

INTRODUCTION TO ILO/APSDEP
by
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1. Introduction

My name is NAOKI HAMADA, Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of ILO/ROAP, APSDEP. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for your participation in this meeting. My presentation will provide background information on APSDEP, and will consist of its history, objectives, structure and current situation.

2. History of APSDEP

The Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP) was set up in 1978 as an ILO Regional Programme with financial support from the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). So, over 20 years have passed since it started.

So far, although it has experienced some big changes, such as a shift of financial support (from the UNDP to the ILO) and the transfer of its office (from Islamabad to Bangkok), APSDEP has played an important part in promoting human resources development through technical and vocational training (TVET) in the region.

3. Objectives and Functions

APSDEP's main objective is to promote vocational training and access to such training in all sectors of the economy (formal and informal) and at all levels of skill and responsibility.

You can find the original or basic objectives and functions of APSDEP in the Statute of APSDEP, which was approved in 1985 by the Director General, and has never been repealed.

You will see the current guiding principles and main functions on pages 7 and 8 of the "Paper for the Technical Meeting on ILO/APSDEP Activities" distributed to all participants.

I think the most important and basic function of APSDEP is to contribute to the development of the member countries through the exchange of experience, expertise and information in the field of vocational training among and between national agencies, as well as employers' and workers' organizations.

4. Structure

Basically, APSDEP is structured as a network composed of

- a) a Central Office or Secretariat of APSDEP, located in the office of ROAP, with officials engaged in planning, coordinating and reporting activities;
- b) national focal points in APSDEP participating countries, usually national training authorities or similar organizations;

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- c) lead institutions, responsible for undertaking technical work and for establishing the linkages for some of the training consultancy and research activities of APSDEP; and
 - d) employers' and workers' organizations.

Unfortunately, this network has not been working effectively in recent years. I think the effectiveness of APSDEP activities in future depends on revitalization of the network.

5. Activities

APSDEP implements a wide-range of activities, which include technical meetings, workshops, training courses, follow-up activities and specific thematic activities. You can see the activities and numbers of participation in the past 10 years from page 3 to 7. An average of eleven meetings/seminars/studies are carried out in a year, but from 1996 to the present, the average has reduced to around eight meetings/seminars/studies due to the limited resources of personnel and financial support. In addition, the reduced number was derived from the requests by technical specialists who would like to see better quality and better-planned meetings rather than meeting the average numbers.

Here, I would like to refer to APSDEP's website.

The APSDEP website was set up in 1999, in order to facilitate exchange of information by utilizing information technology. According to the Questionnaire responses, I feel the website should be greatly improved in order to be made more use of. I think the website should be one of the most useful means to exchange experience, expertise and information in the field of vocational training among and between national agencies, as well as employers' and workers' organizations in future.

6. Finance

As I mentioned already, resource and personnel constraints are one of the serious problems, which restrict on APSDEP's activities. In the present difficult financial climate in many member countries, we have to seek various means to support activities, including cash contribution as well as in-kind contributions.

7. Conclusion

I explained briefly about the background information on APSDEP. As you may know, APSDEP has made a significant contribution in developing vocational training in the region in the past. We need to reform the APSDEP in order that it can still achieve its objectives in the recent rapidly changing circumstances.

I hope we will get a lot of ideas on how to improve APSDEP activities through this meeting, by which the new APSDEP will take a step forward confidently. You can find more details of the main points of my presentation by referring to the Paper for the Technical Meeting on ILO/APSDEP Activities.

Thank you.