



# A·P·O news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

## New Year Message

### APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima




I would like to wish all APO News readers a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year and to thank you for your support for APO efforts to achieve socio-economic development through improved productivity. Like the rest of the world, APO member countries had to cope with both predictable and unexpected challenges in 2003. The SARS outbreak and the war in Iraq were two of the more prominent instances. Most APO member countries managed well, with NPOs leading the way in consolidating the results of past accomplishments and embarking upon innovations to ensure that the productivity movement remains relevant to development in a rapidly changing world.

Intensifying globalization of the marketplace is a key challenge facing all member countries today. Attaining and sustaining competitiveness is the solution. Industries have to be innovative, productive, and dynamic to stay ahead. In this economic push, we also must ensure that development is sustainable by protecting the environment. To be competitive in the global market, it is imperative for industries to be environmentally friendly. With all these considerations in mind, the APO set up a GP Advisory Committee comprising representatives from more than 40 major Japanese corporations to tap their expertise in environmental management for establishing green supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region over the next few years.

Other APO undertakings in 2003 I would like to highlight were:

1. Harnessing IT to make APO publications available online on the APO Web site and to conduct distance learning programs. The convenience, ease, and cost-effectiveness of Web-based training and conferencing mean that the use of distance learning will be further extended this year. The library of e-books will be gradually expanded. In light of this, we will continue to work to upgrade the IT capabilities of the NPOs.
2. Participating in the Third World Water Forum held in Kyoto, Japan.
3. Hosting a APO Liaison Officers' Meeting at the Secretariat in Tokyo. The frank consultations and discussions helped cement relations among the NPOs, as well as between them and the Secretariat.
4. Publishing the 2003 edition of the *APO Asia-Pacific Productivity Data and Analysis*, the third in this landmark annual publication, with substantial improvements over previous editions.

As we look forward to 2004 and what it will bring, the APO will introduce more activities tailored to meet the specific needs of our member countries to strengthen their competitiveness and enhance their socio-economic development. Every effort will be made to ensure that APO activities contribute to a better quality of life for all people in the region based on the spirit of mutual cooperation. 

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**"Competent (people) in every position, if they are doing their best, know all that there is to know about their work except how to improve it."**

**W. Edwards Deming**

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