

APEAEN holds 4th International Conference

APO alumni bodies form networks of productivity practitioners, professionals, and stakeholders, which create opportunities to exchange experiences and skill sets in specific areas of interest. The Asia-Pacific Association of Educators in Agriculture and Environment (APEAEN), an alliance of educators formed after a 1997 APO project, has proven that a regional network of APO alumni is a powerful channel for information sharing.

Starting on 3 August 2009, the APEAEN, in collaboration with Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine and Obihiro City Office, conducted a four-day international conference in Obihiro, Hokkaido, Japan. The fourth biennial conference was also supported by agricultural cooperatives in Obihiro and Shihoro and international institutions and organizations including the FAO and APO. The APO dispatched two resource speakers, President of EARTH University Dr. Jose Zaglul, Costa Rica, and Chung Hsing University Professor Dr. Shiann-Gwo Jeang, Republic of China, under the auspices of its Technical Expert Services Program. APO Agriculture Department Director Song Hyun Choi attended the opening ceremony and delivered a congratulatory address in which he said that, "When organizing projects, the APO always emphasizes the importance of follow-up activities by participants, and hence we encourage them to establish networks among themselves. The APEAEN is a shining example of such a network and the APO is proud of its success."

The fourth APEAEN conference had the theme Education for Sustainable Community Development with Emphasis on Cooperation with Communities. It brought together more than 250 participants from academic institutions, community development organizations, and government offices from the Asia-Pacific region. "The success of the APEAEN is founded on all its members sharing common interests and needs. Therefore they are always interested in exchanging information. Another factor is its good governance, especially its dynamic Secretariat," commented Adjunct Professor of Agricultural Education Dr. Samuel T. Mancebo, University of the Philippines Los Baños, and APEAEN treasurer. The Secretariat



Panel discussion in progress

is operated by four staff, headed by Executive Director Dr. Cely S. Binoya, Professor and Extension Director, Camarines Sur State Agricultural College, the Philippines. They contribute their time and expertise to association activities including Web site management, publications, and communication with members.

The conference included an educational tour of agricultural cooperatives in Obihiro and Shihoro. The participants saw how agricultural schools and universities work together to achieve better farm productivity. Good educational practices in agriculture and the environment and good extension practices were described in 24 presentations in parallel sessions. There were also five poster presentations by students from the Republic of Korea. The conference concluded with summations by Dr. Zaglul and Senior Extension, Education and Communications Officer Dr. Malcolm P. Hazelman, FAO. The APO is happy to support the activities of APO alumni bodies and looks forward to the establishment of more organizations like the APEAEN. 