

**Report of the First Meeting of the
APEC Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC)
Victoria, Canada, 31 January – 01 February 1997**

The first SCSC meeting for 1997 was held on 31 January - 01 February 1997 in Victoria, Canada. 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. Mr. Christopher Butler, Chair of the Committee on Trade and Investment was present. The APEC Secretariat also attended.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Richard Lafontaine, Chair, Standards Council of Canada.

The meeting considered the following documents:

- Chair's Opening Remarks (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/028)
- Draft Agenda (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/001)
- Draft Annotated Agenda (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/002)
- Report on the Outcomes of SOM I and the 1st CTI (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/029)
- Report of the SCSC Chair to the CTI (97/SOM1/CTI/005)
- Draft SCSC Work Program Outline for 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/003)
- Draft SCSC Work Program (1997) (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/030)
- Implementation and Evolution of Collective Action Plans (CAPs) (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/004)
- Transparency Sub-Work Program for 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/005)
- Report on the Results of the Transparency Survey (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/006)
- Proposal on Compilation of Information on Labelling Laws, Regulations and Standards in APEC Region (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/007)
- Cooperation on Technical Infrastructure Development - Work Program for 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/008)
- Progress Report of Partners for Progress (PFP) Project (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/009)
- Course on APEC/Partners for Progress (PFP) Project Training Programme in the Field of Standards and Conformity Assessment Schemes (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/010)

- Draft Request for Proposal: Feasibility Study and Survey on Technical Infrastructural Development for Information Network and Services (CTI 06/97) (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/011)
- Coordination of the Project Between SCSC and HRD WG (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/012)
- HRD WG - Attachment (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/031)
- Mutual Recognition on Conformity Assessment: Sub-Work Program for 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/013)
- Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/014)
- Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements - Appendix "B" (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/027)
- Implementation of Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety and APEC Food MRA (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/015)
- Supplementary Reference Material on Testing and Process Control (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/016)
- Comments on APEC Food MRA Reference Material (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/034)
- Development of Model Mutual Recognition Agreement on Automotive Within Transportation Working Group (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/017)
- Mutual Recognition in the Voluntary Sector Sub-Work Program for 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/018)
- Alignment with International Standards Work Programme 1997 (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/019)
- Alignment with International Standards: Building and Construction Work Program (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/020)
- SCSC Guidelines for the Preparation, Adoption and Review of Technical Regulations (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/021)
- Update on APEC Seminar on Environmental Management Standards (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/022)
- "Reprogramming" Proposal of the APEC Operational Account Project (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/039)
- Draft Report on 1st APEC Conference on Standards and Conformance (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/023)
- Relationship Between SCSC and the Specialist Regional Bodies in Standards and Conformance (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/024)
- Draft Terms of Reference for an SCSC/EC Dialogue (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/025)
- Terms of Reference for an SCSC/EC Dialogue (1997) (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/036)
- Coordination with Other APEC Fora (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/026)
- SCSC Contact List (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/032)
- APEC Voluntary Action Plan for Alignment with International Standards (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/033)
- The Format of Progress in Alignment with International Standards in Priority Areas (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/038)

1. Opening

The Chair extended a warm welcome to all delegates to the 1st SCSC meeting for 1997 in Victoria.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting adopted the draft agenda as presented.

3. Introduction of the new Vice-Chairs

The Chair introduced the new Vice-Chairs: Mr. Jesus Motoomull (in absentia), Director, Bureau of Product Standards, Republic of the Philippines and Mr. A. Aziz Mat, Director-General, Department of Standards Malaysia.

4. Business Arrangements**5. Report on the Outcomes of 1st SOM and 1st CTI**

The Chair presented a report on the outcomes of SOM 1 and the 1st CTI. The CTI Chair was in attendance and invited to provide supplementary comments.

6. Draft SCSC Work Program Outline for 1997

Canada introduced the draft SCSC work program for 1997. It was noted that SCSC would finalize its work program for 1997 taking into consideration discussions under individual agenda items. The work program will include an Outline together with a matrix setting out more specific details relating to work description, objectives, time line and required outputs in 1997. The work program will be organized on the basis of the four objectives of the Osaka Action Agenda.

7. Implementation and Evolution of CAPs

Canada submitted a proposal for reporting on the progress of implementation and evolution of action plans, drawing on a draft proposal of the Philippines presented at the 4th SCSC in Manila. The Chair reported on the guidance requested from the CTI in relation to the implementation and monitoring of action plans. CTI advised that the SCSC was at liberty to monitor programs in a manner suited to its needs.

For 1997, the Sub-Committee agreed that member economies should submit an initial draft report on the status of implementation of their CAP actions to the 2nd SCSC using the format proposed by the Philippines.

