

# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WORKFORCE SYMPOSIUM

11-13 August 2008

APEC Secretariat, Singapore

The Developing Effective Public-Private Partnerships: Meeting the Needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Workforce symposium was held 11-13 August 2008 at the APEC Secretariat in Singapore. The symposium was co-hosted by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the United States Department of Labor (USDOL).

The symposium is part of a two-year USDOL APEC project, *Ensuring Sustainable Growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through Workforce Development* and was endorsed by the Labour and Social Protection Network of the APEC Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG). The symposium incorporated issues identified in an Australian DEEWR self-funded project which examines the use of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the delivery of labour market and welfare policies and programs in APEC economies.

The symposium was opened by the Executive Director of the APEC Secretariat, Ambassador Juan Capuñay of Peru, who spoke about the importance of incorporating PPPs in strategies for meeting skills and labour shortages and in the delivery of employment and training services, which aligns with APEC and Peru's priorities for 2008.

Forty-five delegates attended the symposium representing 17 APEC member economies. The economies represented were Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and the United States. There was broad representation of participants from government, industry, international organisations, academia and the not-for-profit sector.

The symposium provided an opportunity to explore different models of PPPs in the delivery of labour market and employment programs through the experiences and perspectives of varying economies and partners.

The 16 case studies presented provided a variety of approaches to addressing skills shortages, delivering employment and training services, and developing labour market information through PPPs to address the different needs and circumstances of APEC member economies.

Some key themes shared by economies through their experience with PPPs emerged from the symposium.

1. PPPs are essential to the APEC region, as they are an important tool in achieving sustainable development and in the promotion of businesses of all sizes, from micro-enterprises to larger companies.
2. Utilising existing regional strengths through PPPs can assist in meeting the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce.

3. Human capital serves a critical role in economic development, as a skilled workforce is a main driver of business recruitment, retention, and expansion.
4. It is essential to develop effective human resource practices in order to build capacity and enhance the capability of PPPs.
5. A skilled and adequate workforce is an important component of liberalised markets.
6. PPPs are an effective mechanism in providing much needed goods and services.
7. Efficiency, productivity and successful outcomes can be increased by partnering public and private sector expertise and resources.
8. PPPs can be an important mechanism for identifying and addressing the mismatch between the demand and supply of skilled labour.
9. The most effective role for government in public-private partnerships, whether as the lead of the partnership or in a supporting role, depends on the unique circumstances in the APEC economy and the workforce challenge being addressed.
10. Building strong relationships with the private sector and other relevant stakeholders can help governments better address the social dimension of globalisation.
11. While government and business are often the primary focus of PPPs, educational institutions and civil society are also critical partners in human resource development.
12. There is value in public-private collaboration – both in preparing for future workforce challenges and in creating the relationships necessary for sustaining human resource development strategies.
13. Evaluation is an important tool for identifying best practices in PPPs.
14. The increase in utilisation of PPPs for human resource development reflects the recognition that no single entity, or any one sector, can respond adequately or comprehensively enough to the workforce challenges posed by the competitive global economy.

### **Next Steps**

- Finalise and distribute the report on *Developing Effective Public-Private Partnerships in the APEC Region* to wider APEC audience, including publishing report on APEC and HRDWG websites.
- Consider developing, supporting, and promoting APEC project proposals that build on the outcomes of the PPP project and symposium.
- Seek further support from Leaders and Senior Officials for promoting the development of PPPs in the field of human resource development.