

Special presentation on KM and Innovation for SMEs



Dr. Prusak speaking on KM and Innovation for SMEs

"Smallness is not a disadvantage for countries as they enter the new knowledge economy," asserted Dr. Laurence Prusak, prominent US researcher and consultant and founder of the Institute of Knowledge Management, in a special one-hour presentation at the APO Secretariat in Tokyo on 17 April on

Knowledge Management (KM) and Innovation for SMEs in Asia and the Pacific. It was attended by an audience of 40 researchers, consultants, academics, and APO Secretariat staff.

He remarked that the monopoly of useful knowledge by Western civilizations was over. The knowledge economy offers opportunities for SMEs in the Asia-Pacific to become globally competitive using innovation. "Knowledge is better off with small offices and small groups with more live interactions and less hierarchy," he said, because SMEs were agile and had the size, scope, and speed

to innovate. "Different perspectives" are needed to create knowledge and innovate since, "Better outcomes come from cognitive diversity."

Dr. Prusak complimented the APO on promoting KM in the Asia-Pacific region and its soon to be published *KM Facilitators' Guidebook*. He encouraged efforts to develop KM measurement methodology and research on "knowledge productivity," an emerging area.

APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka thanked Dr. Prusak for his informative lecture that gave "a powerful and theoretical boost" to continue initiatives to promote KM among SMEs in member countries. He added that the APO had organized a series of KM projects since 2000.

KM was designated an APO thrust area in 2001. As the concept has gained acceptance in member countries, the APO continues efforts to review and promote it, particularly its relevance to enhancing productivity. One of the latest initiatives was to develop a common KM definition, framework, and implementation approach for member countries and provide guidance for KM planning and implementation, especially for SMEs. Case studies of KM practices in SMEs are also being compiled. 