



APO *news*

Tokyo hosts 47th Governing Body Meeting

The Governing Body of the APO meets annually in one member country to receive the annual report of the Secretary-General and the audited financial report for the preceding year and to make policy decisions. After an interval of six years, the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) was once again held in Tokyo, 14–16 June, at the Mita Kaigisho. A total of 69 delegates comprising APO Directors, Advisers, and observers attended the meeting, which was hosted by APO Director for Japan Kosuke Nakahira and organized jointly by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED), Japan's NPO, and the APO Secretariat.



Delegates to the 47th Session of APO Governing Body

A special feature of the 47th Session of the GBM was the conferring of the APO Regional Awards, which occurs once every five years. In addition, a symposium on Promotion on Economic Partnership in the Region, and Productivity Cooperation among APO member countries was organized by the JPC-SED to coincide with the GBM as part of events to commemorate its 50th anniversary on 13 June, which GBM delegates also attended.

Outgoing APO Chairman Sheng-Hsiung Hsu in his opening address at the Inaugural Session welcomed the guests and delegates and thanked the Government of Japan for hosting the meeting in Tokyo and for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates. He also welcomed APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, who was attending his first GBM. He noted that since its founding in 1961, the APO has been in the forefront of the productivity movement in Asia and the Pacific. The expansion of membership from eight to 20 was satisfying, Hsu said, and he took justifiable pride in the fact that the Republic of China was a founding member. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the privilege of serving as APO Chairman during the past year.

The inaugural session was graced by Japanese Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Ichiro Aisawa and Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Koichi Hirata. Fiji's Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity Kenneth Zinck also attended as a special guest. In his inaugural address, Minister Aisawa emphasized the linkages between economic development and productivity and pointed out that innovations in the more efficient use of energy had contributed to Japan's remarkable economic growth. He noted that Japan has high regard for the role played by the APO in contributing to the socioeconomic development of the region through human resources development. Now, however, the minister pointed out that there is a need to resolve the economic gap among APO member countries through

(Continued on page 4)

Volume 35 Number 7
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"An investment in knowledge pays the best dividends."

Benjamin Franklin

INSIDE

- 2.... Annual report of the Secretary-General
- 3.... APO honors productivity champions
- 4.... New APO Chairman and Vice Chairmen
- 4.... Common Sense Talk
- 5.... OEHS at the workplace
- 6.... Developing agro-industries for employment generation in rural areas
- 7.... p-Experts
- 7.... APO/NPO Update
- 7.... Program calendar
- 8.... Promotion of economic partnership in the region
- 8.... APO Society for Bangladesh holds annual meeting

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Tokyo hosts (Continued from page 1)

poverty alleviation programs, as this will eventually ensure peace and stability in the region. He suggested that Green Productivity be further promoted through such activities as eco-products exhibitions and the *Eco-products Directory*, in which the APO has already demonstrated comparative advantage. Mentioning that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had stated at the Asia-Africa Summit in Bandung, Indonesia, in April that Japan would provide assistance in applying to Africa the knowledge gained from Asia's productivity movement, Minister Aisawa seconded the transfer to other regions, particularly to Africa, to stimulate their economic growth. Finally, he assured the GBM delegates that Japan supported APO Secretariat-initiated administrative and operational reforms to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Secretary Hirata, in his special remarks, said that the global economy had continued to recover over the past year and Asian economies had witnessed expansion. Noting the increasing interdependencies in the global economy, he stated that productivity, and therefore the work of the APO, would play an increasingly important role in growth and development. He concluded by expressing the continued support of METI for APO activities and wished the delegates a successful meeting.

APO Director for Japan Kosuke Nakahira delivered the Welcome Address, in which he noted that since Japan had last hosted a GBM six years ago Asia had faced and overcome many challenges, including the Asian financial crisis, SARS, and avian flu. The APO must continue to mount timely responses to the needs of its member countries, he pointed out, and urged Directors to work together to reform the organization for the benefit of all using this GBM as a starting point. 