

Session II: Local Development and Global Networking

Summary by Chairperson

Five presentations from the Philippines, India, Indonesia, New Zealand and Thailand described policies and programs aimed at developing capacity and capability in science, technology and innovation. Initiatives to develop global networks aimed at exploiting global knowledge and technology were highlighted.

While technology is becoming more widely available, countries do not have the same capacity to access and utilize global knowledge and technology for their economic development. Countries need to develop the capacity to search and evaluate technologies that are appropriate for local development. In the Philippine, the government helps industry select appropriate environmental technology through the Environmental Technology Development (ETV) Program. The ETV Program safeguards industry from using outdated technologies and encourages industry to invest in R&D.

The role of public sector R&D institutions in enhancing competitiveness of local industry in the global market was highlighted with the case study of the leather industry in India. The Central Leather Research Institute has been instrumental in developing highly skilled manpower for the Indian leather industry. However, it was shown that the availability of human capital and low cost production are not sufficient conditions for competing in the global marketplace. National growth missions must take into consideration technology development strategies to enable industry to move up the value chain and become competitive in the global market.

Since the development of high-tech sectors require large investments the selection of priority sectors should be based on the country's comparative advantages to ensure sustainable development. The unsustainable development of the aerospace industry in Indonesia after large investments in human resource development has led to the migration of large numbers of highly qualified manpower to the developed countries. Collaboration through regional and international networks could be one of the effective strategies to develop and utilize human resource and therefore reduce the "brain drain" problem.

The migration of highly qualified human resource to developed countries is not necessarily a loss to the country if measures are taken to maintain linkages with these experts. The Kiwi Expatriate Abroad program is an example of how New Zealand deploys its expertise abroad to assist in the country's development. As a small country, New Zealand's strategic approach is to develop innovation capacity in industries in which the country has a comparative advantage. It follows a development strategy that aims to do well in a few areas and has selected three focus areas for growth and innovation namely, ICT, biotechnology and creative industries.

Programs to stimulate invention could be an effective measure for economic development when followed through by R&D and finally exploiting the invention to make products for the global market. This interaction between invention, R&D and innovation is the

strategic approach applied by the government of Thailand through the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT).