

The Report of the Third Meeting of
The APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)
Tokyo, 5-6 October 1995

1. The SCSC met on 5 and 6 October 1995 prior to the meeting of the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) in Tokyo, Japan. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, the Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, the United States of America and the APEC Secretariat. Representatives of the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), the Asia-Pacific Legal Metrology Forum (APLMF), the Asia Pacific Metrology Program (APMP), the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) attended the meeting as guests as agreed at the July 1995 SCSC meeting.

2. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Eiji Sakuta, Deputy Director-General, International Trade Administration Bureau, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Japan. Mr. Herudi Kartowisastro, Indonesia, and Ms. Margaret Fanning, Australia, attended as Vice-Chairs.

3. The meeting considered the following papers:

- The SCSC Medium- and Long-Term Action Plan (Chair's proposal) (SCSC III.2/TKY-068)
- Case studies on Priority Areas for Alignment with International Standards (Japan, Australia, Korea, Malaysia) (SCSC III.3.a,b,c,d,e/TKY-053,054,055,057,062)
- Selection of Priority Areas for Alignment of APEC Members' Standards with International Standards (Japan, Australia) (SCSC III.5.f,g/TKY-056,058)
- Progress Reports on the APEC Guide and the APEC Seminars on EMC and Environmental Management (Singapore) (SCSC III.3.h/TKY-059)
- Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Experts meeting on mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) on food products in the regulated sector (Australia) (SCSC III.6(REV)/TKY-084)
- Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Experts meeting on Mutual Recognition Arrangements on toys in the regulated sector (Australia) (SCSC III.6.b/TKY-061)
- Good Manufacturing Practices for Bulk Pharmaceuticals (Canada) (SCSC III.6.c(REV)/TKY-079)
- Specialist Regional Bodies- Their Role in Support of APEC (New Zealand) (SCSC III.4/TKY-071,072)
- Mutual Recognition in the Voluntary Sector (New Zealand) (SCSC III.5/TKY-060)
- Development of Technical Infrastructure (Australia) (SCSC

Medium and Long Term Action Plan of the SCSC

4. The meeting considered in detail "the draft Medium and Long Term Action Plan of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance" (SCSC III.2/TKY-068) and finalized the plan with some amendments. The Action Plan comprises an extensive program of action for the future which can be summarized under four main headings

- (1) Alignment with International Standards
 - Alignment of member economies' standards with International Standards by 2010/2020
 - Completion by each APEC economy of its voluntary Action Program in the priority areas identified by the SCSC by 2000/2005
- (2) Mutual Recognition of Conformity Assessment
 - Fostering confidence in the region's conformity assessment infrastructure through mutual recognition arrangements in the voluntary sector
 - Participation in a network of bilateral and multilateral mutual recognition arrangements in most regulated sectors by 2010/2020
- (3) Cooperation of Technical Infrastructure Development
 - Improvement and maintenance of the level of APEC economies' standards and conformance infrastructure to participate in mutual recognition arrangements by 2010/2020
 - Development of a mid-term plan to improve technical infrastructure by 2000
- (4) Transparency
 - Increase of transparency of APEC economies' standards and conformance requirements
 - Conducting a survey for information database and network in 1996

5. In respect to the alignment of standards with international standards, the meeting noted that (i) the work was to be undertaken on a voluntary basis; (ii) members were encouraged (but not obliged) to align their standards with international standards in priority areas when they are identified; and (iii) members were encouraged to remove all deviations of their standards from international standards wherever possible except in circumstances allowed by the TBT and SPS Agreements.

6. The SCSC agreed to submit the Action Plan as finalized to the CTI and recommend that it be adopted as an integral part of the APEC Action Agenda..

Closer Alignment with International Standards

7. The meeting considered the Consolidated Report (SCSC III.3.e/TKY-055) and the reports

on case studies in four priority areas:

- Electrical and Electronic Appliances by Japan (SCSC III.3.a/TKY-057)
- Food Labeling by Australia (SCSC III.3.b/TKY-062)
- Plastic Products by Korea (SCSC III.3.c/TKY-053)
- Rubber Products by Malaysia (SCSC III.3.d/TKY-054)

The meeting welcomed the reports and acknowledged that they provided useful guidance to member economies.

8. The meeting agreed on the general recommendations as contained in the revised Consolidated Report and noted the need to further consider the recommendations put forward by the lead members responsible for the case studies. This will be undertaken at its first meeting in 1996. The SCSC recommends to the CTI that its revised Consolidated Report with Recommendations for Alignment with International Standards be submitted to the Ministerial Meeting in November 1995.

9. The meeting also considered the proposals submitted by Japan and Australia on selection criteria for priority areas to promote alignment with international standards (SCSC III.3.f/TKY-056 and SCSC III.3.g/TKY-058). The meeting agreed that the proposed survey on trade volumes be conducted and that Japan circulate a trade data survey questionnaire by mid-October, with responses to be submitted to Japan by the end of 1995. The meeting agreed also that member economies be encouraged to submit views as soon as possible on priority areas to facilitate a discussion on the selection of priority areas at the first meeting of the SCSC in 1996.

10. The meeting agreed to seek the advice of PASC on priority areas.

11. The meeting noted the progress report by Singapore on an APEC Guide for Alignment of Standards with International Standards and welcomed the arrangements made for Singapore to work with PASC and interested members (Australia, Japan). Singapore also gave further details of the Regional Seminars on Electromagnetic Compatibility (in August 1-2, 1996) and on Environmental Management Standards (in March 1997) (SCSC III.3.h/TKY-059). Members were requested to nominate speakers for the EMC seminar by mid-October 1995.

Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies

12. The guests from the Specialist Regional Bodies provided information on their core activities giving particular emphasis to the strong networks and linkages established among themselves. The degree of coordination and cooperation between the Bodies was emphasized as a key outcome from the recognition that many of their activities were complementary and interdependent.

13. The Sub-Committee noted that the Specialist Regional Bodies have agreed to hold a

series of workshops around the region aimed at improving the level of understanding of the work of the technical infrastructure represented by the Bodies. The first of these workshops is planned for late 1996. The Sub-Committee supported the efforts of the Specialist Regional Bodies in support of SCSC objectives and asked New Zealand, as shepherd, to keep it informed of developments.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements in the Voluntary Sectors

14. The Sub-Committee noted the paper prepared by New Zealand (SCSC III.5/TKY-060). The meeting welcomed the program of activities of the Specialist Regional Bodies as detailed in the report as supporting APEC objectives. The meeting noted that the Specialist Regional Bodies were developing a document of common principles for mutual recognition arrangements.

15. The meeting agreed to commend through the CTI to the Ministerial Meeting the work of the Specialist Regional Bodies for securing MRAs in the voluntary sector, in line with APEC objectives.

16. The meeting also agreed that New Zealand report on further progress to the SCSC at its next meeting.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements in the Regulatory Sectors

17. The meeting considered the Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Experts Meetings on MRAs for Food Products (SCSC III.6(REV)/TKY-084) and Toys (SCSC III 6b/TKY-061) and noted the significant progress that was made at both Experts Meetings. It agreed to support the direction and future work programs and action plans that had been adopted at the Experts Meetings.

18. In particular, the meeting welcomed the progress made by the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Experts Meeting on MRAs for Food Products in developing a series of guidelines for mutual recognition arrangements on conformity assessment for foods. The SCSC noted that interested member economies, taking into account the principles embodied in the guidelines, are to undertake work with a view to developing a general ("umbrella") multilateral MRA for food products.

19. The SCSC noted in relation to the report of the SC-EMM (Toys) that work to date indicated that, because most economies do not have mandatory third party certification requirements, the utility of MRAs in the area of toys may be limited at this stage. It was therefore unlikely that any pilot MRA on toys would be concluded in the near future. This would be taken into account when the Long Term Action Plan came up for review. The SCSC noted, however, that some individual economies have indicated a wish to pursue MRAs on a bilateral or plurilateral basis.

20. The SCSC noted also, and supported, the work that is to be undertaken on developing a possible arrangement on information exchange on toy safety and agreed that this was a valuable extension of the work program.

21. The meeting noted a report from Canada on the workshop that is to be held 21-23 January 1996 on good manufacturing practices for bulk pharmaceuticals for the purpose of confidence building and information exchange (SCSC III.6.c(REV)/TKY-079).

Development of Technical Infrastructure

22. The meeting considered the Australian paper on the Initial Report on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation - Technical Infrastructure Development Survey (SCSC III.1.b/TKY-052) noting the input that had been made by Singapore, New Zealand and Malaysia to the development of the Survey and the preparation of the Report. The meeting also considered a separate paper from Australia (SCSC III.1.a/TKY-051) which summarized the findings of the report and proposed a number of recommendations in relation to future action in response to the survey.

23. The meeting acknowledged that, even though the results were of a preliminary nature and would be improved by additional responses, there was sufficient information in the report to provide useful guidance for SCSC members. It was agreed that member economies submit by mid-December any amendments, revisions, or updates to the report to Australia for inclusion in a revised report to be brought forward for consideration by the first SCSC meeting in 1996.

24. The meeting welcomed the efforts of those Specialist Regional Bodies who were still in the process of conducting needs analysis among their constituents and encouraged them to complete that work as soon as possible. The meeting agreed that the results of these projects should be incorporated by Australia in the revised report.

25. The meeting noted the preliminary findings and agreed that member economies take them into account when developing technical cooperation or assistance programs and when developing a mid-term program to improve technical infrastructure by the year 2000. The meeting noted in particular (i) the recommendation by the APMP relating to the need for capital investment in equipment, facilities, systems, and personnel for establishing and maintaining physical measurement systems; and (ii) there is a need for training of personnel in all facets of the technical infrastructure, including physical measurement, laboratory accreditation, accreditation of quality systems certification/registration, and standards writing. The meeting agreed on the desirability of attachment training and the development of competency-based training programs.

26. The meeting noted Japan's intention to put forward a proposal for the provision of training courses for officials of governmental agencies responsible for standards writing, measurements and conformity assessment as an initial project of proposed Partners for

Progress (PFP) initiative.

Transparency

27. The USA volunteered to serve as shepherd for the area of Transparency as described in the Medium and Long Term Action Plan. The Sub-Committee welcomed the USA's offer and requested that it, together with any interested economies, present a work program at the next meeting of the SCSC with a view to conducting a survey on Transparency in 1996.

Other Business

28. The Republic of the Philippines was elected 1996 chair of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance with strong support. The Philippines nominated Japan and Australia as vice-chairs, and both agreed to serve in that capacity.

29. The Chair closed the meeting by noting the significant progress made by the Sub-Committee during this, its first year of activity.