



# A·P·O news

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION

## Soliciting media support for productivity

*"Despite the long history of the productivity movement in the [Asia-Pacific] region, it is generally felt that the productivity message has yet to reach the majority of people in most countries. A prerequisite for achieving higher productivity is the widespread prevalence of a productivity culture within a country. This means the concept of productivity must first be understood and appreciated by all the people. Many APO member countries lack the machinery and resources to do this. They need all the help they can get. One resource that could make a difference for them is the mass media—newspapers, radio, and television. They reach into homes on a scale that other means of promotion could not hope to achieve."*

**T**hus said APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka as he bade welcome to 17 representatives from 14 countries attending the APO multi-country study mission on the Media and Productivity that took them to Bangkok, Thailand, and Hanoi, Vietnam, 20–24 September 2004. At that moment, the participants were gathered in Bangkok at the World Bank Thailand Development Learning Center in Chulalongkorn University, while the Secretary-General was speaking from the World Bank Tokyo Development Learning Center in Japan. They were connected for a live videoconferencing session on the "Productivity Movement: A Marathon with No Finish Line" led by APO Secretariat Consultant Yoshikuni Ohnishi (see box story on page 5 for highlights of his presentation).

In his welcome address, his first to a group of APO participants, Takenaka also told his audience of mostly media people that they have a unique and essential role in the productivity movement, adding that the study mission was organized specifically to solicit their support. "I would like to appeal to you to give prominence to news reports on productivity-related matters so that the public will be educated in its importance and they will want to do their part to improve the productivity performance of the country and the organizations they work for."



Dhawatchai speaking to mission members

Earlier in the program, the participants were first given an overview of the mission and work of the APO and then plunged into an in-depth exploration of the concept and importance of productivity. Their guide was Kenneth Mok, Director for Information and Public Relations, APO Secretariat. They were next taken through Thailand's master plan for productivity promotion and improvement by Thailand Productivity Institute Executive Director Dhawatchai Tangsanga. To give substance to theory, the participants wound up their program in Bangkok with a rewarding visit to Thai Acrylic Fibre Co. Ltd., the first winner of the Thailand Quality Award and a model of corporate excellence in quality and productivity.

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**"The victors of the battles of tomorrow will be those who can best harness thought to action."**

**B.C. Forbes**

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Early the next morning, the mission members flew to Hanoi for the second part of their program, which included attending the Vietnam Productivity Centre (VPC) 9th Productivity and Quality Forum with the theme “Ahead of Time,” visiting Man De Village which implemented a Green Productivity program, and engaging Dr. Ngo Quy Viet, Director-General of the Directorate for Standards and Quality and APO Director for Vietnam, Ms. Nguyen Thi Bich Hang, VPC Managing Director and APO Liaison Officer for Vietnam, and Mr. Hoang Viet Cuong, VPC Director for Environment and Community Development, in a roundtable meeting on productivity.

All the media representatives in the mission were unanimous in their agreement with APO Secretary-General Takenaka that the media can play a key role in productivity promotion. Prior to joining the mission, most were not familiar with the productivity concept or the work of the NPOs in their respective countries. Apparently little was done to involve them in the national productivity movement. *APO News* spoke to two participants, Mohebal Dayani Dardashti, who heads the Isfahan Bureau of the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran, and Director of Media Shiraz Latif, Pakistan Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Latif expressed a need to sensitize media professionals to productivity issues and to develop their capabilities in productivity reporting. Research briefs on productivity should also be made available to them. It is also desirable to involve them in national committees dealing with productivity issues, not only for the purpose of reporting but to generate in them a sense of ownership



(L-R) Hang, Dr. Viet, and Mok at the roundtable discussion

of the issue. Latif further suggested the creation of a network of journalists interested in productivity issues.

Dardashti suggested that the NPOs should engage in interactions with the media, provide them regular briefings on upcoming productivity promotion programs and issues, allow them to sit in on their programs, give them access to relevant information archives, and introduce them to productivity experts and activists. He is in favor of forming an association of “productivity journalists” to encourage public dialogue on current productivity issues, provide training on productivity reporting, and serve as an advocate for productivity. 🌐