



WSM held in Fiji

The 54th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs (WSM) convened in Nadi, Fiji, 29–31 October. It was attended by 33 NPO and agriculture delegates and 10 advisers representing APO members who confirmed the final lineup of projects for 2014 and discussed the new program plan for the 2015/2016 biennium.

The meeting opened with welcome remarks by Dr. Ganesh Chand, Vice Chancellor, Fiji National University, who noted that, “Your presence on our shores confirms your conviction of the need for enhancing productivity in the Asia-Pacific region and for advancing the lives and living standards of the people, which is the mission of the organization.” That was followed by the inaugural address by the guest of honor, Fijian Prime Minister Commodore Josia Voreqe Bainimarama. In his address, he emphasized that, “We owe a great deal to the lessons we have learned from our fellow APO member countries in making Fiji more productive and committed to quality.” He reached out to the delegates, stressing that, “All nations, irrespective of size, location, or endowments, share the dream of creating wealth and improving the socioeconomic conditions of their people.”

During the WSM, NPO Delegate from Fiji Kamlesh Prakash was elected Chair and NPO Delegate from Sri Lanka Dr. Damitha de Zoysa as the Vice Chair. In his first statement to the WSM, new Secretary-General Mari Amano mentioned fresh areas under the productivity umbrella that he would like to see the organization engaged in, including “more productivity initiatives, social marketing, change management, and gender mainstreaming.” He outlined his vision and focus based on the three key elements of “relevance, transparency, and productivity.” Secretary-General Amano also pointed out that in expanding collaborative activities with other international organizations and such institutions as Cornell University, “The APO will have to adopt new and more flexible approaches.”

A new feature at the 2013 WSM, as suggested by delegates, was four parallel breakout sessions on day 1, which were facilitated by Mohan Dhamotharan, an expert from Germany who had extensive experience in the areas of managing for developmental results and capacity development with several hundred programs implemented in Europe, the Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East. Dhamotharan stated that the breakout sessions were an important element of developing a collaborative strategy for productivity enhancement in APO member countries. The sessions focused on the APO’s strategic directions of strengthening NPOs, developing SMEs and communities, catalyzing innovation-led productivity growth and networking, and promoting Green Productivity. The sessions explored challenges and potentials and identified effective programs that would contribute to the desired outcomes of the strategic directions. The recommendations of the four sessions were presented in a combined session on day 2.

On the last day, delegates made an observational visit to Ocean Soaps Limited, Navutu, Lautoka, before proceeding to adopt the reports of the strategic planning sessions. 🌀



Prime Minister Bainimarama of Fiji delivering the inaugural address. Photo courtesy of National Training & Productivity Centre, Fiji National University.

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