

Better access to labor market information

Recruitment or placement of workers in the right jobs and positions according to their competence, experience, and interests has a direct bearing on the productivity of an enterprise. Given the speed at which businesses are changing and intense competition in today's economy, labor market information providers can offer many useful services to help enterprises find the right people for the right jobs.

The APO and Indonesia through the Directorate of Productivity, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia, jointly organized a study meeting on Labor Market Information in Denpasar, 3–6 July. Twenty-five participants from 14 member countries were in attendance, along with three APO-deputed and two local resource persons. The inaugural session was jointly held with that of the training course on Productivity Management Tools for Women Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness. Indonesian Minister of Manpower and Transmigration Erman Soeparno gave the opening address to launch both.

Among the labor market information-related issues faced by member countries

are the rapidly aging population in most developed countries, declining trend in the male labor force participation rate and increasing trend for the female rate, foreign workers as a major source of both highly skilled and low-skilled labor, and imbalance in the supply of and demand for labor. Informal channels remain the most popular sources of labor market information for both employers and job seekers, although formal channels are becoming more important. Internet recruiting will revolutionize labor market information systems in the near future.

It was pointed out that governments should make the Internet accessible to the less educated, older workers, women, and citizens in rural and remote areas, in addition to collecting and disseminating accurate labor market information so that policymakers can engage in manpower requirement planning, schools are able to help students to plan careers, and citizens are able to utilize the information to update their skills and knowledge and remain and/or become employable. Legislated intergovernmental or bilateral coordination on safety standards, guest worker welfare, and measures to deal with irresponsible recruitment agencies and employers who do not honor labor contracts also appears warranted.