



## Harnessing private-sector experience in Green Productivity

*The APO launched the Green Productivity (GP) Program in 1994 as a strategy for corporations, farms, and communities to realize the dual objectives of productivity improvement and environmental protection for sustainable growth and development. Numerous GP demonstration projects were implemented to prove, very successfully, that it is possible to integrate these two seemingly conflicting objectives to achieve better product competitiveness and a better quality of life for the people.*



*Meeting in progress*

**T**he initial APO GP promotional and capacity-building initiatives were supported largely by governments and institutions—local, regional, and international—including academia. The APO GP Program is now at a stage where it was felt that there should be more intensive private-sector participation. Private-sector corporations, particularly the multinationals, have extensive environmental management experience. Some are pioneering new management systems, while others are at the cutting edge of environment-related technology. As a start for involving the private sector in the Asia-Pacific region in the APO GP Program, the APO Secretariat held a high-level consultative meeting with representatives from 16 major Japanese corporations in Tokyo, 3 June 2002, to solicit their views on how Japanese companies could share their GP experiences with APO member countries, the nature of contributions that they expect from these countries, and suggestions for future APO activities. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Japanese Ministry of Environment and the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development.

APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima gave the opening address in which he expressed the hope that important ideas would emerge from the meeting for incorporation in the APO GP Program to enhance its benefits to Japan and other APO member countries.

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**"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."**

**James Baldwin**

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## Harnessing private-sector experience

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Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto, Director, Center for Collaboration Research and Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo, served as the moderator of the meeting. He commented that Asia would be the manufacturing center of the world in the 21st century. With this development, there would be a number of environmental issues to deal with. In this situation, the APO's role would be very important and Japan should help the organization to meet this challenge.

It was pointed out at the meeting that there are around 6,500 Japanese companies operating in Asia and the Pacific and they are, in effect, promoting the GP concept and practices in their business activities. Their experience and know-how could no doubt be very valuable to their Asian-Pacific counterparts. The delegates attending the meeting expressed their companies' willingness to cooperate with the APO in its GP endeavors.

The meeting deliberated on a wide spectrum of issues and concerns, including: 1) environment and integrated policy; 2) environmental management capacity building; 3) information sharing; 4) compilation of environmental standards of different countries; 5) toxicity and its definition; 6) energy conservation; 7) water pollution and conservation; 8) common definition of waste; 9) regional recycling mechanism; 10) clean development mechanism; 11) eco-labeling; 12) green product and procurement; 13) environment communication and supply chain; and 14) eco-literacy. 