

Secretary-General's New Year greetings

Looking back, 2015 was a very busy, eventful year for the APO, which was achieved through close cooperation among member countries, including NPOs and other organizations. Major changes in the past year have and will continue to affect the focus of APO programs and projects.

A new framework for mitigation of the effects of global warming, the Paris Agreement, was adopted at the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21) in December 2015. The international community

took a step toward collective measures to protect our shared environment. As an organization that has been implementing projects simultaneously aimed at productivity enhancement and environmental conservation under the concept of Green Productivity (GP) for over two decades, the Paris Agreement will create even more interest in the APO's green initiatives. We will continue to support sustainable development across the APO region through numerous GP projects including our flagship event, the 10th Eco-Products International Fair to be held in Thailand in June.

In 2015, the APO launched the Energy Efficiency Program, funded by generous special cash grants from the Government of Japan. The program has been well received as an opportunity to transfer Japan's energy-efficient technologies and experiences to other APO member countries. A major objective of the program is to contribute to achieving a low-carbon society.

In the area of technological innovations, practical applications of the "Internet of Things (IoT)" began to have a



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significant impact on productivity improvement in the agriculture, industry, and service sectors in 2015. New-wave manufacturing and service-oriented products through the application of the IoT are relevant to the APO's strategic directions of catalyzing innovation-led productivity growth and promoting the development of SMEs. In 2016, the APO will continue activities in these strategic directions with a specific focus on human resources development.

In recent years, public-sector productivity (PSP) has emerged as an important theme among APO member countries. PSP plays a key role in improv-

ing the quality of public services which leads to better efficiency in industry. The public sector is also often the biggest employer. To accelerate our efforts in the field, the Development Academy of the Philippines was designated as the APO Center of Excellence (COE) on PSP in 2015, the third COE after SPRING Singapore as the COE on Business Excellence and China Productivity Center as the COE on GP. The new COE will allow rapid expansion of our projects on capacity building to enhance PSP.

This year, we will further intensify efforts to encourage more countries to become members of the APO. In addition, e-learning- and IT-based projects will be expanded dramatically so that a wider range of individuals from member countries and elsewhere can participate. I hope that these APO activities in 2016 will contribute meaningfully to the sustainable socioeconomic development of member countries.

May 2016 be a joyful, prosperous, and productive year for you all. 🌀