

APEC conference for smaller firms underway

By Zhao Ruixue

The fifth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Medium & Small Enterprises Technology Conference and Fair (APEC METC) opened yesterday in Qingdao in east China's Shandong province.

One minute of silence at the opening ceremony honored victims of the May 12 earthquake.

"The fifth APEC METC focuses on energy saving technology, environmental protection, new building materials and new and high technology and provides a dynamic platform to enhance cooperation, dialog and technology exchanges among the APEC members to achieve a sustainable development," Liu Tienan, vice-minister of the National Development

and Reform Commission said in his speech at the opening ceremony.

Statistics from the Qingdao International Conference and Exhibition Secretariat show that 1,036 exhibition booths have been reserved and 100 overseas business groups have registered to attend the fair.

The four-day gathering sponsored by the National Development and Reform Commission will feature forums, business negotiations and technology exchanges on environmental protection, energy saving and pollution control.

The fair will host several forums including the second dialog between Fortune 500 companies and APEC SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), APEC Youth Economic Leaders Summit, Mainland-Hong Kong Investment and Financing Forum, APEC SME Energy Conservation and Emission Reduction Forum and the Asia-Pacific Biofuels Summit.

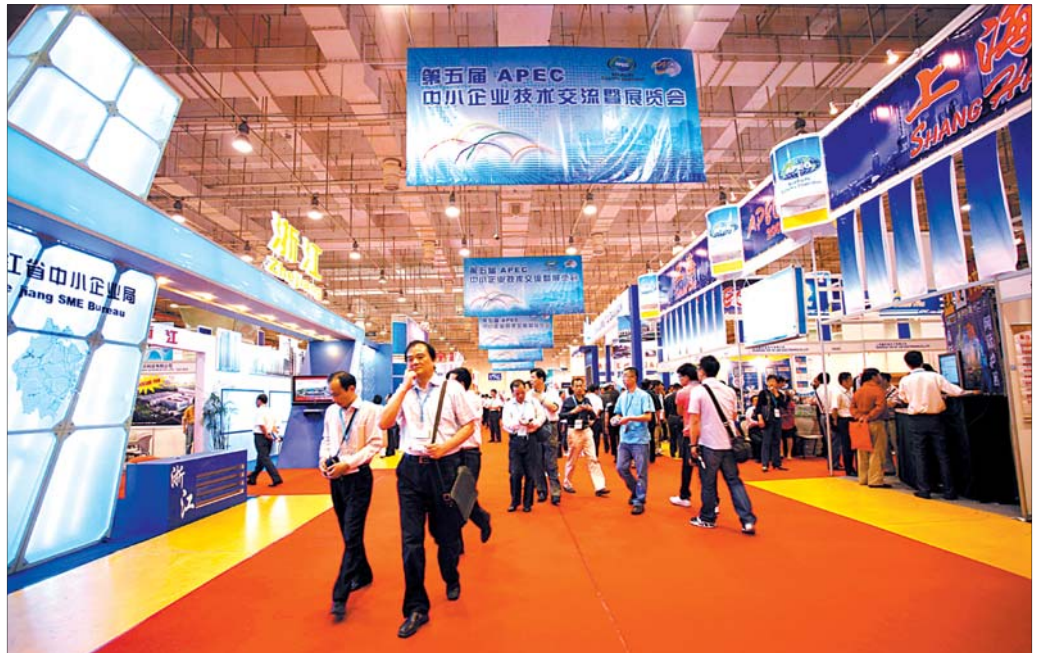
An international outsourcing conference, a promotion meeting for environmental protection projects and a release of new products and new technology will also be held during the fair.

"The fifth APEC METC offers more to meet the requirements of SMEs in aspects of technology exchange, forums, negotiations and meetings on the release of new products," said an official from the Secretariat of Qingdao International Conference and Exhibition.

A range of goods will be exhibited at the fair, including recycled products, automobile parts, new specialized machinery and new construction materials.

Highlighting the theme of "Technology Boosts Economy, Cooperation Creates Future", the APEC METC offers a platform for SMEs from the 21 APEC members to interact with each other. About 30 environmental protection companies, including those from Japan and Australia, brought new products in water treatment, energy saving and pollution control to seek potential partners.

Companies from Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and Indonesia showcased advanced products, technologies and equipment in food processing and energy saving. Business groups from Singapore, the Netherlands and Russia attend



More than 1,000 exhibitor booths are on offer at the fifth APEC forum for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Ju Chuanjiang

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the international outsourcing conference.

The fourth APEC METC held in May 2006 in Qingdao

attracted nearly 1,000 companies from home and abroad and drew 75,000 visitors including 8,500 from overseas. The

fourth fair registered foreign trade deals worth \$203 million and domestic trade agreements worth 765 million yuan.

The first APEC METC was held in Japan in 1996. Qingdao also held the third APEC METC in 2004.



President of South Korea Lee Myung-bak (center) visits appliance giant Haier's headquarters during his tour of Qingdao on May 30.

Ju Chuanjiang

Qindao's public transport ready for the Olympics

By Guo Xin

"Qingdao will provide the best transport service for the sailing athletes coming from all over the world during the Olympic Games in August," said Zhao Yingchun, deputy director of Qingdao Communication Committee.

Eighty percent of buses in Qingdao, the host city of 2008 Olympic sailing competition, now meet the Euro II emission standards. The city's public traffic system, which has progressed through five years of effort, is well prepared for the Olympic Games.

According to Zhao, 560 million yuan has been invested in upgrading the bus fleet since 2006, with 2,856 now meeting

Euro II standards.

He added that 180 million yuan will be spent this year to buy 502 new buses meeting Euro III standards.