Each member economy will submit a second draft for presentation to the 3rd meeting of the SCSC.

In addition, for the third meeting of the SCSC, member economies will provide a revised version of their CAPs based on the format agreed in 1996.

8. Transparency

a) Sub-Work Program for 1997

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

The United States presented the results of the survey on transparency conducted in October 1996. General reaction was positive. Suggestions were made to: collate and distribute the responses; allow member economies to designate a central contact point together with other contact points, if necessary.; ensure information on websites on the Internet be current and accurate; modify recommendations on the use of voluntary international and domestic standards; and update the APEC Standards and Conformance Guide.

The United States rewrote the transparency sub-work program to reflect the recommendations and agreed to edit the recommendations and present them at the next SCSC.

The APEC Secretariat indicated that a budget request is needed to publish a Guide update and include it on the APEC Home page.

b) Preliminary Discussion on Potential TILF Projects

The People's Republic of China (PRC) presented a TILF Project entitled "Proposal on Compilation of Information on Food Labelling Laws, Regulations and Standards in the APEC Region".

The meeting recognized the significance of this initiative and supported in principle the proposed project.

A number of suggestions and comments were made by member economies, including the need to narrow down the scope of the project to make it more manageable. The meeting requested PRC to amend its proposal taking into account the comments provided.

A revised proposal will be submitted at the next SCSC meeting in May.

The APEC Secretariat noted the need to comply with budget guidelines.

9. Cooperation on Technical Infrastructure Development

a) Sub-Work Program for 1997

In introducing the work program, Australia presented a summary of its objectives and expected outcomes.

b) Progress Report on Partners for Progress (PFP) Project

Japan reported on progress in the preparation of the 1996(FY) TILF project "Standards and Conformity Assessment Schemes" which will be held from 19 to 28 March in Malaysia. It was noted that a Japanese mission visited Malaysia from 24 to 29 November last year to consult on the schedule, the detailed content of the curriculum and the progress of the project.

Japan advised that, to date, it received applications from 23 participants and 5 lecturers. Those economies that have not yet submitted applications were requested to send them to Malaysia as soon as possible, but no later than 22 February.

c) Progress Report on the Philippine TILF Project

The SCSC agreed in principle to the Request for Proposal (RFP) on the Philippine project "Feasibility Study and Survey on Technical Infrastructure Development for Information Network Services." The Philippines was requested to liaise closely with the Secretariat and the SCSC Chair on the contract as well as the time frame for the implementation of the project. The Philippines was also requested to clarify the project objectives of institutional surveys and review visits.

d) HRD WG Project in the area of Standards and Conformance

Japan reported on the responses received from member economies to the revised action plan for IQAS project submitted by HRD WG and circulated to SCSC members, which proposed that Phase I (Field surveys and analysis) and Phase II (Seminars and/or conferences) proceed under HRD WG while Phase III (Training Courses) will be jointly conducted by SCSC and HRD WG. After some discussion, the above proposal was agreed upon

together with the understanding that SCSC will forward survey work done in its forum to the HRD WG so that the WG will be able to avoid duplication of work as much as possible. SCSC will also propose to the HRD WG the possible involvement of Specialist Regional Bodies in Phase II.

10. Mutual Recognition of Conformity Assessment in the Regulated Sector

a) **Sub-Work Program for 1997** **Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements**

The meeting considered the paper presented by Australia on "Additional Priority Areas for Mutual Recognition Arrangements". After lengthy deliberation the meeting agreed that:

- "electrical and electronic equipment – safety" would be the next priority area on which work toward a plurilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement would be progressed;
- a meeting of an ad hoc Experts' Group would be convened in conjunction with the next SCSC meeting to be held in May 1997;
- member economies interested in participating in the ad hoc Experts' Group would advise Australia accordingly by 28 February 1997;
- member economies would consider their willingness to act as Convenor of the ad hoc Experts' Group and advise Australia accordingly;
- before the 1st meeting of the ad hoc Experts' Group, interested member economies would exchange further detailed information on their regulatory regimes and conformity assessment systems;
- at the 1st meeting of the ad hoc Experts' Group, members would agree on a work program for the remainder of 1997, with specific attention to deliverables. The meeting would also address a range of issues identified at the SCSC, including further exchange of information, legal status of the arrangement, and mechanisms for the evaluation of technical competence.

