

APO members pave the way forward

58th APO Governing Body Meeting



Minister of Manpower Hanif Dhakiri inaugurating the meeting as the Guest of Honor. Photo courtesy of Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development.

“Let us be closer to each other, let us dedicate all our resources to assist each other as APO member states, and let us assist other countries in the Asia-Pacific to climb the productivity ladder,” urged APO Director for Indonesia and Director General, Training and Productivity, Ministry of Manpower, Khairul Anwar as he welcomed the APO Governing Body (GB) to its 58th session in Jakarta, Indonesia, 19 April 2016.

The three-day annual event was attended by 45 delegates, consisting of APO Directors, Alternate Directors, and Advisers from 19 member countries. Observers from six partner organizations also attended: the Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP); International Labour Organization (ILO); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA); Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA); and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

Minister of Manpower Hanif Dhakiri of the Government of Indonesia presided over the Inaugural Session as the Guest of Honor. In declaring the official opening of the meeting, Minister Hanif said that Indonesia was honored to be the host, noting that the opportunity “is very valuable to encourage the Indonesian people to accelerate the realization of our dream to become a developed country with a high level of social welfare.” Achieving high productivity and competitiveness was a top-priority national agenda item, he stressed, noting four strategic factors that had been key to his country’s productivity improvement: good governance; technology engineering and innovation; improvement of human resources competency; and development of a productive culture. “I hope that what we have done and will be doing in the future will make Indonesia be a more productive, competitive, prosperous nation,” he asserted, looking forward to the acceleration of national as well as regional efforts for enhancing productivity.



APO Chair Margarita R. Songco leading the Governing Body through its consultations, supported by Second Vice Chair Jinasiri Dadallage, First Vice Chair Chew Mok Lee, and Secretary-General Amano. Photo courtesy of Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development.

As the APO Chair for 2015–2016, APO Alternate Director for Pakistan and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Production, Shafqut-ur-Rehman Ranjha, in his opening address, reaffirmed the importance of the APO in raising productivity for long-term economic development, noting that “greater regional integration will also be necessary for the sustainable growth and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region.” In passing the baton of the APO Chair to the APO Director for the Philippines, he urged fellow members to provide their fullest support to the new Chair and Secretary-General in meeting the challenges ahead.

The seats of APO Chair and Vice Chairs rotate annually among APO members, and representatives are elected at each session to lead the GB through its deliberations and decision-making processes in the following 12 months. As the first order of business, the GB confirmed the appointment of APO Director for the Philippines and Deputy Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority, Margarita R. Songco as APO Chair for 2016–2017, assisted by APO Director for Singapore and Assistant Chief Executive, Capabilities & Partnership, SPRING Singapore, Chew Mok Lee as First Vice Chair and APO Director for Sri Lanka and Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration and Management, Jinasiri Dadallage as Second Vice Chair.

Secretary-General Mari Amano reported to the GBM on the APO’s activities and achievements during the previous year, as well as what APO members could expect in the coming year and beyond. He pointed out that when the APO had been founded 55 years ago, the world was vastly different from today. Despite the passing of years and changes that had occurred, “The single greatest challenge still facing every member economy, regardless of its stage of economic

development, is to raise the productivity of its workers. The same challenge, in a different world, continues,” he noted. He stressed the fundamental need for achieving sustainable productivity for long-term economic development and the prosperity of APO member economies.

Under the direction of the new APO Chair, this GBM considered, discussed, and decided on various key agenda items. It approved the Financial Report for the Year 2015, Report of the 56th Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs to the Governing Body, and the APO Preliminary Budget for the 2017–2018 Biennium. The APO Directors also considered and approved the proposal for the Roadmap to Achieve the APO Vision 2020, a medium-term strategic framework to guide the planning and implementation of APO programs and projects in achieving its vision of being the leading international organization on productivity enhancement and enabling APO member economies to be more productive and competitive by 2020. In addition, delegates discussed and unanimously approved the proposal to expand the APO Digital Learning Program, consisting of self-learning e-courses on various topics relevant to productivity improvement, over the next five years. Finally, the GBM elected Dr. Santhi Kanoktanaporn, nominee of the Government of Thailand, as the next Secretary-General for the subsequent three years from September 2016 to September 2019.

During Plenary Session II held 20 April, the GBM invited Vice Chairman and Commissioner of the Indonesian Civil Service Commission Irham Dilmy to make a special presentation on Changes in the Public Sector: Civil Service Human Resources Management in Indonesia. He explained his country’s initiatives to improve the effectiveness of the public sector

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Delegates from APO member economies during discussions. Photo courtesy of Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development.

through human resources development and management.

In line with the usual practice of the GBM, day 2 also included a session on policy directives from each APO member. This year, the presentations focused on the topic of governmental policies aimed at boosting productivity in the areas of the public sector, Green Productivity, and SMEs. APO Directors shared their ideas and views on approaches to meet various economic challenges resulting from weak productivity gains and other factors such as unstable financial markets.

A site visit was organized by the host country on 21 April to the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park) located in eastern Jakarta. Delegates were able to experience the diversity and extent of Indonesia by walking through and viewing miniature reproductions of the country's islands and provinces.

At the closing ceremony, a vote of thanks was presented by APO Director for Lao PDR Somdy Inmyxai, who, on behalf of all delegates, expressed appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for hosting the meeting, especially to APO Director for Indonesia Khairul Anwar for his leadership, and to the entire staff of the NPO Indonesia for their hard work in organizing the meeting meticulously and in a planned manner.

Secretary-General Mari Amano recognized the observers

attending the meeting and acknowledged that their presence gave hope for increasing the level of cooperation in mutually beneficial areas. He thanked Directors for approving the APO Roadmap, expansion of the Digital Learning Program, and the APO Preliminary Budget for the 2017–2018 Biennium. He expressed his gratitude to the Governing Body for supporting his initiatives to revitalize the APO during his tenure as Secretary-General. Secretary-General Amano concluded by thanking APO Director for IR Iran Dr. Roya Tanatabaei Yazdi for her country's agreement to host the next GBM in 2017.

In closing the meeting, APO Chair Margarita R. Songco noted that the success of this year's GBM was evidenced by the decisions made on several important matters, including the approval of the proposed roadmap, which would provide a set of core values for the APO to respond effectively to the needs of its member economies with limited resources, and the election of the new Secretary-General. "The APO is now operating in a more dynamic, globalized environment where economies are restructuring and business models are changing fast due to the advent of IT and social media," she stated. The APO Chair expressed her hopes for the APO to reinvent itself, its approaches, and offerings to become a more dynamic organization, with its programs and activities in sync with the times. 🌀



Attendees at the 58th APO Governing Body Meeting. Photo courtesy of Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development.