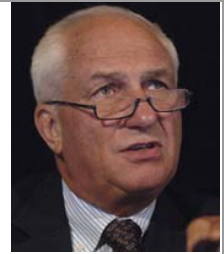


OECD FORUM 2007



GLOBALISATION NEEDS STANDARDS

By Alan Bryden, Secretary General, International Standardization Organization (ISO)

The globalization not only of trade in products and services, but of many other issues, such as security, environmental protection or health, has increased significantly the need for and the production of International Standards.

With 156 national members and a collection of more than 16000 standards, ISO is the leader for the production of voluntary standards, based on a double level of consensus amongst stakeholders and across countries. International Standards contribute positively to the three items of the agenda of the 2007 OECD Forum:

- they contribute to the facilitation of trade and to avoiding unnecessary technical barriers to trade;
- they enable the dissemination of innovation, new technologies and good business practices, thus spreading their benefits and opening world markets;
- they enable the involvement of developing countries and assist them in building national quality infrastructures that contribute to their competitiveness on world markets and to their own economic and social progress.

Numerous examples of ISO achievements and current undertakings illustrate this contribution, such as:

- the development of ISO standards relating to nanotechnologies, ICT, hydrogen technologies, educational services, tourism and associated services, sustainable building or the wide spectrum of work related to health technologies;
- the success of the suites of standards on quality management (ISO 9000), environmental management (ISO 14000), food security (ISO 22000), security in the supply chain (ISO 28000) or on the quality and security of IT services;
- the development of an International Standard giving guidance on social responsibility (the future ISO 26000);
- the pilot project undertaken in collaboration with the International Energy Agency on analyzing and promoting the current portfolio of International Standards relating to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources and identifying gaps for future developments;
- the wide recognition and use of ISO's "toolbox" of International Standards relating to conformity assessment, which facilitates international acceptance of test results, certificates and accreditations.

ISO is implementing an Action Plan to assist and encourage developing countries to become more involved. Big emerging economies such as China, India and Brazil are indeed becoming more active in the Organization, making the ISO System a good example of the successful operation of a multilateral system.

ISO is looking forward to the 2007 OECD Forum to gain support and capture expectations for its open, transparent, truly global and widely recognized standardization system. ISO standards may indeed be the vehicle for the success and wide dissemination of innovation, while, at the same time, contributing to addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, environmental integrity and social equity.