The meeting agreed that SCSC Chair would inform Energy WG of the progress of the activities of the ad hoc Experts' Group.

b) Report on Implementation of the APEC MRA on Conformity Assessment of Foods and Food Products and Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety

The APEC Secretariat reported on the implementation of the APEC MRA on Conformity Assessment of Foods and Food products and Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety. The SCSC noted that six member economies had notified the APEC Secretariat of their intentions to participate in Arrangement for the Exchange of Information on Toy Safety.

c) APEC Food MRA Supplementary Material

New Zealand recalled the work which had gone into producing an APEC Food Mutual Recognition Arrangement. The SCSC Meeting in Manila in October 1996 had considered material produced in 1995 during the development of the Food MRA. SCSC had noted that it included information which might be of use to member economies drawing up Food MRA sectoral arrangements. New Zealand had been asked to consult member economies in a process of discarding the subject areas which had been subsequently incorporated in the Food MRA. It had reduced the material to two subject areas - testing, and production and processing controls. Language in the 1995 documents had been updated to ensure compatibility with the Food MRA. The text was to be supplementary to the Food MRA, and would be available through the APEC Secretariat for member economies initiating sectoral arrangements.

However, it had been suggested that the process of discarding might have removed some further useful information from an earlier *General Guidelines* paper. New Zealand and Singapore undertook to incorporate these elements into the Food MRA "Supplementary Material", adding them to the SCSC-endorsed portions on testing and process controls, and to circulate a text to other member economies for approval.

New Zealand also suggested that the Food MRA, Supplementary Material, and (with the Australian convenor's support) the Arrangement for Exchange of Information on Toy Safety be considered for up-loading to the APEC Secretariat home page. In that regard, SCSC asked the APEC Secretariat to check the budgetary implications.

d) APEC MRA on Vehicle Standards

The meeting considered the information paper presented by Australia on the progress to date by the Transportation Working Group (TPT WG) on their development of a "model" MRA. In particular the meeting observed that the draft "model" MRA uses treaty status language. It was agreed that member economies would, through their representative on the TPT WG, provide any comments on the draft "model" MRA.

11. Mutual Recognition in the Voluntary Sector

New Zealand reported on the extensive information provided by the Specialist Regional Bodies at previous meetings of the Sub-Committee and at the 1st APEC Conference on Standards and Conformance in Manila in October 1996.

It was noted however that, in light of the long term nature of this work, it was not appropriate to report progress at each meeting. The Sub-Committee agreed that New Zealand would report at least twice a year, one of which would be the Sub-Committee meeting immediately prior to the final Senior Official Meeting of the year.

It was agreed that New Zealand would report at the next meeting of SCSC in Quebec in the format agreed by member economies in Davao.

12. Alignment with International Standards

**a) Sub-Work Program for 1997
Alignment of Standards in the Area of Building and
Construction Materials**

The meeting considered the proposal presented by Japan on the sub-work program for 1997 on Alignment with International Standards. After some discussion, the meeting agreed on the proposal with the two following modifications:

- The section on identification of priority areas will be changed to read "Within the course of the year, the SCSC will consider the merits of identifying additional priority areas." and,
- The format used for monitoring progress and implementation of alignment in the priority and unilaterally identified areas was modified, and member economies were requested to submit their comments to Japan by 15 February.

The meeting also considered the paper provided by Australia which set out a series of options for carrying out the work program in the area of building and construction standards development. The US commented that in the area of Structural Design of Timber, perhaps US standards in this area could also be considered. Japan also raised concerns about the possible availability of APEC funding that was referred to in the paper and Australia agreed to consult closely with the APEC Secretariat in the early stages of the development of such a proposal. The meeting noted the expression of interest by New Zealand in possibly acting as a convener (possibly of the TG 3 Technical Group), subject to confirmation and Australia's interest in acting as convener of the TG 1 Technical Group.

The meeting agreed that:

- option 3 —Coordinated action, by member economies with the assistance of PASC— was the preferred mechanism for progressing this work item;
- members will advise Australia by 28 February of their interest in participating in the ad hoc Technical Groups;
- members interested in taking on the role of convener of one of these groups were also asked to advise Australia of their interest by 28 February;
- the SCSC Chair will write to the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) Standing Committee seeking their agreement to assist the SCSC in coordinating this work program.

b) Guidelines for the Preparation, Adoption and Review of Technical Regulations

The meeting noted the importance that CTI attached to this issue and its expectation that guidelines would be developed in 1997. Members expressed appreciation for the work done by New Zealand in preparing a first draft set of guidelines.

The Sub-Committee supported the general approach taken to the guidelines. Members agreed to provide comment on the draft, identifying particular areas where more detail is required, to New Zealand by 28 February. New Zealand would redraft the guidelines for the next meeting of SCSC taking into account comments made by member economies.

c) Seminar on Environmental Management Standards

Singapore informed the meeting that seminar fees would not apply to APEC official delegates.

The final brochures for the seminar had been sent to member economies, who were urged to disseminate them and encourage the widest possible participation among industry members. Singapore also urged member economies to help ensure that the CVs of the presenters and the full text of their presentations were submitted by the new deadlines.

