

**Report of the Second Meeting of the
APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)
Cebu, Philippines, 18-19 May 1996**

The Second SCSC meeting for 1996 was held on 18-19 May in Cebu, Philippines. The meeting was attended by 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, Papua New Guinea, The Republic of the Philippines, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, and The United States of America. The APEC Secretariat also attended.

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

The meeting considered the following documents:

- Report on Status of Publication of Case Studies on Alignment with International Standards (APEC '96/CTI SCII/4/Prg R1/JPN/May 18)
- Update on APEC Guide of Alignment with International Standards (APEC '96/CTI SCII/5/Prg R2A/SIN/May 18)
- Update on APEC Guide of Alignment with International Standards (APEC '96/CTI SCII/5/Prg R2B/AUS/May 18)
- Additional Priority Areas for Alignment with International Standards (APEC '96/CTI SCII/6/Prg R3/JPN/May 18)
- Report on Partners for Progress (APEC '96/CTI SCII/7/Prg R4/JPN/May 18)
- Report on Experts Meeting on Plurilateral MRAs on Food Products (APEC '96/CTI SCII/8/R1/AUS/May 18)

- Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety (APEC '96/CTI SCII/9/Prg R5/AUS/May 18)
- Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements (APEC '96/CTI SCII/10/Prg R6/AUS/May 18)
- Update on Seminar on Electromagnetic Compatibility (APEC '96/CTI SCII/1/Prg R7/SIN/May 19)
- Update on Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies (APEC '96/CTI SCII/2/Prg R8/NZ/May 19)
- Technical Infrastructure Program (APEC '96/CTI SCII/4/Prg R9/AUS/May 19)
- Regional Forum for Laboratories (APEC '96/CTI SCII/6/Prg R11/AUS/May 17)
- Discussion of Member Economies Submission of Action Plan (Collective actions of SCSC and members' contributions and special actions) (APEC '96/CTI SCII/7/WP3/RP/May 19)
- HRD Project vis-a-vis SCSC Activity (APEC '96/CTI SCII/8/Others/THA/May 19)

Report on Status of Publication of Case Studies on Alignment with International Standards

The meeting considered the Japanese paper which proposed to include some small amendments on the revised report circulated to all SCSC members on **10 April 1996**.

The meeting approved this proposal and agreed to take the next step for the publication of the Report on Case Studies on Alignment with International Standards.

The meeting noted that the recommendations of the case study reports should be used by APEC members as guidelines to align with international standards.

The meeting highly appreciated the considerable efforts undertaken by the four member economies, Australia, Japan, Korea and Malaysia to complete the report.

Update on the APEC Guide for Alignment of Standards with International Standards

Singapore updated the meeting on progress on the APEC Guide and the decision made by PASC to forward the draft APEC Guide to the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB).

The issues arising from member economies' comments on the draft Guide were discussed and decisions made as follows:

- while harmonization would be the longer term aim of SCSC, the call for alignment, in the APEC Guide, would be retained.
- the phrase "and with deviations clearly identified" would be added to the definition of "alignment with international standards" in paragraph 3 of the APEC Statement.
- The importance of alignment of technical regulations was recognized. New Zealand was encouraged to take the lead in that area of work as an exercise separate from that on alignment with international standards.
- The current ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21 should be used by member economies in their alignment efforts before the revision of the guides is finalized by ISO/IEC.
- Member economies were to submit any further comments on the draft Guide to Singapore by **26 May 1996**. All comments on the APEC Statement would be considered by the Working Group and a new revised draft will be circulated to member economies for further comments or confirmation. Comments on ISO/IEC Guides 3 and 21 would be forwarded to ISO TMB through PASC as inputs for the revision.

Additional Priority Areas for Alignment with International Standards

The meeting considered Japan's proposal for selection of priority areas for alignment with international standards and selected the following priority areas based on the case studies:

- Airconditioner, Television, Refrigerator;
- Food Labelling (Codex General Standards for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods);
- Rubber Gloves and Rubber Condoms

In the meantime, there was no consensus on the selection of Unplasticized PVC Pipes and Fittings for Water Supply and for General Use as one priority area, however, this could be considered at a later stage.

The meeting also agreed to continue considering additional priority areas for alignment with international standards and requested member economies to submit to Japan by **15 July 1996** proposals for further priority areas with supporting information/justification for their inclusion based on the agreed criteria for selection.

Japan was asked to compile the members' submissions and submit the proposal for additional priority areas for consideration by SCSC at its August 1996 meeting. It was also suggested that consultation with the Specialist Regional Bodies such as PASC would be useful in the process of selecting priority areas.

Partners for Progress

Japan presented to the meeting a revised version of the "APEC/PFP Project Proposal on Standards and Conformity Assessment Schemes". Japan reported that the revisions to the report presented at the SCSC meeting in February 1996 were made to accommodate comments received from member economies. The meeting endorsed the proposal and urged

Japan to take into account the various comments made with respect to the development of the course curriculum.

