

The Secretary-General's annual report (part two)

In the July 2002 issue, the APO News carried a story on the annual report of Secretary-General Takashi Tajima to the 44th Session of the APO Governing Body, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, highlighting the accomplishments of the APO in 2001. In this second and final part of the article, the APO News looks at the Secretary-General's future view of APO activities.

Secretary-General Tajima started with knowledge management (KM), a thrust area of the APO. He said that the KM Program has two important missions: to propagate the KM concept in APO member countries and to build the NPOs' capabilities in KM so that they can become lead agencies in the creation of knowledge workers and in increasing the productivity of their respective countries.

The APO GP Program was launched in response to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Now, ten years later in August/September 2002, the second World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Secretary-General said that the APO will participate in the WSSD as it provides an excellent opportunity to showcase the accomplishments of the GP Program and to become acquainted with the emerging issues and challenges. A number of side events will be held in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, the Vietnamese Government, and the Regional Institute for Environmental Technology. Secretary-General Tajima further stated that as a follow-up to the WSSD, the APO will organize the Second International Conference on Green Productivity in Manila, the Philippines, in December 2002.

The ICD Program, Secretary-General Tajima said, will be further improved based on the report of the external evaluator. The achievements of country-specific programs such as demonstration projects will be documented for wider dissemination, and collaboration with other developmental organizations, NGOs, and civil society will be

strengthened for more effective program implementation, he added.


The Secretary-General emphasized that the APO will continue to mobilize its resources to strengthen the NPOs. "NPOs should continuously transform themselves not only to keep pace with the changes but to stay ahead of them." He commended the strong mentoring support provided by the more advanced NPOs to their other colleagues to help them jumpstart their journey toward excellence. This, he said, is tangible proof of the APO's spirit of mutual cooperation among its members.

Turning his attention to the APO Agriculture Program, the Secretary-General pointed to two key issues that the APO will address. One is increasing the competitiveness of agricultural products to meet the challenges of globalization and trade liberalization. Among the measures being considered are product diversification, value addition, improvements in food processing and marketing, and the application of IT. The second issue is promoting the incorporation of social and non-economic goals, like poverty alleviation, rural development, and environmental protection, in national development plans. He indicated that the APO will step up its efforts to strengthen institutional linkages between NPOs and relevant agricultural agencies and to reinforce collaboration between agricultural and other programs.

In view of the current adverse economic situation and the consequent reduction in contributions to the APO, particularly from Japan, the largest donor to the APO, Secretary-General Tajima

pointed out that the Secretariat has been rigorously reviewing its financial position to make the most effective use of funds in the implementation of 2003 and 2004 programs. He expressed the hope that Japan and the other member countries would offer further support to the APO for the benefit of all member countries and the region as a whole.

Expressing his gratitude for the kind support and cooperation received from other international and regional organizations, national and local governments, and NGOs in upgrading the quality and contents of APO programs, Secretary-General Tajima stressed the need to expand the scope of this collaboration further to achieve greater excellence in APO programs.

He concluded his report by suggesting the need for the APO to adopt a bifocal approach to program planning. "On the one hand, member countries need to adapt to emerging economic realities at the global level and, on the other, they should also remain focused on the fundamentals of productivity." APO projects are divided into three categories: A, B, and C. Projects in Category A, which constitute the majority, are open to all member countries and those in Category B are for selected member countries that share a common interest in a specific topic. Category C projects are those conducted by member countries and open for participation by the others. Under the bifocal approach proposed by the Secretary-General, more Category B and C projects will be sponsored by the APO to strengthen productivity strategies and programs at the country and sub-regional levels. 



The delegates to the 44th GBM