



A·P·O news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

Laos convenes national productivity roundtable

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in its effort to give its industrial development program added momentum, convened a national productivity roundtable conference (RTC) in Vientiane, 12–13 January 2004. It was facilitated by the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts with the support and assistance of the APO. Vice Minister for Industry and Handicrafts and APO Director for Laos Dr. Nam Viyaketh described the purpose of the RTC as endeavoring to forge "a national consensus on how to launch and promote productivity at the macro and micro levels." To give importance and prominence to the meeting, the Laos Prime Minister and several cabinet ministers (Industry and Handicrafts; Agriculture; Commerce; and Education) attended the inaugural session. The APO was represented by the Secretary-General. More than 100 prominent individuals from the national and provincial governments, employers' and business organizations, trade unions, academia, and civil society bodies took part in the two-day meeting.



(L-R) Vice Minister Dr. Nam Viyaketh, Secretary-General Takashi Tajima, Prime Minister Boun Nhang Vorachith, and Minister Onneua Phommachanh at the inaugural session of the RTC

In inaugurating the RTC, Prime Minister Boun Nhang Vorachith said that his government recognized the importance of productivity as a driving force in the efficient development, upgrading, and expansion of industrial activities and output. He added that increased productivity would benefit everyone and stressed that the success of the productivity movement was the responsibility not only of the government but also of all sectors of the economy. Minister for Industry and Handicrafts Onneua Phommachanh, in his keynote speech, said that the promotion of productivity was an important strategic measure in the government's industrialization and modernization programs. He pointed out that the productivity movement would contribute to the socio-economic development of Laos through increased competitiveness, job creation, improved living standards, and the country's successful integration into the global economy.

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"Teamwork is a make or break situation. Either you help make it or the lack of it will break you."

Kris A. Hiatt

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APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima, in his address, outlined the significant role of the government in a national productivity movement, which includes educating the people on its importance, gaining their support for it, and integrating productivity into the national economic development plan. Among other key contributing factors for a successful productivity movement that the Secretary-General mentioned were: 1) the establishment of an effective national productivity organization (NPO) with the requisite capacity and capability to provide the necessary drive and leadership; 2) the commitment and support of all stakeholders; and 3) the development of the country's human resources.

The RTC was structured in three parts. One featured resource speakers deputed by the APO from Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam who spoke on their respective countries' experiences and strategies in promoting and enhancing productivity. Another aspect of the RTC was presentations by four interest groups in Laos on their views and concerns about productivity: the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; Lao Federation

of Trade Unions; Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industries; and National University of Lao PDR. The third part was the proposal of a set of guiding principles and strategic measures for the formulation of policies and action plans to launch a successful national productivity movement.

The development of an environment conducive for productivity improvements, labor-management cooperation, the willingness on the part of the people to accept changes necessary for productivity increase, and equitable sharing of the gains of higher productivity among stakeholders were the guiding principles the RTC enunciated. It also spelled out the fundamental requisites needed to establish an effective NPO, its basic role, and the importance of governmental subvention to support its work. The strategic measures recommended reflect the successful programs implemented by NPOs in other APO member countries, particularly in manpower development, employee participation in building excellent organizations, entrepreneurship development, Green Productivity promotion, and strengthening stakeholders' competencies in quality and productivity. 