



# APO NEWS

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## New APO Secretary-General: Ryuichiro Yamazaki

**O**n 16 September 2010, the Asian Productivity Organization welcomed Ryuichiro Yamazaki as its ninth Secretary-General. Yamazaki was elected unanimously at the 52nd APO Governing Body Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in April. He succeeds Shigeo Takenaka, who completed his term of office after serving for six years.

After retiring from a wide-ranging career in the Japanese Foreign Service in 2008 (*for details see the APO website: [www.apo-tokyo.org](http://www.apo-tokyo.org)*), Yamazaki had until recently held several nonpermanent positions such as Special Advisor to Nara prefecture, which is celebrating its 1300th anniversary this year since becoming the first capital of Japan; Senior Director of the Japan International Labour Foundation; and Visiting Professor at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.



New APO Secretary-General Ryuichiro Yamazaki smiles at the Secretariat on his first day in office 16 September 2010. APO/SA

The *APO News* followed the new Secretary-General as he took office. On his first day, 16 September 2010, Yamazaki remarked: “As an ‘international civil servant,’ I intend to grasp the needs of the NPOs through close communication. I will then shape a consensus to prioritize the activities of the APO, thereby enhancing the confidence of all stakeholders, increasing cost-effectiveness and ultimately improving the credibility of the organization. These are my five “Cs”: *communication, consensus, confidence, cost-effectiveness, and credibility*.” Secretary-General Yamazaki continued, “I am overwhelmed by the diversity of APO projects that are planned and implemented by the three departments at the Secretariat of Industry, Agriculture, and Research & Planning.”

All smiles at his first gathering with APO staff, Yamazaki said that he was looking forward to creating a warm, cordial atmosphere at the Secretariat that can bring out the full potential of all the staff. “I would like to promote effective communication and consideration for others, by ‘putting oneself in the shoes of others’ from time to time, and encouraging good-natured humor at the workplace. The same goes for relationships with member country governments and NPOs.”

One week after taking office, Yamazaki was determined about what he sought to do at the Secretariat. “Amid serious global economic concerns, I seek to verify and assess on a yearly basis the cost-efficiency of APO projects ranging across various sectors such as industry, agriculture, services, and even the public sector. I would like to enhance the e-learning programs, as well as the Eco-products International Fair, with public seminars and other methods, executing follow-up evaluations, and making improvements as seen fit. I would also like to organize forums to examine new issues like climate change and its impact on productivity. As to the *APO Productivity Databook*, it would be useful to have experts analyze the overall demographic trends of respective countries in the midterm. I would also like to look at increasing opportunities for joint projects and events with other international organizations to enhance the economies of scale.”



Yamazaki gets to work at the Secretariat. APO/SA

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“With the cooperation of member governments, NPOs, relevant international organizations, and various stakeholders, I am determined to promote a wide-ranging productivity movement across the Asia-Pacific. I would especially like to boost syner-

*Yamazaki makes a point as he speaks to Secretariat staff 16 September 2010. APO/SA*

gistic collaborations with NPOs and assist them in their mission to act as the apex spearheads of their nationwide productivity movements. This is crucial for each member country, as well as for the APO region as a whole. As said by Benjamin Franklin during other extremely difficult economic times, ‘Unless we all hang together, we will surely all hang separately,’” Yamazaki concluded with a smile.

New Secretary-General Yamazaki takes the helm at an important juncture in the history of the APO as it prepares for its Golden Jubilee in 2011. 