Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance Convenor's Report

Purpose: Information
Submitted by: SCSC Convenor

First Committee on Trade and Investment Meeting
18-22 February 2022

SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND CONFORMANCE

CONVENOR'S SUMMARY REPORT TO CTI1 2022

1. **How the forum's work contribute to CTI's objectives, including taking forward the Aotearoa Plan of Action, as we pursue the Putrajaya Vision 2040:**

   The First Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (SCSC1) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 15th - 16th February 2022. The SCSC meeting was chaired by Mr. Ekanit Pomyanon.
   The meeting was run fully virtually with all 20 Member Economies, 3 SRBs Members, namely APAC, APMP and PASC; as well as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

   a. **Support for the Multilateral Trading System**
   - *"…Growth of international trade flows in the region become more stable and predictable including with increased coverage of WTO rules, through APEC members' effective and transparent implementation of existing and future commitments..."*

     - Japan reported on the WTO TBT Committee meetings, while China reported on the WTO SPS Committee meetings. Specific trade concerns (STCs) of both TBT and SPS have been steadily increasing. In addition, the 9th Triennial Review of the TBT committee was adopted at the meeting on November 2021.
     - Peru updated the self-funded study of the "Initiative on Promoting Transparency of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) World Trade Organization (WTO) Notifications: Improving Completeness and Clearness of Information".
     - Philippines briefed on the Conference "Improving Transparency of Pre-Packaged Food Packaging and Labelling Laws, Regulations and Best Practices".

   b. **Regional Economic Integration**
   - *"…APEC's trade and investment environment is free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable..."*
   - *"…further advance the Bogor Goals and economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda which contributes to high standard and comprehensive regional undertakings…"*

     - Australia updated the implementation of the self-funded SCSC project "APEC workshop to identify future work on NTMs affecting grain trade" whose second project workshop was held virtually on 24 and 25 August 2021.
     - Chinese Taipei highlighted on "2021 APEC Online Communication Platform for COVID 19 Vaccine Testing Harmonization and Information Exchange of Batch Release Activity" which aims to establish the information exchange platform of vaccine quality control information, and to promote the international cooperation to help each control authority maintain vaccine quality and people safety in the future, on 26 October 2021 with 6 APEC and non-APEC speakers and 21 experts from 10 different national control authorities.
     - Malaysia presented "Capacity Building Workshop on Understanding Conformity Requirements for Software Controlled Weight and Measuring Instruments for Sustainable Trade" whose preliminary study was completed, and workshop is planned to be held during 10 - 12 May 2022.

c. **Trade Facilitation and Connectivity**
   - *"…promote seamless connectivity, resilient supply chains and responsible business conduct, APEC economies will improve physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity…"*

   > • Australia reported on the project "Trade Facilitation through the Development of an APEC Food Safety Risk Communication Framework".
   > • China introduced "APEC Webinar on Best Practices and Standards of Data Exchange for Trade Facilitation"
   > • The United States presented the project "APEC FSCF PTIN Workshop on Pesticide Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) Harmonization: A Trade Facilitative Approach to MRL Compliance".

d. **Innovation and Digitalisation**
   - *"…To empower all our people and businesses to participate and grow in an interconnected global economy, we will foster an enabling environment that is, among others, market-driven and supported by digital economy and innovation."*
   - *"…strengthen digital infrastructure, accelerate digital transformation, narrow the digital divide, as well as cooperate on facilitating the flow of data and strengthening consumer and business trust in digital transactions."*

   > • Japan reported on "Capacity Building on Testing and Conformity Assessment of Fine Bubble Technologies for use in Agro-/Aqua-Culture and Water Treatment in the APEC Region".
   > • The United States shared the projects on personal protective equipment and drone technology.

e. **Sustainable and Inclusive Growth**
   - *"Advancing inclusive policies, including under the economic drivers of trade & investment, and innovation and digitalisation, to promote sustainable economic growth opportunities and improve quality of life…"*
   - *"...develop, encourage and exchange best practice policies, and promote capacity building programmes, that address all environmental challenges - including climate change - and support sustainable growth, such as through trade, including APEC's work on facilitation of trade in environmental goods and services"*

   > • Japan presented "Capacity Building on the Development of Climate Actions for Sustainable Growth by use of ISO 14080" aiming to share challenge and potential needs of harmonisation for reporting climate action and sustainable finances to improve communication between financiers and ISO standards.
   > • Malaysia reported on "Understanding the Roles and Impact of Voluntary Sustainability Standards to Trade in the APEC Region".

