

**Report of the First Meeting of the
APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)
Manila, 13-14 February 1996**

The First SCSC meeting for 1996 was held on 13 - 14 February in Manila, Philippines. The meeting was attended by representatives of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and United States of America. The APEC Secretariat also attended. A representative of the Asia Pacific Metrology Programme (APMP) Secretariat was also present as guest.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Jesus L. Motoomull, Director, Bureau of Product Standards, Philippines.

The meeting considered the following papers:

- APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Terms of Reference for Reporting Member Economies' Contributions and Special and Collective Actions (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 4 ToR Rev/RP/Feb. 13)
- Report of Survey on Electrical and Electronic Appliances (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 5.5.1/WP 1/JPN/Feb.13)
- Report of Survey on Food Labelling (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 5.5.2/WP 2/AUS/Feb. 13)
- Report of Survey on uPVC Pipes and Fittings for Water Supply and General Use (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 5.5.3/WP 3/ROK/Feb. 13)
- Report of Survey on Rubber Products (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 5.5.4/WP 4/MAS/Feb. 13)
- Consolidated Reports on Case Studies (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 5/Con R/JPN/Feb.13)
- Proposal for Selection of Priority Areas to Align APEC Economies Standards with International Standards (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 6/WP 5/JPN/Feb.13)
- Proposal on the Procedure for Selecting Priority Areas for Alignment with International Standards ((APEC 96/CTI SC 1 6/WP 5 Rev/JPN/Feb.14)

- Arrangement for Exchange of Information on Toy Safety (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 7/WP 6/AUS/Feb.13)
- Safety Standards Requirements for Toys (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 7/WP 6A/AUS/Feb.13)
- Report of Experts Meeting on Plurilateral MRAs on Food Products (APEC 96/CTI SC1 8/WP 7/AUS/Feb.13)
- Identifying New Sectors for Multilateral Work on Mutual Recognition Arrangements on Conformity Assessment (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 9/WP 8/AUS/Feb. 13)
- APEC Standards and Conformance Subcommittee Seminar on Good Manufacturing Practices-Bulk Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 1/R/CDA/Feb.14)
- Seminar on TBT and SPS Agreements (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 2.2.1/Prg R1/AUS/Feb.14)
- APEC Seminar on Electromagnetic Compatibility (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 2.2.2/Prg R2/SIN/Feb. 14)
- APEC Guide for Alignment with International Standards (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 2.2.3/Prg R3/SIN/Feb. 13)
- Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 3/WP 9/NZ/Feb.14)
- Technical Infrastructure Development (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 4/WP 10/AUS/Feb.14)
- APEC/PFP Project Proposal on Standards and Conformity Assessment Schemes (APEC 96/CTI SC1 5/WP 11/JPN/Feb. 13)
- Project to Assess Availability and Access to Standards, Regulations and Conformity Assessment Requirements in the APEC Economies (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 6/WP 12/AUS/Feb. 14)
- Regional Forum for Laboratories Involved in Chemical and Microbiological Analysis (APEC 96/CTI SC 1 7/AUS/Feb. 14)

Terms of Reference and Format for Action Plans

The meeting adopted the revised format proposed by the Philippines for the reporting of SCSC's Collective Actions and member economies' contributions to these collective actions as well as special actions. Member economies will submit their initial reports to the Philippines by **15 April 1996** which will be summarized and circulated to member economies by **early May 1996**.

Consolidated Report and Case Studies Reports on Alignment with International Standards

The SCSC considered revised drafts of the Consolidated Report and four (4) Case Study Reports on Electrical and Electronic Appliances, Food Labelling, Plastic Products and Rubber Products which were prepared by lead economies namely, Japan, Australia, Korea, and Malaysia. The SCSC members reached agreement on the revised reports, taking note of some specific comments which should be incorporated in the recommendations in those reports.

The Chairman asked Japan to circulate finalized reports by **15 April 1996** to all members for confirmation prior to their publication.

Priority Areas for Alignment with International Standards

The meeting discussed the Japanese proposal on selection of priority areas for alignment with international standards. The meeting agreed that it is necessary to take into consideration factors other than trade value for selection of priority areas. Accordingly, the following criteria for selection of priority areas for alignment with international standards were formulated and endorsed by the meeting:

- Perceived value of alignment in terms of reducing costs and/or increasing regional trade flows:
 - that standards or the absence thereof create a barrier/obstacle to trade that would be alleviated/lowered if economies were to align to international standards
 - the extent to which the development of new international standards, would reduce cost and create mutual trade benefits

(non-alignment barriers to trade can be identified, in part, through consultation with business)
- The significance of existing trade flows;
- Interest among APEC member economies;

- The product groups are specific enough to be manageable, yet broad enough to represent significant trade opportunities;
- Feasibility of alignment.

