



# APO *news*

## 48th WSM lays groundwork for new program planning

*The 48th Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organizations (NPOs) was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, 16–18 October 2007. In attendance were 51 delegates, advisers, and observers from 19 member countries and three observers from the Colombo Plan Secretariat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The workshop meeting, the second in 2007, was convened to facilitate the transition to the new budgeting system that will take effect from 2009, as decided by the Governing Body at its 49th session in Mongolia last June.*



*Secretary-General Takenaka (L) meeting Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (center)*

**T**he 48th WSM reviewed the APO 2008, 2009, and 2010 Program Plans. Because 2007 is a transition year, the present workshop meeting adopted two different approaches in reviewing the projects proposed by the Secretariat. The 2008 plan was reviewed in same manner as previously and the proposed projects were endorsed after some modifications as suggested by the hosting countries. However, as the WSM was brought forward to October, projects to be financed using “other” income were not yet reflected. The complete 2008 Program Plan will be ready by February 2008 and submitted for the Governing Body’s final approval through circulation.

The 2009 and 2010 Program Plans were reviewed under the new budgeting system, which will require the Governing Body to determine the amount of the total membership contributions. Previously, the amount was automatically known following a preset calculation. For this purpose, the 2009 and 2010 Program Plans were prepared based on a new program planning process in which the proposed projects were presented according to their priority.

The Secretariat went an extra mile to explain the new program planning process. A reference paper was circulated prior to the meeting describing the four criteria for prioritizing projects: 1) projects with new topics, using new methods, and with new outreach contents; 2) projects suggested by delegates to the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) and WSM; 3) projects supported by the results of a survey conducted among member countries; and 4) projects suggested by resource persons and/or participants.

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**“The most damaging phrase in the language is: ‘It’s always been done that way.’”**

**Grace Hopper**

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**Asian Productivity Organization**  
Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F  
1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 102-0093, Japan  
Tel: (81-3) 5226-3920  
Fax: (81-3) 5226-3950  
e-Mail: apo@apo-tokyo.org  
Web site: www.apo-tokyo.org



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The details of the rationales for these criteria were presented by the Secretariat before the Strategic Planning Session. The Secretariat also made presentations on e-learning and two-tiered projects, which represent projects using new methods. To complete the explanation, the Secretariat also made a presentation on the Eco-products International Fair (EPIF), which Vietnam is scheduled to host in March 2008, the fourth such event after those held in Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.



Research and Planning Department Director Bhattarai explaining the new program planning process

The WSM endorsed the new program planning approach developed by the Secretariat and it further decided to ask the Secretariat to make the necessary modifications in the priorities of projects to be presented to the GBM at the meeting in April 2008, taking into account the views and suggestions made at this workshop meeting.

The 48th WSM was graced by the presence of Vietnam's Minister for Science and Technology Hoang Van Phong, who delivered the inaugural address. He said that despite the dynamic economic growth of many Asian nations, including Vietnam, there was still a big gap in terms of economic development between the developing and developed member countries. "I believe that the APO's contribution to the socioeconomic development of countries in the region will be positively extended in coming years," he stated. APO Director for Vietnam Dr. Ngo Quy Viet gave a warm welcome address. After commending the APO's achievements in contributing to the socioeconomic development of its member countries, Dr. Viet added, "The APO is also an important bridge connecting regional members and other international organizations."

APO Alternate Director and Managing Director of the Vietnam Productivity Centre Nguyen Anh Tuan, and APO Alternate Director and NPO Head from Cambodia Yea Bunna were elected as Chair and Vice Chair of the meeting, respectively. One of the key agenda items of the WSM, the statement of Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, was then delivered (*see page 2 for a summary of his statement*).

During the concurrent strategic planning exercises, the Industry and Service Sector Committee was chaired by National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, Head Dato' Nik Zainiah Nik Abdul Rahman with NPO Delegate from Bangladesh Dr. Md. Nazrul Islam serving as rapporteur. The Agriculture Sector Committee was chaired by Agriculture Delegate from Vietnam Dr. Nguyen Van Bo, and the rapporteur was Agriculture Delegate from Malaysia Esther Lew Swee Yong.

During the WSM, Secretary-General Takenaka paid a courtesy call on Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung. The Prime Minister appreciated the programs organized by the APO and the productivity movement being promoted nationwide by the Vietnam Productivity Centre. He was also very supportive of the EPIF 2008 to be hosted by Vietnam in March next year.

APO Secretary-General Takenaka, in his closing statement, noted, "We have made a successful first step in the long process of implementing a new budgeting system." He expressed his appreciation for the suggestions and advice at the meeting and promised to incorporate them in refining the program planning process further. In his closing statement, Chair Tuan called the meeting a success and said, "I believe that through this workshop meeting we made a great stride in the transition toward the new system of planning APO programs and projects."



(L-R) Vice Chair Yea Bunna, Chair Nguyen Anh Tuan, and APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka

After the hard work of the WSM had been accomplished, approximately 40 of the delegates headed 30 kilometers outside Hanoi in the early morning of the final day to tour the handicraft village of Phu Vinh. Phu Vinh has been known as a supplier of bamboo and rattan products since the 1800s. On a cool, sunny day, the delegates observed artisans practicing traditional skills to produce useful household objects. Some craftspeople have also begun to offer homestays to complement informal handicraft and business tours to those appreciating the weaving and design artistry displayed by the residents of Phu Vinh and admired by the WSM visitors. ☺



Delegates talking with village children in Phu Vinh

The APO Web site contains more extensive reports on the WSM, including a photo gallery.