2. Forum Main Objectives/Deliverables expected for 2022
Please provide a brief list of the forum's 2022 objectives and expected outcomes/deliverables.

- SCSC Priorities in 2022 are (1) to develop and promote the standard and conformance projects/activities in relation to the Bio-Circular-Green Economic (BCG) Model; (2) to encourage and strengthen the new practices for COVID-19 recovery to sustain trade and investment in the region; (3) to enhance digital and innovation environment as market-driven strategy and global connection; and (4) to support and strengthen the MSMEs Trade Facilitation.
- The survey of the International Standards for the 10th Voluntary Action Plan (VAP) Alignment Work focuses on circular economy.

3. Planned private sector engagement in 2022
Please provide a list of planned private sector engagement in 2022

- China' virtual seminar "Improving Transparency and Knowledge of Food Safety Requirements for trade food in the APEC region", which food industries will be invited to share their opinions and experiences.
- Chinese Taipei's "APEC Public-Private Dialogue on Product Safety in digital trade", which e-commerce companies and consumer groups will be invited to share their opinions and experiences.

4. Planned cross-fora collaboration in 2022
Please provide a list of planned cross-fora collaboration in 2022

- China's proposal of the project "Ageing-inclusive digital economy: bridging the digital divide for the elderly by standards and conformity assessment" (SCSC – DESG/ISO/IEC) whose draft international standards to be developed upon ISO members' approval
- New Zealand's workshop "Low-carbon Hydrogen International Standard" (SCSC / EWG) to be held on 17 March 2022.
- "The 15th Good Regulatory Practice Conference" (SCSC – EC) hosted by Thailand
- United States' project "Building APEC Economies' Capacity in Good Regulatory Practices to Reduce Barriers to Trade" (SCSC – EC)

5. Main outcomes from most recent plenary meeting
Please provide in list format

Fruitful policy discussion on SCSC's priorities 2022 with SRBs, JRAC and SCSC encouraged to contribute to such priorities by adopting related international standards, streamlining conformance systems, enhancing standardisation, accreditation, metrology, conformity assessment and market surveillance, focusing on the Bio-Circular-Green Economic (BCG) Model, COVID-19 recovery, digital trade and MSMEs.

6. Was quorum reached at the most recent plenary meeting?
Please advise how many economies participated in the most recent plenary meeting.

The quorum was reached with 20 economies participating SCSC1.

7. **What is your Forum doing to maintain/increase its relevance to APEC member economies and increase participation from its members?**
   Please provide a brief list of planned efforts to increase participation from members

   - Updates on the latest developments of WTO (TBT and SPS), ISO, IEC and SRBs (APAC, APMP and PASC) in terms of standards and conformance relating to trade facilitation in the region
   - More capacity building projects and workshops regarding post-COVID-19 economic recovery i.e. Good Regulatory Practices to Reduce Barriers to Trade, Safety Requirements for international trade food, renewable energy, water sanitation and conservation, Ageing-inclusive digital economy, and Testing Methods for Internet of Things (IoT) Products.
   - Platforms for sharing information, technology and best practices regarding product safety in digital trade, digital technology tackling pandemic, and SARS-CoV-2 detection".

8. **Decision points needed from CTI**

   - To seek CTI's endorsement of the SCSC Convenor's Report.
   - To drive SCSC Priorities and BCG Model.
   - To promote the project proposal "PPD on Promoting Transparency of TBT WTO Notifications: Improving Completeness and Clearness of Information" submitted through CTI.