

## Productivity movement: more private-sector initiative expected

**O**n 21 September 2004, APO Secretariat Consultant Yoshikuni Ohnishi conducted a live videoconferencing session on the “Productivity Movement: A Marathon with No Finish Line.” He spoke from Tokyo to participants of the APO Study Mission on the Media and Productivity who were gathered at the World Bank Thailand Development Learning Center in Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Ohnishi started off by drawing attention to the shifting focus of productivity—from supply side to demand side, from economic dimensions to social ones, and from technology oriented to human oriented—brought about by changes in the business environment and rising expectations of society. He cited examples of how this has affected the work of NPOs in APO member countries, adding that the NPOs themselves are faced with many challenges, including seeking financial resources, building in-house capabilities, and overcoming competition in the services they provide. He advocated that the more advanced NPOs should take on a benefactor role by increasing their assistance to the weaker ones.

In tracing the development of the productivity movements in the region and the ownership and management of NPOs, Ohnishi contended that eventually most of the productivity initiatives would be undertaken by the private sector as it has the experience, skills, knowledge, and resources. In addition, NPOs generally tend to lack speed and dynamism in responding to the needs of society. To overcome this, a few of the more advanced NPOs



*Ohnishi (L) listening to a comment by Dardashti of Iran*

have resorted to corporatizing some of their services, particularly training and consultancy, where they are managed like private-sector companies. Despite his contention, Ohnishi believes that the NPOs will continue to have a crucial role to play, especially in: 1) facilitating private-sector involvement; 2) serving sectors that do not have means and capabilities of their own to undertake human resources development and information gathering, like SMEs and non-urban sectors; and 3) developing core competencies to offer services for which others are willing to pay.

Ohnishi concluded his presentation by pointing out the four factors critical to the success of a productivity movement: dynamic leadership, governmental support, involvement of all stakeholders, and development of core competencies. 