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51st WSM in Bangkok

Thirty-five NPO and Agriculture delegates from the 19 APO member countries gathered in Bangkok, the dynamic capital of the Kingdom of Thailand, for the 51st Workshop Meeting (WSM) of Heads of National Productivity Organization (NPOs), 19–21 October 2010. Accompanying the delegates were 17 advisers from nine member countries, and there were also four observers representing the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Pan African Productivity Association, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.



Inaugural session of the 51st Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs in Bangkok, 19 October 2010. Photo courtesy of FTPI

Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Executive Director, Thailand Productivity Institute, and APO Alternate Director for Thailand, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the host country. He remarked that over the last few years, the APO had improved its programs in terms of quality and quantity to cope with global changes and the level of development of member countries. This had resulted in greater accumulated experience and new knowledge. “The APO has become a center of excellence on productivity in its own right and occupies an autonomous position in the world,” according to Dr. Phanit.



Dr. Witoon Simachokedee speaks at WSM. APO/Kaoru Negishi

Following the welcome statement, Dr. Witoon Simachokedee, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry, and APO Director for Thailand, delivered the inaugural address. Dr. Witoon reiterated the importance of productivity to create wealth and improve the quality of life through socioeconomic development and stressed that efforts to improve competitiveness and productivity should focus on the three important factors of production-capital, labor, and technology. Synergy among these three factors would result in higher productivity growth.

The meeting unanimously elected Dr. Phanit Laosirirat as Chair and he was assisted by Mr. Soutchay Sisouvong, NPO Delegate from Lao PDR, as Vice Chair. After confirming the meeting agenda, the delegates heard the Secretary-General's statement (see pages 2 and 3), the Secretariat's presentation on 2011 and 2012 projects, and a report on the evaluation of 2009 projects.



Dr. Phanit Laosirirat welcomes delegates to the meeting. APO/Kaoru Negishi

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The Secretariat's presentation on the 2011 and 2012 program plans elaborated on modifications of projects that the Secretary-General had touched upon in his statement. One delegate inquired whether the modifications, particularly scaling down of some projects, affected project duration. In response, the Secretariat explained that the durations of projects essentially remained unchanged since other aspects had been adjusted, for example, reducing the number of international resource persons and replacing them with comparable national resource persons.

The Secretariat's report on the evaluation of projects implemented in 2009 comprised two parts. The first was the results of onsite, end-of-project evaluations, and the second was the impact evaluation study. The latter was presented by Prof. Serafin Talisayon, the independent evaluator who conducted the impact evaluation study this year. He reported that APO projects had generated clear positive impacts, and they were particularly observable at the level of participants. Organization-wide impacts were somewhat less pronounced, however. To address this, Prof. Talisayon recommended that the nominating companies and organizations improve their reentry action plans to allow staff members participating in APO projects to share and apply the lessons learned in the workplace.


In the afternoon, the WSM delegates gave country reports on how the APO had contributed to their socioeconomic progress and indications of areas in which NPOs required assistance in addressing challenges they may face in the future. These themes were related to the APO's 50th anniversary next year, a time to take stock of the APO's endeavors thus far and suggest its directions in the years ahead.

Discussion on this theme continued as the delegates brainstormed on the APO's thrust and subject areas at a joint strategic planning session conducted in the afternoon of the second day of the WSM. It was a lively, constructive discussion, providing insightful feedback to the Secretariat, which will compile it for follow-up and submission to the 2011 GBM. Prior to the brainstorming exercise, the delegates formed two committees, the Industry and Service sector committee and Agriculture sector committee, which met separately to reconfirm the modified 2011 project lineup

and review and endorse those for 2012. Chairing the Industry and Service sector committee was Mr. Antonio D. Kalaw, Jr., the NPO delegate from the Philippines; Dr. Apichai Pongsrihadulchai chaired the Agriculture sector committee.

The WSM adopted the reports and proceedings of the meeting for submission to the 2011 GBM at the end of the session. On behalf of the delegates, Vice Chair Soutchay Sisouvang presented a vote of thanks, in which he expressed the delegates' gratitude to the host country. He also looked forward to extending Laotian hospitality to everyone when the next WSM met in Vientiane in October 2011. The meeting closed with statements by Secretary-General Yamazaki and WSM Chair Dr. Phanit Laosirirat.

Thai hospitality was evident in abundance throughout the WSM. It was seen daily in the sumptuous cuisine offered the WSM delegates, always accented by elegant flower arrangements and decorative carved fruit. In addition, MK Company, one of the most successful local enterprises operating in the intensely com-

petitive food and beverage industry, graciously hosted a visit by WSM delegates so that they could observe firsthand an example of the host country's productivity improvement pursuits. As a testimony to its success, MK has around 300 restaurants nationwide which are well-known "Thai-suki" eateries. The delegates were given a tour of MK's central processing center, which handles and prepares materials for distribution to its restaurant chain. The visit was an impressive reminder of how productivity can make a real difference in corporate competitiveness. 



MK employees assisting Indonesian Agriculture Delegate Leli Nuryati with protective gear before entering the central kitchen. Photo courtesy of FTPI