

People behind the scenes: Program Officer Setsuko Miyakawa

Jackie Chan, the world-famous action movie star and director, is known for the outtakes at the end of his films giving a behind-the-scenes view of the people and process. Here is an up-close, personal view of the APO Secretariat's own action star, Industry Department Program Officer Setsuko Miyakawa, who was responsible for the recently concluded EPIF 2009 (see page 1).

Preparations for a mega event like the EPIF span a year, starting as soon as one fair finishes and only ending when the next begins. Managing the event means taking final responsibility for everything, from coordinating with exhibitors, coorganizers, supporting organizations, and Secretariat staff to overseeing procedures, preparations, management, and execution. The final days are especially hectic and require many late nights at the office.

Miyakawa smiled through stress and weariness, constantly encouraging others with warm words, a cup of coffee, or a quick meal. After working late on 12 March before an early-morning flight to Manila, a Secretariat coworker jokingly said, "You had better go home early if you want to be in one piece by the end of the EPIF." However, the next morning, that coworker opened an e-mail message from Miyakawa sent after 02:00. Her dedication was reflected again when she sent a message informing the Secretariat of her safe arrival in Manila, with details on preparations and instructions for other staff.

Prior to the EPIF opening ceremony, a series of coordination meetings were convened to check major programs and an endless list of items for review.



Miyakawa (L) checking EPIF preparations at the venue

Miyakawa was the troubleshooter for the entire series, chairing all the meetings in a calm, professional manner despite bloodshot eyes due to lack of sleep and stress. One of the coorganizers who worked with Miyakawa on the EPIF 2006 in Singapore described her as a "perfectionist" while expressing concern for her health. Although Miyakawa generally deflects compliments, anyone who has worked with her praises her professionalism and kindness in putting others first on all occasions. "I am still having nightmares about missing details at the EPIF," she said almost a week after the EPIF 2009 had concluded. Her eyes were still tired, but all know that she will spring into action when needed. Miyakawa's schedule remains full with the EPIF 2009 wrap-up, but she will soon be on her way to Indonesia, the venue of the EPIF 2010, to start the sequel. 