

Strengthening regional development

There are many excellent business corporations and organizations that utilize various human resources and local characteristics effectively in specific regions. With expanded IT utilization and easier geographic access due to improved transportation systems, enterprises can be competitive in the global market despite distance from central business centers. In both developed and developing countries, there is growing recognition of the need to accelerate regional industrialization due to the negative effects of excessive concentration of national resources in urban centers. If economic activity occurs exclusively in urban centers, it will hinder the sound development of the country as a whole. Regional industrialization is also important at the national level because improvements in income, employment, infrastructure, information and communication, and amenities at the regional level will contribute to increasing productivity at the macro GNP level.



Participants touring Aeon Miyazaki Shopping Center

In Japan, the approaches adopted to promote regional industrialization include revitalization of existing industries; creating new businesses by infusing new technologies, services, ideas, and other resources; inducing large urban-based firms to relocate to regional areas in anticipation of job creation and other linkage effects; and developing strategic alliances with neighboring countries by promoting trade, investment, and other economic activities. Coordination and cooperation among the parties involved will contribute not only to sharing the limited resources available in a region but also to achieving higher synergistic effects. Technological innovations undertaken by small and medium firms for high value-added products point in this direction. The role of agents such as universities, public R&D centers, and business associations is crucial for the promotion of local small firms, including venture businesses.

The APO, in collaboration with the Miyazaki Prefectural Government, held a symposium on “Strengthening Regional Development” in Miyazaki prefecture, Japan, 23–27 October, with 25 participants from 15 member countries who examined policies and measures for industry development in rural cities in Japan and supporting business corporations in regional areas. They also explored the possibilities of future collaboration among governments, business support organizations, and corporations through the exchange of views and dialogues.

Participants visited Miyazaki Techno Fair at the Miyazaki Prefecture Industrial Technology Center on 23 and 24 October and participated in business-matching sessions to seek collaboration with local entrepreneurs. They also participated in seminars on “Trade and Business Promotion and Attraction Measures for Corporations” and the “Business Exchange Conference” held at the World Convention Center Summit on 25 October. Ulvac Kiko Inc., Shusen-no-Mori, Aeon Miyazaki Shopping Center, and Honda Lock Manufacturing Co. Ltd. hosted site visits so that the attendees could gain firsthand experience from their operations. 