

Top Management Forum on corporate social responsibility

The APO organized its 2005 Top Management Forum in Tokyo from 28 February to 3 March with the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan (METI). This year's forum, the 21st in the series, focused on corporate social responsibility (CSR). In recent years, interest in CSR has been growing worldwide. Along with the globalization of the economy, issues such as environmental destruction and violations of human rights have also contributed to the mounting interest in CSR. However, clear definitions of CSR still do not exist. The forum, with 30 participants from 16 APO member countries, covered issues such as the concept of CSR, case studies of CSR as practiced by Japanese corporations, and socially responsible investment.

The forum tried to provide participants with an understanding of the drastic changes in the current management climate and the recognition of the importance of CSR for the sustainable development of business corporations. After hearing various presentations by guest speakers, the participants discussed how they could promote CSR in their home countries and identify the issues and challenges in CSR promotion.

The forum led off with a keynote speech by Prof. Iwao Taka of Reitaku University on "The Current Situations and Future Directions of Corporate Social Responsibility," followed by a special address on "Promotion Policies for Corporate Social Responsibility" by Mr. Hideo Suzuki, Director, Corporate Affairs Division of the Economic and Industrial Policy Bureau, METI.

Forum participants also had opportunities to hear presentations on: "CSR Management and Corporate Value" by Mr. Hiroshi Hirano, President and Chief Executive Officer, Sompo Japan Insurance Inc; "My Philosophy of Business



The forum in progress

and Corporate Social Responsibility" by Mr. Morio Ikeda, President and CEO, Shiseido Co. Ltd.; "Building a New Snow Brand Milk Products Co., Ltd." by Mr. Makoto Wakita, Managing Director, Snow Brand Milk Products Co., Ltd.; "Positive Prospects of the CSR Debate in Japan in Comparison with Europe and America" by Mr. Minoru Inaoka, Managing Director, Ito-Yokado Co., Ltd.; and "Socially Responsible Investment in Japan" by Ms. Mariko Kawaguchi, Senior Analyst, Management Strategy Research Department, Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd.

In addition, Dr. Hiroshi Kato, President, Chiba University of Commerce, gave a commemorative speech at the forum on 1 March on "The Vision for the 21st Century and Productivity Movement for the Future," and the participants attended a ceremony later that day organized by the JPC-SED to mark the 50th anniversary of the productivity movement in Japan. 