



A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

APO Launches New Productivity Data and Analysis Book

On 11 January 2002, at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo, the APO held a press conference to announce the release of its new book *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*. Mr. Takashi Tajima, APO Secretary-General, gave the opening remarks, followed by the chief expert of the study behind the book, Dr. David Owyong, who spoke on the significance, scope, and results of the study, and the usefulness of the publication to policy-makers, business executives, workers, and productivity specialists. At the press conference were representatives from leading Japanese papers and journals, including the Asahi Shimbun, Mainichi Shimbun, Nikkei Shimbun, International Development Journal, and JPC-SED News. Also in attendance were diplomats from the Tokyo embassies of Bangladesh, Fiji, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Sri Lanka.

Over the last 40 years, much has been done by APO member countries to promote and increase productivity. The scope of activities undertaken and the range of subjects covered by them are quite phenomenal. The productivity concept has also been expanded to embrace global and social concerns. The active promotion of productivity



Press conference in progress

and the huge investments in programs for its improvement inevitably have led to expectations for some clear evidence of the contributions of productivity to the socio-economic development of a country. Secretary-General Tajima, speaking at the press conference, said that the APO, out of a sense of duty as the apex productivity body in the region, decided to collect the relevant productivity data, including their analysis, by setting up a group of experts representing member countries to undertake this task. The book, *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*, is the fruit of their labor, after a year of intensive data collection, reviews, updating, and analysis.

In his Foreword to the book, Mr. Tajima said that the intention of publishing the book is to "provide all stakeholders and national policymakers with a set of vital, fundamental, and authoritative information to assist them in their strategic

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"What is critical to the customer's success? Learning the answer to that question and then learning how to provide the solution is the only focus we need."

Jack Welch

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thinking, policy formulation, and action taking.” For this reason, APO member countries which participated in the study will find it useful for: 1) comparing results achieved in the productivity drive with planned targets and with those of other countries, 2) checking progress made, 3) identifying areas where productivity remains weak, and 4) formulating effective policies to give the movement further support and impetus.

The national experts identified 42 indicators for data collection, and they were grouped under six categories, namely, Domestic Economy, Internationalization, Infrastructure, Science and Technology, Management, and People. Apart from the 16 APO countries covered in the study, four “benchmark countries,” Australia, Germany, the UK, and USA, were also included. They were selected based on their different geographical locations and their representativeness among developed nations.

The *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis* book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of a country-by-country analysis of productivity data. Part two contains tables of data by country, as well as graphic charts of every indicator for each country. The tables are for intercountry comparison, whilst the charts are solely for use by the participating countries to study the progress they have made under each indicator over the time period 1990-1999. The final part gives the data sources of the indicators by country.

Dr. David Owyong, chief expert of the study behind the publication and formerly an associate professor at the National University of Singapore, wrote in his introduction to the book that there are some important differences between this APO book and other related publications, such as the World Competitiveness Yearbook published by the Institute for Management Development (IMD). According to him, the distinctive features of the APO book are: 1) Its focus is on the productivity and associated policies of the APO member countries. 2) A longer time series is provided which allows a comparison of each country with itself over time. 3) It contains no ranking of countries as relative position is not the focus of the study. 4) It includes country analyses on productivity strategies and policies. “These features reduce possible overlap with existing publications and thus may even be used in conjunction with them.”

On the future plans for this APO publication, Secretary-General Tajima said, “As it fulfills a longstanding desire by all the stakeholders of the productivity movements in APO member countries for quantitative evidence of the contributions of productivity to their socio-economic development and progress, I believe that it should be published annually to provide new data as well as to update the data and analyses already included.”

The book retails for US\$29.00. For order or more information, please contact Ms Yoko Fujino at the APO Information and Public Relations Department (Tel: 81-3-52263927; Fax: 81-3-52263957; E-mail: ipr@apo-tokyo.org). 