

# Multicountry OSM on SME development

**D**evelopment of SMEs was the focus of a recently completed multicountry observational study mission (OSM) held in Japan, 24–28 January 2011. The OSM, jointly hosted by the APO and Japan Productivity Center (JPC), had 12 participants from three members representing the Mekong region (Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam) and four observers from Myanmar. Participants shared their experiences in the development of demonstration companies and described the relevant support given by the national productivity organizations through the Member Country Support Program (MCSP). The OSM and MCSP are follow-up activities to a previous APO-sponsored workshop on SME Development in the Mekong Region.

The OSM agenda included presentations by SME Expert Satoru Tajima, participants' country paper presentations, and site visits in Tokyo and Nagoya. In Tokyo, APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki joined the OSM at Diamond Dining Co. Ltd., where they observed practices adopted to ensure customer satisfaction. In Nagoya, site visits to four companies, Sankyo Kogyo Co. Ltd., Mirai Industry Co. Ltd., Nabeya Bi-Tech Kaisha, and Meidoh Co. Ltd., demonstrated

the application of lean systems to enhance product quality, management philosophies for motivating workers, human resources and production management techniques for multiple-item small-lot production, and total quality management, respectively.



*OSM participants learning about SME best practices at Mirai Industry Co. Ltd. Photo M. Idham/APO*

On the last day, Tajima facilitated action planning by participants and chaired the summing-up session. Participants expressed satisfaction with what they had gained from the mission, especially during the site visits, and planned to disseminate their new knowledge in their organizations. ⚙️