

Better international rules for inclusive globalization

5th annual meeting of international organizations

Introductory remarks by Sergio Mujica

Good morning, Ladies and gentlemen. In recent years, the question of “how to improve global governance” has become a major theme. There is today an urgency to make the transition to a new paradigm on good global governance that reflects the realities of a globalized world. A world where challenges transcend national borders and institutional boundaries; a world where no country, organization or group can solve them in isolation.

ISO has been actively engaged with many international organizations (IO), such as those present here today, since its inception in 1947. Over the past seven decades, our engagement with you has undergone profound changes, both in terms of the variety of standards and the evolving priorities. But the long-established history of collaboration among our organizations has been essential to tackling some of the world’s most global challenges and will continue to be a transformative force in the future, as we pursue the implementation of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, the global roadmap that will guide our collective work by 2030.

As our interdependence continues to deepen, we need to adapt our instruments and institutions to keep pace, maximizing our collective strengths and putting our resources to better use. In other words, we must take action on the biggest challenges facing the world today, build strong institutions and leverage our existing partnerships.

In our fast-changing world, international cooperation is essential to adapt and solve today’s global challenges. New ways to think about what makes for good global governance are needed. This is why I applaud the efforts of the OECD, the host partners of today’s event – UNECE and IEC – and all the other IOs who have joined this partnership. Our collaboration, and open dialogue on this project will not only bring enhanced IO cooperation, but also a sharing of best practices to enhance our own performance. The benefits that will result from our joint efforts cannot be underestimated, and we look forward very much to hosting the meetings of the five working groups tomorrow.

Standards, public policy and good governance

In our interconnected, interlinked and interdependent world, there is now a recognition that public policies can no longer be developed and implemented in isolation when they impact trade, health, security or the environment. Increasingly, the use and referencing of standards, based on consensus among stakeholders, forms part of good regulatory practice and good public governance. The standard-setting activities of ISO and other IOs in this room provide the tools necessary for governments to adopt solutions that reinforce multilateralism and support an effective and inclusive multilateral rule-based system.

Today, references to voluntary standards are a core part of good governance. For example, the WTO encourages the use of International Standards in order to reduce unnecessary barriers to trade. The UNECE has also developed and promotes a model for good regulatory practices that makes extensive reference to the use of International Standards and advocates their complementarity with regulations. These are just some of the many ways in which international standards are being promoted by international organizations to foster a more inclusive, transparent international system.

Standards supporting the SDGs

Today, International Standards can contribute not only to public policy initiatives, but also by providing solutions that will be needed in order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The shifting tectonics of the modern economy make a clear case for the important role that international standards can play in driving sustainable and inclusive development, tackling inequality and helping to address some of the biggest social and environmental challenges targeted by the SDGs.

There are literally thousands of international standards that can help organizations and companies all over the world to address this agenda. This is because they represent the state-of-the-art knowledge of experts in their respective fields. But importantly, due to their international nature, we can also be confident that they are applicable everywhere. They represent a common goal and a common path to reach it – on an international scale. ISO will be giving a presentation later this afternoon on how International Standards support the SDGs.

ISO week in Geneva

To further raise awareness around the SDGs and how standards can help, ISO will be co-organizing a conference (together with the UN and with input from UNECE) during its ISO General Assembly week in Geneva this September. We will use the platform and global audience to help governments and partners around the world better understand how international standards can help them to achieve the SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen, standards have a key role to play in the international rule-based system - contributing to the UN 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs, supporting public policy and promoting transparent and inclusive rules and institutions – all of which are top priorities for all those present today. So, let's continue our work here to foster closer IO collaboration, improve the quality of international standard-setting and raise the awareness of regulators and legislators about the benefits of using standards and other international instruments to overcome shared challenges and support inclusive globalization.

Thank you!