



# A·P·O *news*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

## Heads of NPOs attend APO annual planning meeting

**T**he heads of the national productivity organizations (NPOs) of 18 APO member countries, together with their agriculture delegates and advisers numbering 44, met in Manila, the Philippines, 18–20 February 2003, to participate in the annual program and strategic planning meeting of the APO. The occasion was the APO 43rd Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs (WSM). In addition to the delegates and advisers, there were seven observers from Cambodia, Myanmar, UBI France, Asian Development Bank, Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers, and International Labour Organization.

The WSM was inaugurated by Dr. Eduardo T. Gonzalez, President, Development Academy of the Philippines. A keynote address by Secretary Elisea G. Gozun, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Philippines, was presented by DENR Undersecretary Renato A. de Rueda. Another speaker at the inaugural session was APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima, who presented his annual statement to the delegates (see page 2 for more coverage of the statement). The closing session of the WSM was graced by Secretary Emilia T. Boncodin of the Department of Budget and Management who also addressed the gathering.



WSM delegates

The heads of NPOs also received a special presentation on “Sustainable Rural/Community Development” by Dr. Cielito F. Habito, Professor of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University. During the meeting, Secretary-General Tajima presented a certificate of appreciation to Jo-Na’s International Philippines, Inc., a leading manufacturer and exporter of snacks and dehydrated and preserved fruits, in recognition of its strong support for and commitment to the Green Productivity Demonstration Program.

### Inaugural Address

Dr. Eduardo T. Gonzalez, in his inaugural address, noted the different sizes, levels of development, and governance systems in Asian countries and that some transitional economies still had much to learn in terms of productivity and quality. The APO member countries as a group were an increasingly important force in the world economy and this col-

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**“The biggest mistake anyone can make is to focus on the competitor. You focus on the consumer and you will get it right.”**

*K. B. Dadiseth*

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*Dr. Gonzalez delivering the inaugural address*

lective weight had been rising, he noted. Many had embraced trade liberalization as a means to progress. However, at the same time, many parts of Asia were being carefully watched because of their exposed weaknesses in the areas of financial stability, protection of environment commons, and movement of capital. Moreover, an increasing reliance on exports, at a time of contracting global trade and stagnant domestic demand, made Asia highly vulnerable to a global economic downturn.

Dr. Gonzalez said that as most Asian nations were part of a broader set of middle-income countries that had become important suppliers of global public goods, their involvement in any collective action to address market failures in the production of such goods was crucial. In most of Asia, progress in productivity and quality improvements was necessary to recover the momentum for broad-based and equitable growth and to forestall another financial crisis. He told the delegates that their task at the workshop was to strengthen the supply of global public goods in the Asian region by reviewing and evaluating recent productivity movement efforts and formulating plans that would enable government, firms, and civil society organizations to cope with the rapid socio-economic changes taking place in Asia and around the globe.

Each country, Dr. Gonzalez commented, would be faced with many external and internal issues. For the Philippines, the external challenge was to keep up with the fluctuations in the global market, while the internal challenge was to win the confi-

dence of investors to raise the current low volume of investments. The Philippine government had recently shifted its focus in economic planning from the macroeconomic and demand side to the microeconomic and supply side, thus putting productivity-enhancing measures at center stage. In light of this, the challenge for the NPO of the Philippines was to promote productivity-driven growth with the following thrust areas: sustainable human development, knowledge management, transparency and accountability in governance, democratic reforms, and education for excellence.

In concluding his address, Dr. Gonzalez told the delegates that their goal was "to make sure that no country is left behind and no country is barred from moving ahead." He then declared the 43rd Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs open.

#### **Keynote Address**

Secretary Gozun commenced her address by making reference to the 2nd APO Green Productivity (GP) World Conference held recently in Manila as an immediate response to the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). She said that Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, in her message to that 2nd GP World Conference, emphasized that her administration's development programs and related initiatives were anchored on the two paramount concerns of the need to achieve economic development and the need to conserve the environment. She added that the APO GP program of harmonizing productivity improvement with environmental protection for sustainable development matched these concerns perfectly.

With reference to the WSSD, Secretary Gozun said that it had reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element on the international agenda and gave new impetus to global action to fight against poverty and protect the environment. She then went on to reiterate some of the commitments that were made, particularly those pertaining to poverty eradication, water resources management,

restoration of depleted fish stocks, establishment of a marine protected network, reduction in rate of biodiversity loss, and reduction in the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. She commended the APO for its participation in the WSSD, particularly the successful launching of its partnership initiative on poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

As the Philippine Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources, Gozun had maintained an agenda for development that was responsive to both the needs of the population and the requirements of ecological integrity. She informed the delegates of the following initiatives undertaken by her ministry: 1) opening the upland areas to agricultural investments and production, especially joint ventures between private investors and upland communities, that would provide the needed vegetative cover, create jobs, augment the income of upland communities, and allow the government to use its limited resources to maintain and protect existing forests; 2) revitalizing the forestry and mining industries and promoting responsible forestry and mining operations, including the clean-up and rehabilitation of abandoned mines; 3) rationalizing and streamlining the land titling system; 4) facilitating the distribution of public lands to qualified informal settlers; 5) implementing the Clean Air Act as a top national priority activity; 6) promoting the use of alternative fuels such as natural gas, bio-diesel, and other environmentally friendly fuels; 7) encouraging industries to shift to cleaner production; 8) providing support to local governments in establishing recovery facilities for waste recycling and converting open dump sites into sanitary landfills; and 9) conducting regular reviews and streamlining of rules, regulations, and procedures to ensure their responsiveness to the needs of clientele and investors, especially on the environmental impact assessment system and its particular application to small and medium enterprises.

In concluding her statement, Secretary Gozun expressed solidarity with the delegates as they sought ways to achieve increased productivity as soon as possible because of the many expectations and the urgency of time. ☺