

— 2nd World Conference on Green Productivity —

The APO, in collaboration with the Development Academy of the Philippines-Productivity and Development Center (DAP-PDC), hosted the 2nd World Conference on Green Productivity (GP) in the Philippines on 9–11 December 2002. This was a follow-up to the first world GP conference in 1996.

The APO established its GP program in 1994 as a response to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, popularly known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and as a strategy to integrate productivity improvement with environmental protection for sustainable development, backed by the APO mission of enhancing competitiveness,

protecting the environment, and achieving social fairness. Since then, the APO has extensively and successfully promoted and publicized the GP concept to all stakeholders in the government, public, and economic sectors and contributed to upgrading the GP capabilities of the national productivity organizations (NPOs) in the APO region.

The 2nd World GP Conference, with the theme “Looking beyond the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development,” was meant to involve GP stakeholders in (1) defining the future directions of GP in the wake of the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, especially its role in community development, corporate

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governance, SMEs, and sustainable development; and (2) deliberating on emerging trends like greening the supply chain and eco-business. About 150 delegates, comprising top governmental officials, senior executives in the public and economic sectors, experts on productivity and the environment, and members of academia, civil society organizations, and regional and international organizations, attended the meeting. At the close of the conference, the delegates adopted a statement on Green Productivity 2002 (full text on page 8).

An inaugural message from Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was presented to the conference by Alberto Romulo, Executive Secretary, Office of the President. Other speakers at the opening sessions were Dr. Eduardo T. Gonzalez, President, Development Academy of the Philippines; Tadao Chino, President, Asian Development Bank; and APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima.

President Arroyo told the meeting that in our time there are two paramount concerns: the need to achieve economic development and the need to preserve the environment. She further said that her top priority has always been the welfare of the poor who are also the most vulnerable to environmental disasters. "Because they are exposed to pollution, the unhealthy become ill more easily and more seriously. Their inability to access medical care and medicines compounds their problems." When viewed in this light, she added, environmental abuse becomes an issue of justice and equity, life and death.

President Arroyo referred to some of the legislation and remedial actions implemented by her government to address environmental issues relating to garbage disposal, nuclear and toxic waste, mining, air pollution by both stationary and mobile sources, protection of watershed areas and forests, and rural development to stem urban migration. The President also commented that the promotion of sustainable environmental practices in the industrial sector was gaining headway, an example being the integration of environmental management systems in industrial operations by SMEs. She outlined various financial assistance and technical assistance schemes as well as incentives that were



Mr. Alberto Romulo presenting the inaugural message from Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. On the platform are: (L-R) Mr. Surya Chandak (UNEP), Mr. Tajima, Mr. Chino, and Dr. Gonzalez.

introduced to encourage the adoption of clean and environment-friendly technologies by industries and local communities.

APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima in his opening remarks said that further efforts in GP promotion and implementation are necessary as, despite the adoption of Agenda 21 at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the world is still beset with a number of environmental problems. He stressed the importance of identifying innovative approaches to enhance GP expertise and practices, particularly for strengthening the NPOs in member countries to serve as focal points for GP promotion and dissemination. Secretary-General Tajima also called for more active involvement of stakeholders in GP in the region. He cited the example of the establishment of the APO GP Advisory Committee in Japan to solicit the cooperation of private-sector enterprises in greening the supply chain and in green purchasing, and expressed the hope that member countries and others will take similar actions.

The full text of President Arroyo's address and Secretary-General Tajima's message can be viewed on the APO Web site at: www.apo-tokyo.org. The February 2003 issue of the *APO News* will feature highlights of some key papers delivered at the 2nd GP world conference. 