

Message to environmental journalists

As the world proceeds relentlessly with more development, the task of protecting the environment, conserving natural resources, and restoring the earth to its former pristine condition becomes even more urgent. The speed and scope of progress in this endeavor depend essentially on how quickly and extensively the world can be educated on this issue, and the promptness and comprehensiveness of the programs and activities undertaken to deal with it. Here journalists have a critical role in raising public awareness of environmental issues so that they will desire to take remedial and preventive measures of their own and to support programs that have been introduced to address environmental concerns.

This was the message of APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima to the delegates of the 14th World Congress of Environmental Journalists of the Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists (APFEJ) held in Aruthgama, Sri Lanka, 27–31 October 2002. It was presented on his behalf

by Kenneth Mok, APO Director for Information and Public Relations, who later in the program briefed the delegates on the APO Green Productivity concept and practice.

The APFEJ, established in January 1988, is a grouping of 8,000 environmental journalists from 91 countries who took upon themselves the laudatory task of promoting excellence in environmental reporting. Each year it sponsors a world congress to update its members on environmental issues and to facilitate networking and exchange of information. At this year's meeting, the APFEJ International Green Pen Award, first introduced in 1998, was conferred on four outstanding journalists, including Philip Mathews, a Malaysian and former head of the APO Information and Public Relations Department. The other awardees were Mangal Nab Shakya (Nepal), Elizabeth C. Roxas (Philippines), and Ivan Lim (Singapore).