

NIPO marks first decade

The National Iranian Productivity Organization (NIPO) celebrated its 10th anniversary on 26 May 2003 with a commemoration ceremony—cum—national productivity conference under the rallying theme “Productivity Advancement Guarantees Economic Development.” This joint event was graced by Presidential Advisor in Development Affairs Mohammad Bagherian and 350 special guests.

Since its inception, NIPO has met many challenges. Its activities over the past 10 years can be classified into the following four phases:

Conceptualizing Productivity—In the initial phase, the unfamiliar productivity concept was defined and propagated to the public.

Legislating Productivity—In this phase, legal regulations/mechanisms were introduced which require state institutions and executive bodies to identify productivity indicators for planning, measurement, and analysis.

Piloting Productivity—Selected productivity techniques, such as *gemba kaizen* and problem-solving groups, were piloted in economic institutions and governmental organizations.

Developing Productivity Networks—In this current phase, NIPO has been mandated to develop and manage communication networks with stakeholders in the national productivity movement, such as experts, planners, and policy-makers in government, public institutions, and private-sector corporations.

NIPO programs cover a wide range of activities, including producing productivity data for macro-economic planning; building the capability of management consultancy organizations; providing support to productivity specialists, both individuals and groups; and establishing international relationships. The basic thrust areas are: Green Productivity; integrated community development; development of SMEs; information and communication technologies; value engineering; quality management; the National Productivity and Business Excellence Award; productivity improvement in the manufacturing and service sectors; and total factor productivity.

In his welcome address at the commemorative ceremony, Seyyed Ahmad Eshagh Husseini, NIPO’s Managing Director, remarked, “Productivity is an essential element in achieving sustainable development and securing an abundant future for our nation—without dependence on oil. As we plan for our nation’s economic, social, and cultural development, productivity can and should be used as a catalyst to encourage competition, promote economic growth, and improve standards of living.”



Presidential Advisor Bagherian delivering his opening address

Presidential Advisor in Development Affairs Mohammad Bagherian delivered the opening address in which he described productivity as the sustainable empowerment of national resources. The transfer of global experiences, even if they are not 100% localized, is important to productivity growth, he added. “It is advisable to evaluate and make use of best practices from throughout the world.”

Mr. Bagherian pointed to the 80% reduction in the productivity of national capital, labor, and energy over the last two decades; the inefficient public-sector systems, particularly in human resources development; the flight of human capital; and the increasing costs of infrastructure development and structural reforms as indications of insufficient attention given to productivity. He attributed the root causes to the lack of a clear vision in the economic, social, and cultural arenas; ad-hocism in management planning; complacency about management trends; and inflexibility in reforming outlooks, strategies, and approaches.

Mr. Bagherian made several proposals for inclusion in the Iranian Fourth Five-Year Development Plan to be finalized this year. They include the formulation of: 1) a culture of preparing productivity development plans; 2) a comprehensive system for productivity development based on priorities set forth by institutions of higher learning, market institutions, and governmental orga-

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nizations; and 3) a national high council for productivity to decide on allocation of resources for promoting productivity.

APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima, in his congratulatory message to NIPO, said that there is a direct correlation between the success of a national

productivity program, the competency of its NPO, and the support the latter enjoys from the productivity stakeholders: government, employers, employees, and the community at large. He called on the stakeholders to intensify further their support for NIPO as there is much more it could do for Iran. 