The meeting urged member-economies to submit their proposals for priority areas with supporting information to Japan by **22 March 1996**. Japan was requested to circulate by **end April 1996** a proposal based on these inputs as well as responses to a survey questionnaire on each member economy's export value in HS 4-digit groupings belonging to HS 84 and 85. To keep member economies informed of the submission of proposals, they were urged to circulate copies of the proposals to other member economies when they submit the proposals to Japan.

Partners for Progress

Japan presented a paper entitled "APEC/PFP Project Proposal on Standards and Conformity Assessment Schemes", and invited comments on the paper with a view to seeking approval of the SCSC. The Committee endorsed the Japanese proposal and urged member economies to inform Japan by **end April 1996** of their comments and their willingness to participate in and/or contribute to the project. Japan will submit a progress report on the PFP project at the SCSC meeting in **May 1996**.

Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety

The meeting considered the discussion paper and the draft arrangement for the exchange of information on toy safety. The meeting agreed that member economies would provide their final comments to Australia by the **end of March 1996**, with a view to the Arrangement being tabled for acceptance by the SCSC at its **May 1996** meeting.

The meeting noted in relation to member economies participation or involvement in the work of the ISO on toy safety, that the next meeting of the ISO Technical Committee 181 is scheduled in October 1996 in Florida, USA.

Report of the Experts Meeting on MRAs on Food Products

The meeting considered the Report of the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Experts Meeting on MRAs for Food Products (SC-EMM (Food Products) (Document APEC 96/CTI SC1 8/R/AUS/Feb 13) held in Manila on 12 February 1996. The SCSC welcomed the progress made by the SC-EMM (Food Products) at its meeting and endorsed the decisions taken regarding the future work program. It noted that the MRA is to be redrafted by Australia, in consultation with New Zealand and the United States, and circulated in **early March** for comment by **15 April 1996**. A further redraft will be circulated in the **first week of May** for consideration by the SC-EMM at its **May 1996** meeting.

The SCSC also noted that member economies are to nominate, by **end April 1996**, particular sectors they may wish to participate in.

The meeting endorsed the recommendation that the Guidelines on the development of MRAs in the food sector be published as APEC documents, as suggested at the Tokyo meeting. To this end, Australia will circulate the revised Guidelines, taking into account the comments received to date from member economies, for approval at the **May 1996** meeting of the SCSC's Experts Group on MRAs on Food Products. At that time consideration will be given to putting forward a submission to the APEC Budget and Administration Committee (BAC) to fund the publication of these documents.

Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements

The meeting endorsed the criteria proposed in the paper on Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements (Document APEC 96/CTI SC1 9/WP8/AUS/Feb. 13) for identifying new sectors for possible multilateral mutual recognition arrangement discussions.

The meeting agreed that member economies should submit to Australia, by **15 April 1996**, any nominations of sectors for consideration as priority areas for the future development of MRAs and that these nominations should address each of the agreed criteria.

Australia is to bring forward for consideration at the **May 1996** meeting of the SCSC a paper on the nominated sectors, and a draft questionnaire on conformity assessment regimes. The intention is that the questionnaires are to be completed and forwarded to Australia, by **15 July**

1996, to enable a further paper on priority areas to be prepared for consideration at the August 1996 meeting of the SCSC.

Report on Seminar on Bulk Pharmaceuticals

Canada reported on the seminar on bulk pharmaceuticals held in Vancouver, Canada in January 1996. It was noted that the seminar had resulted in the creation of a working group and the setting up of a number of objectives supporting elements of the Osaka Declaration calling for the promotion of regulatory system transparency and removal of trade and investment distortions arising from domestic regulations. Australia noted that some matters arising from the Vancouver seminar which could be considered at the proposed APEC/Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention meeting in September 1996 in Canberra, Australia.

Update on Seminar on TBT and SPS Agreements

The United States recommended that the TBT/SPS Seminar be rescheduled for May 1996, to be held back to back with the next SCSC and related Experts Group meetings. The SCSC approved tentative dates of May 14 to 16, pending availability of appropriate WTO experts and final approval of the schedule for the May SCSC meetings.

The United States will continue to accept recommendations on the program, and is particularly interested in hearing from member economies who have an interest in providing experts to act as presenters. They will work to finalize plans and will inform members of progress in setting up the seminar.

Update on Seminar on Electromagnetic Compatibility

Singapore updated the meeting on the status of the APEC EMC Seminar to be held in Singapore on 1 and 2 August 1996. The meeting approved the preliminary program and noted the work schedule for preparation of the seminar. Member economies agreed to indicate their interest in participating in the EMC display by 15 March 1996.

