



APEC SME Summit 2010 in Yokohama

< Background >

APEC region has experienced rapid growth and has become the growth center of the world economy. Member economies weathered the economic crisis and regional economic conditions are improving, but uncertainty remains.

In every APEC member economy, SMEs play important roles as key sources of economic growth, providing numerous and diverse benefits. SMEs provide job opportunities, drive innovation, nurture entrepreneurship, foster supporting industries, develop new products, generate export opportunities, reduce poverty, and increase the overall well-being of society.

Nevertheless, in this era of globalization, SMEs face new challenges and tremendous opportunities in a rapidly changing business environment. Expanding regional economic integration and advancing technological innovation are intensifying the transformation.

There is a growing concern that economic opportunities and benefits of economic growth have not been equally shared by the enterprises and individuals in every corner of the region, and, in fact, SMEs remain affected by the aftermath of the global economic downturn, confronting obstacles such as decreased demand and difficulties obtaining business loans.

SMEs usually have limited ability to take advantage of economic opportunities, but it is also true that SMEs possess the agility and resilience to overcome difficulties and open up new business frontiers. SMEs can flourish with the optimal use of available support measures and management resources such as knowledge, technologies, intellectual property, networks, and human capital.

It is more vital for APEC than ever to address improvement of the business environment, in which SMEs can fulfill their potential, and reinvigorate economic growth of the region.



<Outline>

Since its inception in 2007, the APEC SME Summit has served as a vital forum for exchanges and cooperation among APEC Leaders, Ministers, and SME managers, emphasizing economic growth and prosperity. The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry is organizing the event to be held on November 11, 2010, based on the theme of “Big Trees Grow from Small Seeds.”

The APEC SME Summit 2010 will address crucial issues for SMEs, such as entrepreneurship, sustainable business practices, access to the global markets, access to finance, development of human capital, and utilization of information technology. The programme of the conference will be relevant to the APEC Growth Strategy and its different perspectives, in particular, inclusive growth.

Participants will be able to learn, from APEC Leaders and Ministers, about beneficial policy measures in member economies that foster business environments in which SMEs can thrive. SME managers, including women and young, will share the best practices of overcoming challenges in innovative and effective ways.

We anticipate about 500 participants from government agencies, business communities, aid agencies, financial institutions, universities, and research institutions within the APEC region.