

## Summary of the Secretary-General's statement

After greeting the guest of honor, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education and Mayor of the South West District Low Yen Ling, NPO and Agriculture delegates, advisers, and observers, Secretary-General Mari Amano thanked the Government of Singapore for “its warm hospitality and generosity in hosting this year’s WSM.” He also expressed appreciation to SPRING Singapore, led by APO Director for Singapore Chew Mok Lee, for “sparing no effort in organizing the WSM and making all the delegates feel at home.”



Secretary-General Mari Amano. Photo courtesy of SPRING Singapore.

Turning to current and new initiatives particularly important to the APO, Secretary-General Amano stated that, “The 2015 edition of the *APO Productivity Databook* released in September this year was based on the updated 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) compared with the 1993 SNA used previously.” Total factor productivity (TFP) had been newly computed for Cambodia, with TFP analysis expanded to cover 18 member economies. He was pleased that this edition presented energy productivity estimates to help improve energy efficiency for sustainable growth in the region and pledged that the *APO Productivity Databook* project would continue to improve as part of the policy advisory function of the APO.

Secretary-General Amano reported that Bangkok would host the next Eco-products International Fair (EPIF), to be organized by the FTPI and Federation of Thai Industries from 8 to 11 June 2016 with the theme “24-Hour Eco-Life.” Various side events were planned, and an international conference was to be held concurrently from 8 to 10 June. He hoped that all member countries would participate in the EPIF to generate eco-business networks.

“I thank the Governments of the Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea for providing generous cash grants enabling the APO to implement new projects and assign experts to member countries,” said the Secretary-General, pointing out that such grants were particularly important for the agriculture sector, which had benefited from the five-year Special Program for Capacity Building in the Food Industry in ASEAN Least Developed Countries starting last year. In addition to country-specific activities, it also financed the hosting of two multicountry projects in Japan annually. Japan had also provided a new three-year grant for the Special Program for Promoting Public-private Partnerships in Enhancing Food Value

Chains in Asian Countries starting in 2015, he explained. The APO had also received a special cash grant from the Government of Japan to build the capacity for energy conservation in Bangladesh, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, which was underway. To gain spillover effects from the program, the GBM had approved an increase in the number of slots for participants in multicountry projects under the program for other member countries, he reminded the delegates.

The APO continued to be active in Africa through the generosity of the Japanese government, continued the Secretary-General, citing the training course on Industrial Human Resources Development held in South Africa in June. He confirmed that follow-up activities in Africa were planned. Noting that the APO had been accelerating global partnerships, he described a collaboration with the Development Centre of the OECD to publish a productivity outlook report in mid-2016. After assisting the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) in productivity measurement for the Bhutanese government, the APO and UNDESA were currently discussing a possible joint workshop on productivity data and their use for policy formulation, noted Secretary-General Amano. He acknowledged that Secretariat staff played important roles in international cooperation activities by sharing the APO’s unique knowledge, experience, and expertise. “We are also committed to maintaining close relations with various agencies in Japan,” he commented, listing an internship program on global leadership practices held by the JPC, a lecture on Green Productivity and green business at Yokohama National University, and the International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific.

Turning to e-learning efforts, the Secretary-General described “the convergence of technology, social media, and content” that had presented “the perfect opportunity to relaunch the APO’s whole suite of e-learning courses.” He called videoconference-based courses using the APO’s new in-house facilities “a huge success.” The highly regarded self-learning e-courses would also be revolutionized, he promised, by creating “high-impact, interactive self-learning e-courses that encourage learning anywhere, anytime, and with any digital device.” He requested the support and advice of member countries “to help transform the Digital Learning Program into a world-class platform for e-learning on par with that offered by institutions of higher learning around the world.” Colombian visitors to the Secretariat in August had specifically wanted to collaborate with the APO to translate its e-courses into Spanish, which the Secretary-General saw as a testament to the wide audience reached. He encouraged member countries to translate self-learning e-courses into local languages to increase the APO’s reach.

“The APO has always strived to serve member countries by offering great programs funded from membership contributions and special cash grants, made even better through partnerships with other organizations working to advance the productivity mission,” said Secretary-General Amano. “At this WSM, I look forward to lively discussions that will help improve our programs for member countries.” Although acknowledging

that much work must be accomplished, he hoped that delegates would be able to “soak up the amazing atmosphere of our host country, a modern metropolis set in a tropical garden, and sample the exceptional international cuisine infused with the flavors of the cultures of Singapore.” The statement concluded with the announcement that the next WSM would be held in Malaysia. 🌟