In addition, nine parking lots and 83 bus stations have been newly built and 30 new bus lines are operational.

Special bus lines like the "Olympic Nonstop" and "Olympic Special" will be provided for participants in the Games.

The city says it now leads the nation in bus line density and emission control standards.

Taxi drivers are also encouraged to improve their vehicles and services, according to Zhao. Qingdao's 15,000 taxi drivers are required to dress in uniforms, while strict supervision will ensure professional performance.

Training programs, including languages, knowledge of the Olympic Games, and etiquette, are required for bus and taxi drivers as well as service personnel at the airport. The city reports that 500 drivers in the city are able to communicate with passengers in foreign languages.

Twenty barrier-free taxis and six barrier-free buses will be provided for the Paralympic Games in September.

Direct bus lines will link hotels and competition venues with Qingdao's airport, railway station and seaport.

"Passengers from both home and abroad will enjoy complete and excellent public transport services during the Olympic Games sailing competition and beyond," Zhao said.



Arts and crafts from Guizhou province are popular among visitors.

Ju Chuanjiang

Dialog bridges SMEs, multinationals

By Du Shu

About 30 of the world's Fortune 500 companies attended the second dialog with APEC SMEs held in the eastern Chinese city of Qingdao on Friday.

Sponsored by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the forum is a part of the fifth APEC SME Technology Conference and Fair.

Liu Tienan, vice-minister of the NDRC, said "the forum has played an active role in promoting the cooperation and development of both sides by building an exchange bridge between SMEs and big multinationals".

With the theme of "Technology and Innovation Boosting the Development of SMEs", the forum also featured high-profile exchanges on technology and innovation-powered development as well as the environment, sustainable development and the challenges SMEs face in an era of higher costs.

"The forum provides an opportunity for SMEs to learn from advanced expertise in big companies, which

will boost their healthy development," said Qiu Hong, assistant to the minister of commerce.

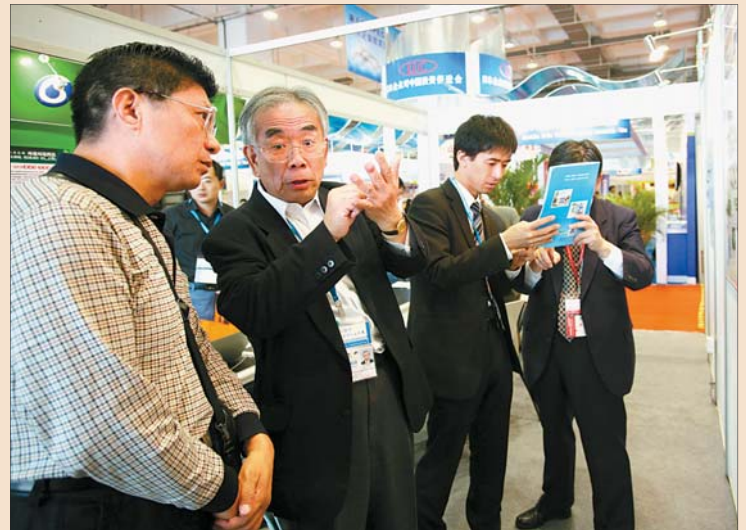
Representatives from famous companies from home and abroad including IBM, GE, Gome, Best Buy, Sony, and Yili Group participated

in the forum and gave talks on a range of SME subjects including technology, innovation, application of information technology and financing.

Zhao Hong, relationship officer of the Qingdao branch of HSBC Bank (China) Co Ltd

said "the forum will let us know more about what SMEs need, then we can provide them with best services".

Other forums to be held include the fifth APEC SME Services Alliance Forum and the Forum on Energy Saving and Pollution Control.



Satoru Kurozumi (second from left) of Sekisui Aqua Systems Co Ltd introduces environmental protection products to visitors.

Ju Chuanjiang

International buyers converge on port city

By Xue Xiaoying

The first day of the APEC METC that opened Friday saw a large amount of turnover as international buyers converged on Qingdao.

Nearly a hundred international buyers, including Jusco, Decathlon, Carrefour and Auchan are now at the fair.

The international outsourcing conference has been invigorated through the participation of more than 1,000 domestic suppliers. Nearly 30 multinational buyers in attendance also include US-based Wal-Mart and Japan's Mitsubishi Corp whose booths are crowded with potential suppliers.

"This is the first time we came here since our company started operation in 2006," said Detlef Plegge, general manager from ZF Commercial Vehicle Steering (Shandong) Co Ltd.

"We want to look for employees and suppliers for our company, and I am pretty confident to get what I want at the fair," said Plegge.

"I am interested in new building materials and automobiles, and I want to see what the Chinese can invent. We have already been working with some producers, and this time I want to find some new kinds of

business," said Xavier Bariller from French-based HQC Trade & Consulting Group Co Ltd.

According to the fair's statistics, European and US companies account for 85 percent of all buyers at the fair. Their purchasing wish list includes industrial, agricultural, seafood and hi-tech products.

According to a survey of 207 suppliers conducted by the Qingdao multinational purchase promotion center, more than 53 percent of suppliers

have received buying intentions from purchasers.

The center made elaborate preparations for the fair, even faxing a training primer to suppliers and briefing them by telephone beforehand to ensure they meet the demands of large multinational purchasers. Some buyers say suppliers with samples and catalogs can help them identify products and get to negotiations as soon as possible, raising their efficiency.

Foreign merchants have paid special attention to booths for machinery, environmental protection, energy saving, electrical products, food processing equipment and arts and crafts.

For the convenience of customers, there are also areas set aside for international purchasing negotiation as well as pavilions housing electronic commerce, international logistics and famous international corporations.



Tasting Indonesian coffee

Ju Chuanjiang