

# Introducing the APO Secretariat (I)

**T**he *APO News* has been reporting on the programs and activities of the APO and NPOs. However, little has been written about the APO Secretariat. Beginning with this issue, we are featuring a six-part series on the work of the Secretariat to give readers a brief oversight of what it does.

The Secretariat is the executive arm of the APO. Headed by the Secretary-General, it carries out the policy directives of the Governing Body; formulates the rolling plan and implements the annual programs in collaboration with the NPOs of member countries; and seeks and secures cooperative relationships with other international organizations and governmental and private institutions.

Apart from the office of the Secretary-General, the APO Secretariat has six functional departments: Administration and Finance (A&F); Research and Planning; Industry; Agriculture; Environment; and Information and Public Relations. In this first report, we would like to introduce the A&F Department.

## *Administration and Finance Department*

This is the administrative hub of the Secretariat. Departmental Director N.G. Kularatne, who hails from Sri Lanka, probably has the most varied work portfolio. Apart from the administrative, financial, and personnel functions, his department is also tasked with organizing the annual Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs and the Governing Body Meeting; overseeing membership matters; coordinating the APO's participation in various international conferences and meetings; and administering the Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs Program. Under this program, the APO sponsors visits by high-level officials, policy makers, and opinion leaders from one member country to one or two others, either to participate in training programs or conferences or for consultation on productivity-related issues.



*A&F staff members (L-R) Matsuyama, Nojima, Kularatne, Kusumi, Kuroki, Tomizawa, Yamamoto, and Kawashima.*

In recent years, worsening economies in member countries—the result of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA—have led to falling membership contributions (which are based on GNP/GDP performance) and special funding grants. The recent Iraqi war and the SARS outbreak have added to the difficulties. The financial constraints faced by the APO will likely continue for a few more years. A major challenge of the A&F Department is to find ways to reduce operating and project implementation costs and devote as much of the APO's financial resources as possible to organizing projects that will directly benefit member countries, and to seek more international collaboration to support the work of the APO.

In addition to the departmental director, the A&F Department staff comprises two officers, Naoto Yamamoto and Norimasa Matsuyama, and five general support staff: Toshiko Kuroki, Mutsumi Nojima, Naoko Kusumi, Hironori Kawashima, and Asako Tomizawa. 