

Eco-strategy for eco-business

Environmental Management for Sustainable Productivity Enhancement was the topic of the 26th Top Management Forum, one of the longest-running APO projects, held in the historic city of Kyoto, Japan, 22–24 February, in collaboration with the Japan Productivity Center. “This forum, which started back in 1985, has provided opportunities for Asian top managers to become familiar with the state-of-the-art management strategies utilized by leading Japanese corporations to maximize their productivity,” stated APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka in his opening address. Speaking on the forum’s focus in connection with the APO’s Green Productivity (GP) concept, Secretary-General Takenaka remarked that, “As time went on, more and more people in the business community understood the importance of taking sustainability factors into consideration.” He expanded on this by detailing the establishment of the Green Productivity Advisory Committee (GPAC) by the APO and its continuing support for Eco-products International Fairs and the publication of the *Eco-products Directory* series.

This year’s forum focused on current environmental management strategies and practices adopted by Japanese companies including GPAC members. GPAC Chairperson Teisuke Kitayama, Chairman of the Board of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), gave a presentation entitled Social Responsibility of the Financial Sector for the Realization of a Sustainable Society. Chairperson Kitayama introduced initiatives introduced by the SMBC financial group to promote environmental protection through financial instruments such as loans, deposits, investment trusts, and carbon credits. Dr. Ryoichi Yamamoto, University of Tokyo Professor and a GPAC Vice Chairperson, spoke on sustainable business development and environmental management to coun-

teract global warming, including commitments to greenhouse gas reductions. Yu Murata, Japanese Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, introduced policies to encourage environmental management and business sustainability.



Forum participants discussing how to adapt eco-strategies

Speakers representing Nippon Mosaic Tile Co., Ltd., Shiseido Co., Ltd., Toray Industries, Inc., and Panasonic Corporation regaled the audience with details of newly developed, cutting-edge concepts and management tools used by their companies. The forum participants also visited the Hitachi Maxell Ltd. Kyoto plant. Maxell’s environmentally friendly processes, including waste sorting and recycling methods, were demonstrated during the plant tour.

During a group session, participants discussed how to adapt and apply the environmental management strategies explained during the forum in their own settings. Professor Kun-Mo Lee of Ajou University, Republic of Korea, who spoke on eco-business at the forum, facilitated the session. A publication will summarize all the presentations including the group discussion, which will be available on the APO Web site in the near future. 