Update on APEC Guide for Alignment with International Standards

Singapore updated the meeting on the status of the APEC Guide. The meeting noted that in the light of the tight time frame in the work schedule, it was necessary to alert the PASC Standing Committee members of the project and the actions that will be expected of them.

The draft APEC Guide shall be discussed during the SCSC meeting in **August 1996**.

Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies

New Zealand briefed the meeting on progress and development of a conference aimed at improving understanding of the work of the standards and conformance technical infrastructure represented by the Specialist Regional Bodies. Dr. Angela Samuel of the APMP Secretariat briefed the meeting on the status of funding an organizational arrangements for the proposed conference.

The meeting strongly endorsed the proposed conference, noting the contribution the conference would make to the achievement of the SCSC's work program. The importance of continuing to develop a close relationship between the SCSC and the Specialist Regional Bodies was stressed. It was also suggested that the timing of the proposed conference (30 September - 02 October 1996) would enable it to provide input to the development of priorities for further work on technical infrastructure by SCSC and APEC member economies.

The meeting:

agreed that the Conference will make an important contribution to the achievement of APEC objectives for the development of the standards and conformance technical infrastructure to member economies.

agreed that funding should be sought from the APEC Central Fund for the conference as an APEC activity.

requested New Zealand to develop a funding proposal for expenses which are allowable under the APEC Central Fund, to be submitted to the Budget and Administration Committee (BAC) Meeting on **26-27 March 1996** through the CTI Chair with the understanding that the proposal will be endorsed by the CTI at its earliest session after the BAC meeting.

Technical Infrastructure Development Mid-Term Work Plan

The meeting considered the Discussion Paper and Report on the Technical Infrastructure Development Survey (Document No. APEC 96/CTI SC1 4/WP 10/AUS/Feb.14)

The meeting

noted the key findings of the Technical Infrastructure Survey;

agreed that member economies, when considering the development of either bilateral or multilateral development assistance programs, should take into account the needs identified in the Survey;

endorsed the specific recommendations of the APMP in relation to the importance of investment by members in equipment, facilities, systems and personnel necessary to establish and maintain physical measurement systems and take due account of the members' needs in this area when developing assistance programs.

supported the interim recommendations of the APLAC Study Tour in relation to:

- increasing participation in and support for the regional intercomparisons/proficiency testing programs for both calibration and testing laboratories;
- the need for equivalence in the process by which laboratories are accredited; and
- the proposal that APEC members act cooperatively by enabling individual economies to access and utilize the laboratory accreditation programs in other member economies.

endorsed the need for training of personnel in all facets of the technical infrastructure, and in particular:

- physical measurement;
- laboratory accreditation;
- quality systems certification; and
- standards writing; and

agreed that members should take advantage of opportunities that may arise for cooperation in the specific area of training , particularly for:

- training courses or attachment training of staff (both secretariat and technical);
- development of competency-based training programs; and
- access to measurement audit equipment and participation in proficiency testing programs.

The meeting agreed on the following process for developing a mid-term program to improve technical infrastructure by the year 2000:

- Member economies are to advise Australia, by **15 April 1996**, of their priority needs based on their perception of what can realistically be achieved by 2000
- the advice of the Specialist Regional Bodies is also to be sought
- the developed member economies are to provide advice regarding their capabilities (taking into account resource constraints) in terms of providing assistance in the implementation of the mid-term program
- Australia is to prepare a preliminary draft Technical Infrastructure Development program, in the light of advice received from member economies and Specialist Regional Bodies, for consideration by SCSC at its **May 1996** meeting.
- a redrafted program, revised as necessary to take into account member economies' and Specialist Regional Bodies' comments, will be submitted to the **August 1996** SCSC meeting and subsequently to the Conference of the Specialist Regional Bodies (September 30 October 2 1996) for their further consideration, with a view to the mid-term program being finalized at the SCSC's **October 1996** meeting.

Project to Assess Availability and Access to Standards, Regulations and Conformity Assessment Requirements

The United States presented an initial concept paper on the project and asked members to submit comments on the concept by the **end of March 1996**. The next step will be the development of a survey questionnaire, in consultation with PASC, by **mid-April 1996**. Evaluation of responses and preliminary recommendations should be available for consideration by the SCSC at its **final meeting in 1996**.

Regional Forum for Laboratories Involved in Chemical and Microbiological Analysis

The meeting noted the proposal and agreed that member economies should forward any comments or questions on it to Australia by **15 March 1996**. It was agreed that Australia would re-submit the proposal, with further details as appropriate, for consideration by the SCSC at its **May 1996 meeting**.