

People behind the scenes: Alwina binti Alwi Tan



This young lady who hails from Malaysia likes sports, shopping, watching movies, and cooking during her free time.

Alwina is in the Customer Relation Unit of the Strategic Planning and Corporate Communication Department, which is in charge of handling customers' complaints, feedback, inquiries, and the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) Business Information Centre. In addition, she represents the MPC on a committee for the Ministry of International Trade and Industry's weekly bulletin and other corporate communication tasks.

The 52nd session of the APO Governing Body (GBM) was the first international program Alwina handled. She still feels the sense of excitement that ran through her when she was first informed that she would be part of the MPC's GBM team. "It was truly a challenge for me to be directly involved in an international program such as the GBM," she confirmed.

The preparations for the GBM started five months prior to the day the delegates and advisers arrived in Kuala Lumpur. Aside from having a detailed checklist, Alwina made sure that discussions and meetings were held regularly with her superior and colleagues to troubleshoot anything that might possibly occur.

She was lucky to have a good team to work with, she acknowledged. Regular communication, especially through e-mail messages with the APO Secretariat, APO Conference Officer, APO Liaison Officer for Malaysia, and other colleagues all helped to make the GBM a success.

Reminiscing about the good times enjoyed during the GBM and preparatory period, when her specific role included assisting with hotel logistics, flight schedules, and arranging the welcome dinner, Alwina recalled that the toughest aspects were last-minute changes in either flights or the names of delegates. These continued to occur even up until the day before the GBM convened, but all were coped with smoothly. "However, once the participants arrived in Kuala Lumpur, all my worries began to fade. I felt happy and relieved, but know that the next challenge awaits," she said. "Even though not everything went as expected, as there were last-minute changes, we managed to overcome them with the help of our Conference Officer and the APO Secretariat staff."

Alwina was sure that all the APO delegates enjoyed their stay in Malaysia based on their smiling faces. She regarded the GBM as a valuable experience, allowing her to work behind the scenes and get to know people and cultures from different countries. She also appreciated the experience she gained from working with the APO Secretariat staff. Alwina's advice for others who would like to take on similar responsibilities in event preparation is to be diligent. "This kind of job requires a lot of preparation, continuous communication, and commitment. Always be prepared and ready to act if there is any unexpected or sudden change in the flow of the program." 