New Zealand enquired if members of SRBs from non-APEC member economies could participate in the seminar. The APEC Secretariat requested that such enquiries be submitted to the Secretariat.

d) "Reprogramming" Proposal of the APEC Operational Account Project

The meeting approved the Japanese proposal for reprogramming the APEC Operational Account project #CTI 03/96 ("Report of the Case Studies on Alignment with International Standards in Priority Areas") to the Project on publication of a report on implementation of alignment with International Standards.

13. Report on 1st APEC Conference on Standards and Conformance

New Zealand tabled a final report of the 1st APEC Conference on Standards and Conformance held in Manila, 9-11 October 1996. The Sub-Committee welcomed this report and in doing so agreed to provide comment to the APMP Secretariat, through New Zealand, by 28 February.

In conjunction with the Specialist Regional Bodies, New Zealand was asked to consider the timing of a possible second conference.

The Sub-Committee agreed:

- to open channels of communication with their national bodies in each area of standards and conformance as well as corresponding government agencies and industry and commerce groups to determine how APEC can best address their needs;
- to identify contact points within APEC economies to disseminate information on government decisions related to standards and conformance, to infrastructure groups and relevant trade and industry sectors.

14. Closer Cooperation with Specialist Regional Bodies

New Zealand presented a paper on closer cooperation between the Specialist Regional Bodies and SCSC. In considering this paper, the Sub-Committee addressed ways in which the effectiveness of the relationship could be improved recognising the technical expertise that the Specialist Regional Bodies can bring to the work of the SCSC in an advisory capacity.

As a practical way of addressing these relationship issues, the SCSC agreed, in principle, to the holding of a Round Table discussion associated with the last meeting in 1997, on issues of mutual interest where practical outcomes would be achieved.

The Sub-Committee accepted recommendations that the SCSC:

- provide Specialist Regional Body representatives, when attending SCSC meetings, the opportunity to participate in its discussions;
- urge its representatives to utilise the expertise of the Specialist Regional Bodies when attending SCSC meetings;
- encourage its representatives to establish and maintain closer links with their own domestic constituents of the Specialist Regional Bodies;
- agree that where appropriate, it should refer issues to the relevant Specialist Regional Body to develop a report that may be considered by SCSC members;
- encourage the full participation of its members in the activities of the Specialist Regional Bodies;
- encourage those members with infrastructure bodies not already members of the Specialist Regional Bodies to consider membership; and
- agree that New Zealand prepare a proposal, for the next meeting of the SCSC, on the details of a Round Table discussion, to be held in conjunction with the last SCSC meeting in 1997, identifying areas where financial assistance may be required.

15. EC/SCSC Dialogue

The meeting discussed Draft Terms of Reference for an SCSC/EC dialogue presented by Canada.

It was noted that SOM approved in Manila a proposal of the CTI for the SCSC to carry out a practical dialogue on an ad hoc basis on technical matters with its counterparts in the European Commission. This decision was referred by the CTI to the SCSC which was asked to develop Terms of Reference.

The meeting endorsed the modified Terms of Reference (97/SOM1/CTI/SCSC/036). Member economies were invited to put forward suggested topics along with any supplementary information on these topics to the Chair by 28 February.

16. Coordination Meeting of Other APEC Fora

The meeting considered a proposal put forward by Canada to address SCSC-related activities that arise in other APEC fora. The SCSC agreed to the following:

- a) When a member economy becomes aware of an activity/project which might be related to SCSC activities, it will inform the SCSC/Chair and the APEC Secretariat.
- b) When the APEC Secretariat becomes aware of an activity/project which might be related to SCSC activities, it will seek additional information, where appropriate, and inform the SCSC Chair.
- c) Following (a) and (b) above, the SCSC Chair will ask the Chair/Lead Shepherd to provide relevant information on the activity/project concerned.
- d) When the SCSC Chair receives the relevant information from the Chair/Lead Shepherd concerned, the SCSC Chair will circulate the information to member economies and the APEC Secretariat.

After circulation, the SCSC will discuss the manner in which it wishes to treat the information received.

The APEC Secretariat presented a list of projects on SCSC-related activities in other APEC fora. This list will be kept up to date. The SCSC Chair will advise the Chair of the CTI of these activities, where appropriate.

17. SCSC Work Program for 1997

The meeting endorsed the SCSC work program Outline for 1997, as amended. Member economies agreed to provide comments on the work program matrix for 1997 by 14 February 1997, following which the SCSC Chair will circulate a revised version to member economies for confirmation.

18. Other Matters

No other matters were placed on the agenda.

19. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with the Chair thanking all delegates for their cooperation and contribution to the proceedings of the 1st SCSC in 1997.