

APO signs MOU with Hawaii

On 29 July 2003, the APO signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of Hawaii through its Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). The MOU is the forging of a formal strategic alliance between two organizations which will allow them to tap into each other's network for the better delivery of their respective products and services, the undertaking of joint projects of mutual interest to each other's clients or members, and the convergence of longer-term strategies. The APO-Hawaii MOU is the first collaborative agreement between the two parties. Signing on behalf of Hawaii was DBEDT Director Theodore Liu. Secretary-General Takashi Tajima signed for the APO.

In the MOU, the two organizations "recognize the desirability and necessity of improving the quality of life of people in the Asia-Pacific region through productivity enhancement" and they undertake to cooperate with each other in 1) planning and implementing joint projects that are of common interest in areas related to business promotion, economic development, and productivity enhancement; and 2) assisting their clients or members to expand their economic activities in developing business partnerships, trade, and investment; transferring technology; providing technical assistance; and participating in interactive programs and exhibitions.

The Hawaii-APO relationship started in 1985 when the East-West Center (EWC) in Honolulu, an education and research institution, deputed experts to conduct projects for the APO. This collaboration was later expanded to include joint publications on economic policy issues. In 1996, there was a change of partner in Hawaii from the EWC to DBEDT. Since then, the DBEDT has been co-hosting with the APO at least one workshop a year in Hawaii on subjects such as eco-tourism, coastal resource management, telemedicine, healthcare management, and e-commerce. This year's focus is on e-governance.

A major driving force behind this partnership between Hawaii and the APO was Dr. Seiji F. Naya, former DBEDT Director and currently Visiting Senior Fellow in the EWC. His relationship with the APO goes back to the early 1980s when he was the Chief Economist at the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In that capacity, Dr. Naya reinvigorated the ADB's support for the APO, first initiated



Dr. Seiji Naya

in 1972. Because of his belief in the work of the APO, which he once described as an institution that is steeped in tradition but farsighted in its vision and approach, Dr. Naya opened new avenues of collaboration for the APO when he joined the EWC in Hawaii as the Director of the Resource Systems Institute and when he was appointed DBEDT director.