

## 53rd GBM approves new strategic directions and hails productivity champions

The 53rd Governing Body Meeting (GBM) was held 19 to 21 April in Malaysia at the Royale Chulan Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. A total of 57 participants attended the three-day event, which was hosted by the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) for the second year in a row. Originally set to be hosted by the Government of Japan in Tokyo, the high-level gathering was moved to Kuala Lumpur after the earthquake and tsunami struck Japan's northeastern region in March. The APO Secretariat had been in the thick of preparations for the GBM and the APO 50th jubilee celebration when the tragedy struck. The Government of Malaysia, through the MPC, readily accepted the request of the Government of Japan and the GB that Malaysia host the meeting. APO Directors and advisers representing all active APO members and observers from partner organizations like PAPA and the Colombo Plan attended. The GBM elected a new chair and vice chairs for 2011–2012: APO Director for Lao PDR Somdy Inmyxai was elected APO Chair while APO Director for Malaysia Azman Hashim and APO Director for Mongolia Yamaaranz Erkhembayar assumed the positions of First and Second Vice Chairs, respectively.

A highlight of the GBM was the approval of the proposed new strategic directions of the APO for 2011 to 2020. The APO was established in 1961 with the mission of contributing to the socio-economic development of its members through enhancing productivity. With global developments calling for improved competitiveness and sustainable development of countries, the GBM agreed that the APO must conduct its mission in the next 10 years with a view to supporting the “sustainable socioeconomic development” of members. In line with this modified mission statement, the APO's new vision “To be the leading international organization on productivity enhancement, enabling APO economies to be more productive and competitive by 2020” was also approved. In the next decade, the APO's strategic thrust areas will focus on strengthening NPOs, promoting the development of SMEs and communities, catalyzing innovation-led productivity growth, and promoting Green Productivity.

The Inaugural Session on the afternoon of 19 April was opened by Chairman of the Board of the MPC Azman Hashim, who welcomed the delegates. Malaysian Minister of Trade and Industry Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed delivered the inaugural address. Other guests of honor during the Inaugural Session were APO officials led by outgoing Governing Body Chair Dr. Dong-Kyu Choi (Republic of Korea) and First Vice Chair Somdy Inmyxai (Lao PDR). The inaugural session was highlighted by the conferment of the APO Regional Awards 2011 on five distinguished productivity champions, led by former President Fidel V. Ramos (Philippines) who gave the keynote address. The four other distinguished recipients of the APO Regional Awards were Dr. Tyzz Jiun-Duh (Republic of China), Rachmat Gobel (Indonesia), Tsuneaki Taniguchi (Japan), and Dr. Dong-Kyu Choi (Republic of Korea).

In his welcome address at the inaugural session, Azman Hashim conveyed the MPC's honor in hosting the 53rd Session of the APO Governing Body. He expressed confidence that the 53rd GBM would provide an avenue for deliberation on a broad range of issues concerning the way forward for APO programs to raise regional productivity. Minister Yang Berhormat Dato' Sri



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L–R: APO GB 2nd Vice Chair Y. Erkhembayar, 1st Vice-Chair Azman Hashim, Chair S. Inmyxai, APO Secretary-General Yamazaki, and Secretariat Administration and Finance Director Sherman Loo at the plenary session on the opening day. Photo courtesy of MPC.



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Mustapa Mohamed in his inaugural address noted that Malaysia had adopted a new economic model that would hopefully elevate the country to a higher growth path. He emphasized that the role of government was to provide an investment environment conducive to attracting quality investments and developing high-quality human capital. In this drive toward growth, he believed that Malaysia, as a member of the APO, had learned valuable productivity lessons from its Asian neighbors and would continue to intensify its productivity and innovation programs for the creation of high value-added activities in the economy. Former President of the Republic of the Philippines Fidel V. Ramos, one of the five APO Regional Awardees for 2011, delivered the keynote address. The GBM received reports from Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki, which included the APO's performance in programs and projects and the audited financial status for 2010.

On day two of the GBM, APO Directors spoke on the strategic and operating challenges of the APO and the measures to address them. Foremost in the minds of members was ensuring that the APO would be able to sustain the delivery of its services to all members while efficiently managing operational constraints, especially financial resources. With the global crunch being felt by all, the GBM agreed that it was an imperative to rationalize existing programs and projects so that they were more focused and direct in creating benefits for members, consistent with the APO thrust areas of strengthening NPOs, SME development, Green Productivity, and innovation-led productivity growth.

GBM delegates also visited the facilities of MM Vita oils Sdn. Bhd. in Kuala Lumpur. MM Vita oils is a multiple award-winning manufacturer of edible oil and fat products which exports to 81 countries and exemplifies an SME that has carved out a market niche through the adoption of tried-and-tested best practices in business and quality management. The delegates were given a presentation on the company's profile and taken on a tour of the factory's facilities and operations. 🌾



*APO Regional Awardees 2011 (L-R): T. Taniguchi (Japan), D.-K. Choi (ROK), F.V. Ramos (Philippines), R. Gobel (Indonesia), and T. Duh (ROC). Photo courtesy of MPC.*