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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

The APO at the WSSD

The APO participated in the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, as an accredited inter-governmental organization. The objective was to make the vision and achievements of the APO Green Productivity Program known globally. The APO delegation was led by Secretary-General Takashi Tajima. Other members were: Nguyen Thi Bich Hang, Managing Director, Vietnam Productivity Center; Augustine Koh, Director, Environment Department, APO Secretariat; and Mandar Parasnis, APO Environment Program Officer.



The APO delegation at the WSSD (from L-R) M. Parasnis; A. Koh; T. Tajima; and Nguyen Thi Bich Hang

The 10-day summit was attended by an estimated 60,000 delegates, including heads of state/government and national delegates of more than 160 countries, and representatives of business and industry, women, children and youth, indigenous people, local authorities, workers and trade unions, NGOs, scientific and technological communities, farmers, and regional/international organizations. With its overriding concerns for dire poverty and environmental degradation, the summit touched on a broad range of subjects, such as water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture, biodiversity and ecosystem management, and cross-cutting issues like access to markets, phasing out export subsidies, and promoting corporate responsibility and accountability. It concluded with the adoption of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation.

APO Type II Partnership Initiative and Side Events at the WSSD

Apart from the Plan of Implementation and the initiatives announced by various governments to carry out their commitments (termed Type I Initiatives), another major outcome of the WSSD was the generation of a number of partnership proposals to implement Agenda 21 and sustainable development activities by governments, citizen groups, businesses,

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When one door closes
another door opens; but we
so often look so long and so
regretfully upon the closed
door, that we do not see the
ones which open for us.

Alexander Graham Bell

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international organizations, and others. These partnership initiatives are called “Type II Initiatives” and they are international in scope and reach (i.e., global, regional, and/or sub-regional). More than 220 partnership initiatives were announced and accepted by the WSSD to complement the governmental commitments. Among them was the APO’s proposal on “Regional Partnership for Poverty Alleviation and Environmental Protection through Green Productivity-Integrated Community Development and the Clean Development Mechanism.”

The APO Type II initiative was officially launched by Secretary-General Tajima at the joint APO-Vietnam seminar on “Green Productivity Approach for Integrated Community Development (GP-ICD) & Poverty Alleviation.” This was one of three side events which the APO co-organized with others at the WSSD. The seminar was held at the Japan Pavilion, Ubuntu Village, Johannesburg, 28 August, with the objective of showcasing the successful APO-Vietnam initiatives in GP-ICD for poverty alleviation, one of the primary issues discussed at the WSSD.

In his opening remarks, Secretary-General Tajima gave an outline of the GP-ICD Program and its importance as a thrust area in the context of APO activities. Dr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Vice-Minister, Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology, thanked the APO for its constant support for the GP-ICD program in Vietnam and assured the continued cooperation of his government. Dr. Nguyen Huu Thien, Director-General of the Vietnam Directorate for Standards and Quality, spoke on the successful implementation of the GP-ICD Program in Vietnam. This was followed by a video presentation on the GP-ICD demonstration projects in Vietnam.

The seminar was attended by about 35 participants from all over the world. Participants from Africa, Eastern Europe, and South America requested APO assistance to introduce similar GP-ICD activities in their countries.

The second APO side event at the WSSD was the roundtable meeting on “SIGN³-Asia:



Vietnam-APO team at the WSSD. In the center is APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima. On his left is Vietnamese Vice-Minister Pham Khoi Nguyen, and on his right is Dr. Nguyen Huu Thien

Sustainable Investments, Global Network for Asia.” This meeting was jointly organized with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), European Partners for Environment (EPE), and the Regional Institute of Environmental Technology (RIET) of Singapore at the Hotel Caesars Gauteng, Johannesburg, 29 August.

SIGN³-Asia stands for “Sustainable Investment Global Network for Asia.” The N³ in the acronym denotes the need to consider the triple bottom line of development—economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental sustainability—in all investment decisions. Its central aim is to promote “sustainable investments.” SIGN³-Asia is a proposal of the APO, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, EPE, RIET, International Institute for Environment and Development, and UNEP. The roundtable meeting, held to introduce this proposal to interested stakeholders, focused on the steps to take to launch SIGN³-Asia and the possible roles and responsibilities of the supporting parties.

The meeting was attended by more than 15 high-ranking participants from various governments, international/regional organizations, NGOs, and multinational corporations from Europe, Asia, and Africa. They were highly appreciative of the concept and indicated their willingness to cooperate. Mrs. Liana Bratasida, Indonesian Deputy Minister for Environmental Conservation, graced the event and expressed her support for the proposal.

The symposium on “Greening Asian SMEs:

Cleaner Production & Green Productivity for Water Conservation & Management” was the third APO side event. It was held at the Water Dome, Johannesburg, 30 August. Partner organizations were the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNEP. The objective of the meeting was to deliberate on the GP and Cleaner Production (CP) concepts in relation to the key issues discussed at the WSSD and their importance, based on past experiences in the Asia-Pacific region, to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for enhancing their competitiveness and environmental performance in the present time of financial crisis.

APO Secretary-General Tajima, speaking at the opening session, highlighted the importance of SMEs in the Asian region and hence the APO’s special emphasis on SMEs in all its activities, including GP. Mme. Jacqueline Aloisi de Lardere, Director, UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economy, in her closing remarks, emphasized the importance of changing production and consumption patterns and on focusing on product eco-design rather than on the production process alone. Other speakers were: Mr. Cornis van der Lugt (UNEP); Mr. J. Warren Evans (ADB); Mr. Augustine Koh (APO); and Dr. Loh Wah Sing (RIET).

The symposium had about 25 participants, including officials from the ADB, UNEP, and other agencies. A prominent guest was Dr. Kim Hak-Su, UN Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. 