangkok last October.

This April, an anniversary ceremony in conjunction with the annual Governing Body Meeting will be held in Tokyo. On that occasion, the APO Regional Awards will be conferred on five selected individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the cause of productivity enhancement in the APO region.

This anniversary will also be timely for the APO Secretariat to renew its strategic vision for conducting its mission. This will be carried out against the backdrop of numerous common challenges such as the difficult fiscal situation in our member countries as well as global sustainability issues. We are living in a dynamic, changing world due to rapid progress in science and technology coupled with deeper and faster globalization. Significant steps must be taken to ensure that environmental sustainability goes hand in hand with such global-scale socioeconomic development.

We must, while undertaking any necessary fine-tuning, maintain our resolve in pursuing our fundamental mission. We must build upon ongoing strategic thrust areas such as Green Productivity and strengthening of SMEs, while developing new, more effective strategies that ensure the APO's relevancy to the needs of member countries whose economies are evolving rapidly.

With these in mind, the APO seeks to create synergy with our stakeholders, i.e., governments, NPOs, the private sector, academia, APO alumni, and the media, among others, because their concerted efforts are crucial for achieving a greater impact through the pooling of knowledge, expertise, and resources. I look forward to the continued support from all stakeholders in the diverse programs scheduled for this year, such as the Eco-Products International Fair, Top Management Forum, and Agriculture and Food Supply Chain Safety Program, to mention only a few.

Asia as a whole has excellent potential for growth. It can lead the global economic recovery with sustained strong growth throughout the region. The APO, at the heart of a dynamic Asia, is in a unique position to promote the socioeconomic development of not only our member countries but also of other interdependent economies. The challenges are enormous but not insurmountable. Let us all stay united and adopt innovative ideas and new approaches to make our bright future a reality.




Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki



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