Report on Experts Meeting on Plurilateral MRAs on Food Products

Australia presented a report of the Experts Meeting on the Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Conformity Assessment of Food Products which was held on 17 May 1996. The SCSC endorsed the decisions of the Experts Meeting and in particular that:

- Australia in consultation with other interested member economies, would prepare a further draft of the MRA taking into account the comments made at the meeting. This redraft would be circulated to member economies by the end of **June 1996** for their comments;
- member economies should submit to Australia by **05 July 1996**, any further nominations they might wish to make as to possible Sectoral Annexes for future MRA discussions. All nominations (including those already submitted) are to address the agreed criteria.
- Australia would bring forward for consideration at the **August 1996** meeting of the SC-EMM a report on the nominations;
- In relation to the project on food recall,
 - member economies forward to Australia by end of **June 1996** information on their food recall systems and their international obligations to exchange relevant information;
 - a small Working Group be established to undertake the tasks identified in the attachment to the proposal (Document APEC96/CTI SCII 5/WP3/SC EMM Fd Prod/May 17) and report to the SC-EMM for Food Products; and

- Australia present a report on the progress of the project at the **October 1996** meeting of the SC-EMM.

Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety

The meeting discussed the draft of the Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety prepared by Australia as lead economy and made comments on possible improvements to it. Australia undertook to prepare a further draft of the Arrangement taking into account the comments made at the meeting. Those comments are to be forwarded in writing to Australia by **01 June 1996**.

Australia would then circulate a revised draft for comment. Any comments on that document are to be sent to Australia by **01 July 1996** to enable Australia to prepare and circulate a final draft well in advance of the **August 1996** meeting of the SCSC. The intention is to finalize and endorse this Arrangement at that meeting.

Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements

The meeting noted the nominations put forward by Indonesia and Chinese Taipei and agreed that further time was needed to enable member economies to consider their positions and make such further nominations that they might wish to make. Accordingly, the meeting agreed that member economies would submit to Australia by **15 July 1996** any further nominations for new MRA priority areas and that these nominations, together with those already proposed, should address the agreed criteria.

Member economies would also submit to Australia by **15 July 1996** any comments on the draft Mutual Recognition Arrangement Questionnaire which was submitted by Australia.

The intention is that the **August 1996** meeting of the SCSC would agree on a short list of possible sectors and that member economies would then be asked to supply information sought in the questionnaire relating to those short listed sectors to enable the considered decision to be taken on additional priority areas for future work.

The meeting further noted that they committed to identify in 1996, new priority areas for the development of MRAs but that the commencement and target dates of this work together with the forum in which any discussions might take place were matters that were yet to be decided.

Report on Development of 'Model' MRA on Automotive Standards within Transportation Working Group

An Australian representative of the APEC Transportation Working Group (TPT-WG) presented a report on the TPT-WG's activities in its Road Transport Harmonization Project and the development of a draft "Model" Mutual Recognition Agreement concerning Regulations, Standards and Technical Requirements for Certain Road Vehicles, Equipment and Parts noting the potential for applicability of the draft 'model' in other industry sectors. The representative foreshadowed that developments on the 'model' MRA would be presented to the SCSC at its next meeting.

The meeting noted the TPT-WG representative's request that SCSC members encourage their respective transportation officials to make comments on the draft by **12 July 1996**.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements in the Voluntary Sector

New Zealand presented a progress report on work by the Specialist Regional Bodies on initiating and extending mutual recognition arrangements between conformity assessment

bodies in the voluntary sector. The meeting noted that with the guidance of SCSC the Specialist Regional Bodies had developed ambitious objectives and actions for achieving these objectives, and there had been positive progress in achieving these objectives.

The importance of such arrangements in facilitating the acceptance of test reports in both the regulated and business sectors was noted. In addition, it was recognised that mutual recognition must be based on a competent technical infrastructure, and the development needs in this area would be discussed under a subsequent agenda item.

It was recognised that as work on mutual recognition in the voluntary sector has been undertaken by the Specialist Regional Bodies in accordance with the objectives of APEC as reflected in the Osaka Action Agenda, these Bodies should have the opportunity to report directly to the SCSC on progress and any factors which might be affecting the achievement of their objectives. Equally, the SCSC should have the opportunity to comment on the work of the Specialist Regional Bodies.

It was agreed that:

- the Specialist Regional Bodies would report at each meeting of the SCSC on progress in achieving their objectives in relation to mutual recognition in the voluntary sector, and any factors which might be affecting the achievement of these objectives, in a format to be agreed between the Specialist Regional Bodies and New Zealand;
- the Chairman would invite representatives of the Specialist Regional Bodies to present their reports directly to the SCSC, and participate as guests of the Committee.

