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Thailand hosts Eco-products International Fair 2005

On 6–8 October this year, the APO in collaboration with the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI) organized the Eco-products International Fair (EPIF) 2005. More than 22,000 visitors thronged the IMPACT Exhibition Center in Bangkok, Thailand, to attend the EPIF 2005. This was the second such fair in Southeast Asia following the first EPIF held in Malaysia in 2004. The theme of the fair was “New Environmental Challenges for the Global Community.” The guest of honor and keynote speaker at the opening ceremony was the Thai Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Mr. Sora-at Klinpratoom.



Opening of the EPIF 2005. (L-R) Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Executive Director, FTPI; Mr. Praphad; Minister Sora-at; Mr. Hirata; and Mr. Takenaka

A total of 226 booths showcasing eco-friendly products and services covering items ranging from consumer goods to materials for manufacturing were set up by exhibitors from Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. Fifty-six well-known exhibitors included Daikin, Ebara, Hitachi, Matsushita, Mitsubishi, Teijin, Toshiba, Toyota, Siam Cement Company, and others. The APO had a booth to promote its Green Productivity (GP) activities. This year the organizers sponsored an eco-product concept booth that had as its main attraction an “Eco-wish Tree” that drew crowds of all ages. Another crowd-pleaser was Honda’s humanoid robot ASIMO. The 120-cm robot performed “live” on stage for appreciative crowds several times daily during the EPIF 2005. The performances demonstrated the technological innovations that allow it to run at 3 km per hour, mimic the movements of a person, and dance rhythmically.

In addition to Minister Sora-at, speakers at the opening ceremony were FTI Chairman Praphad Phodhivorakhun, APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka, and Parliamentary Secretary Koichi Hirata of the Japanese Ministry of Trade and Industry. Minister Sora-at, in his keynote address, said that advances are being made in green production processes, which are environmentally friendly and energy saving, and are now becoming more common in the global market. Thailand is committed to improving its products and services to join this environment-friendly trend as it will help Thai manufacturers to increase their competitiveness globally. Minister Sora-at also pointed out that the EPIF had not only given Thai manufacturers

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“Simplicity involves two major processes: eliminating redundant elements and integrating things to make them flow.”

Ken Okuyama

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along with other international enterprises an opportunity to showcase their eco-products but also created an opportunity for the exchange of product knowledge and technologies that will help protect the environment and save valuable energy. He expressed the hope that the EPIF 2005 would help raise environmental awareness among the general Thai public and pave the way to gaining their support for eco-products.

Praphad recognized the need for Thai industries to join hands with others to minimize the negative effects on the environment of business activities and felt that their participation in the EPIF 2005 demonstrated their commitments to this. Parliamentary Secretary Hirata in his address mentioned that it was very important that consumers and all stakeholders have access to adequate information and knowledge of products on the market, as well as a forum to exchange information and knowledge on related environmental issues. Hirata further pledged that Japan would continue to cooperate with other countries to disseminate environmentally friendly and energy-saving know-how and technologies developed by Japanese industry for sustainable development and would support the APO in its productivity enhancement and GP endeavors in Asia and the Pacific. Secretary-General Takenaka mentioned that in order to protect the environment we need to promote eco-innovations at every level, including technical, policy management, and individual lifestyle levels, and disseminate such innovations swiftly in society. He expressed the hope that the Asian-Pacific region would see accelerating trends in GP, eco-design, and eco-products through such annual eco-product fairs organized by the APO in collaboration with its partners.




Scene at the fair

to provide opportunities for business matchmaking and networking in eco-product-related business. Around 100 participants attended the conference, including 35 overseas participants from 15 APO member countries. On the first day the resource speakers and their topics were: Koichi Hirata, “Policies for Economic Growth and Preservation of the Environment”; Kenichi Azuma, Vice President, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan, “Successful Case in the Global Promotion of Eco-products—Experiences of Mitsubishi Electric Corporation”; Dr. Chaiyod Bunyagidj, Vice President, Thailand Environment Institute, “Key Success Factors and Barriers in the Implementation of Green Purchasing and Eco-products”; and Datuk Mustafa Mansur, President of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, “Importance of Awareness on Eco-products for Global Competitiveness.”

The second day of the conference focused on 3R initiatives. Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto spoke on “Establishment of a Sustainable Society through Sound Material Cycles: Institutional Framework and Technical Capacity”; Dr. Yasuhiko Hotta, Policy Analyst, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan, on “Japan’s 3R Initiatives: Experiences and Success Stories”; Mary Jane C. Ortega, City Mayor, City Government of San Fernando, the Philippines, on “Key Issues and Challenges in Managing Waste in the Context of the 3 Rs”; Augustine Koh, Director, Environment Department, APO, on “The APO’s Experiences in 3R Implementation”; Somthai Wongcharoen, Wongpanit Garbage Recycle Separation Plant, Thailand, on “3R Cases in Thailand”; and Saburo Kato, Special Advisor to the Mayor of Kawasaki City, Japan, on “3R Experiences in Japan.”

On the third day, a special thematic session on “Environmentally Sustainable Industrial Development and the Concept of Eco-towns in the Asia-Pacific Region” was held. The event was coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme and Global Environment Centre Foundation. The presentations were followed by a panel discussion, where delegates representing a number of cities of Asia and the Pacific shared their visions of what eco-towns might be and their experiences in trying to create them.

The Thai track and other track covered a series of parallel events during the three days of the EPIF 2005. The events on the Thai track targeted Thai professionals, with topics ranging from eco-design to innovative waste treatment systems to green energy. The other track hosted events organized by the International Green Purchasing Network (IGPN) among others. Included in the discussions were involving youth in green purchasing, eco- and agro-tourism, and eco-material development. Taking advantage of the fair, the IGPN held its first governing body meeting in Bangkok while members of its network attended the EPIF. 



Prof. Yamamoto (L) presenting the directory to Minister Sora-at

The opening day of the fair also saw the launching of the seminal APO publication *Eco-products Directory 2005*. Professor Yamamoto of the University of Tokyo and a Vice Chairman of the APO GP Advisory Committee presented the first copy of the new volume to Minister Sora-at.

Running parallel to the fair were three series of events, popularly known as “tracks,” with the first being the APO track, the second the Thai track, and the third the “other” track. A three-day International Conference on Eco-products for Competitiveness in Global Markets was organized on the APO track. The objectives of the conference were to create greater awareness among the business community in particular and the public in general of the importance of eco-products in achieving sustainable production and consumption; to share the experiences and practices of companies and governments in reducing, recycling, and reusing (3R initiatives), greening of supply chains, and green procurement; and