Update on Seminar on Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)

Singapore reported on the progress in the preparation for the APEC Seminar on EMC. Member economies were requested to assist in distributing the seminar brochure, to be

dispatched to them by **end of May 1996**, to relevant government agencies, associations and industries.

New Zealand emphasized the importance of involving regulators and industries in SCSC's work and asked for full participation by member economies in the seminar. The Chair similarly urged member economies to fully support the EMC seminar.

Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies

New Zealand reported that APEC funding had been received for the APEC Conference on Standards and Conformance, which has been organized by the Specialist Regional Bodies and would be held in Manila from **30 September to 01 October 1996**.

The SCSC commended the Specialist Regional Bodies for this initiative, and encouraged full participation by relevant and interested organizations within the region. Advice was sought by some members on the process which had been undertaken to select speakers, and New Zealand agreed to communicate this to the SCSC.

Report on Seminar on WTO TBT/SPS Agreements

U.S.A. reported on the WTO TBT/SPS Seminar held in Manila, Philippines on **14-15 May 1996**. One hundred fifteen participants from 17 APEC member economies attended the seminar. The meeting commended the U.S.A. for the successful conduct of said seminar. Likewise, the meeting acknowledged the WTO Secretariat for the support extended by providing resource speakers for the seminar.

Mid-Term Technical Infrastructure Development Program

Australia presented a draft Mid-term Technical Infrastructure Development Program which had been developed on the basis of information received from five member economies and four of the Specialist Regional Bodies.

The meeting:

- noted the preliminary draft Technical Infrastructure Development Program prepared by Australia and agreed that member economies should provide their contributions and any additional comments to Australia by **14 June 1996**; and
- agreed that the Technical Infrastructure Development Program might also address issues relating to the institutional infrastructure necessary to support developments in the technical infrastructure of member economies.

The Chair stressed the need for member economies to provide their contributions and comments by the agreed deadline so that the revised Mid-term Technical Infrastructure Development Program could be developed and circulated to member economies well in advance of the August meeting of the SCSC.

Transparency Survey to Assess Availability and Access to Standards, Regulations and Conformity Assessment Requirements

Following the United States report on comments received on the proposed survey on a standards and conformance database, the SCSC endorsed the US Proposal to:

- a) Circulate by **early June 1996**, a draft survey for review by SCSC members, PASC, and other Specialist Regional Bodies along with summary information on available database;

- b) Circulate in **early July 1996** the revised survey, which takes into consideration the comments received, with a view to obtaining responses prior to the next SCSC meeting.

Regional Forum for Laboratories

The meeting considered a paper on the establishment of a new regional forum for representatives from laboratories in the APEC region.

The meeting requested that Australia approach the Specialist Regional Bodies, particularly APLAC and APLMF, to obtain their views on the proposal and to ensure that there is no overlap between the proposed new forum with the roles of the existing Specialist Regional Bodies. The meeting also asked Australia to circulate an illustrative agenda of the forum to give potential participants a better appreciation of its intended scope. It was agreed that the matter would be considered further at the August meeting of the SCSC.

Discussion of Member Economies Submission of Action Plan (Collective Action of SCSC and Member Contributions and Special Actions)

The Philippines presented the submissions of contributions and special actions by member economies.

The meeting agreed on the desirability to publish these actions upon their finalization by member economies and after the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November 1996. The Philippines was asked to coordinate with SOM to avoid duplication of publication. The meeting also agreed that the Philippines will coordinate the monitoring of the implementation of the collective actions of member economies and will report to the SCSC on the progress of their implementation.

It was also agreed that the summarized action plan will be re-circulated by the Philippines to member economies by **end of June 1996** for further comment.

The SCSC Chair urged member economies who have not yet responded to the survey to submit to the Philippines, their contributions and special actions.

Other Matters

Thailand informed the meeting that a questionnaire (APEC/HRD/BMN-IQAS Project) developed by the HRD Working Group covering ISO 9000, ISO 14000, product certification, metrology and calibration services was circulated to member economies. The questionnaire also included activities like testing and accreditation. Such activities had already been surveyed by Australia under the Technical Infrastructure Project of the SCSC.

The meeting agreed that SCSC propose to SOM through the CTI that this seeming duplication be examined with a view to clarify the scope of work of HRD especially in areas which are already covered by SCSC or other Working Groups.

The meeting also agreed to recommend to the SOM that action be taken to ensure that the standards and conformance-related work being undertaken in the various APEC fora including the Working Groups is coordinated. As part of the process, it is important to ensure that there is full exchange of information between the other Working Groups and the SCSC.

The meeting also noted the report by Mexico on TBT notification (NOM-050 SCFI-1994) concerning labelling of food and non-alcoholic beverages effective 01 November 1996.