

this, relying on our scientific networks and ongoing assessment of the state of our environment via, for example, the Global Environment Outlook process. In its work to promote essential practices such as responsible chemicals management and life cycle management, UNEP is also ready to work with the standards community and training institutions to advance management technology support and capacity building on a scale that reflects the magnitude and scale of today's challenges. ■



Kandeh K. Yumkella

UNIDO Director-General

The majority of developing countries are unable to meaningfully participate in the profitable global trade of manufactured goods. The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization** (UNIDO) aims to address this inequality by helping developing countries attract investments, develop their supply capacity, ensure compliance with market requirements and standards, and gain access to export markets, while protecting consumers and the environment.

UNIDO is conscious that a country's degree of involvement with standardization and conformity assessment (for example, number of nationally adopted standards, enterprises certified, laboratories accredited, etc.) tends to be reflected in its general level of economic and industrial development. This has a bearing on the efficiency of its economy and its ability to produce and trade.

The developing world recognizes that delays in adopting processes for the harmonization of standards and for continuously improving quality, standardization, metrology and conformity assessment will hinder its potential to fully enjoy the advantages of global trade, and jeopardize its efforts towards development, employment creation and poverty reduction.

UNIDO thus offers support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to comply with International Standards and regulations and overcome technical barriers to trade or sanitary and phytosanitary measures. Numerous national standards bodies (NSBs), laboratories and conformity assessment bodies in developing countries benefit from UNIDO's capacity-building and technical assistance services.

Ideally, NSBs should actively participate as full members in international standards organizations and their development work. However, they often lack the financial resources and technical experts needed for such investment – issues that UNIDO aims to address through its programmes and activities.

UNIDO's holistic trade capacity-building approach is characterized by strong partnerships with international organizations and technical bodies. In this spirit, a UNIDO/ISO Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in 2003 to jointly assist developing countries and emerging economies to enhance industrial development and participate in world trade through standardization.

Following up, UNIDO has supported numerous NSBs in becoming ISO members, increasing their participation in international standardization activ-

ities, harmonizing national standards with ISO standards and assisting businesses, governments and consumers in implementing ISO standards. UNIDO is also committed to supporting the *ISO Action Plan for Developing Countries*.

Dr. Kandeh K. Yumkella has been the Director-General of UNIDO since December 2005. He is a former Minister of Trade, Industry and State Enterprises of the Republic of Sierra Leone. With over 20 years' experience in international development, he has provided leadership for various initiatives and managed high-level consultations and negotiations with member states on global development issues. He served as Director of the Africa and LDCs Regional Bureau and UNIDO Representative and Director of the first UNIDO Regional Office in Nigeria. Dr Yumkella holds a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois, USA, an M.Sc. in agricultural economics from Cornell University, USA, and a B.Sc. Division One (Cum Laude) in general agriculture from Njala University College, Sierra Leone. He has authored and co-authored several publications.

UNIDO's recent involvement in ISO-led activities encompassed food safety and traceability standards, social responsibility and energy management, the joint development and publication of *Fast Forward – National standards bodies in developing countries* and training material for food safety management (ISO 22000) – examples of how the synergy between the leading international standards development organization, ISO, and the UN agency mandate to foster sustainable industrial development is effective and vibrant.

As Chairman of UN-Energy, I am working towards combining efforts to combat climate change, promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy. With this aim, UNIDO turned to the implementation of energy efficiency

and management systems in developing countries, with a view to also enhance their participation in the standardization process.

Following a joint initiative from UNIDO and the Standardization Administration of China (SAC), ISO established a new project committee (ISO/PC 242, *Energy management*) to develop a management system standard for energy (MSE). UNIDO will carry out regional studies to identify opportunities and barriers associated with its adoption. UNIDO is also working with ISO to organize the breakout session on standards for energy efficiency, water, climate change, and their management, which will be held in conjunction with the 42nd meeting of the ISO committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO).

To benefit from the current globalized market economy, developing countries must be able to achieve international levels of quality and safety by meeting a wide range of standards, regulations, tests and certification requirements. It is imperative to strengthen their institutional and human capabilities in quality, standardization and conformity assessment, and to participate more actively in related international activities. This goal is at the heart of UNIDO's actions and its partnership with ISO and its members. ■

Sha Zukang became the United Nations Under-Secretary-General heading the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in July 2007. He also chairs the United Nations Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. Prior to joining the United Nations, Mr. Sha held a number of posts in the diplomatic service of the People's Republic of China with portfolios covering a range of fields, including economic and social affairs, human rights and humanitarian affairs, politics and security. He is a graduate of Nanjing University, China.



Sha Zukang

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations

The **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs** (DESA), which I head, supports the follow-up to the major UN summits and conferences, including the Rio Conference and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The recent review and assessment of progress on industrial development by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) highlighted the importance of standardization for developing countries as they undertake policies and measures to promote industrial development. International consensus-based standards, of the type produced by ISO, can be valuable tools to support that work, for example, in the area of energy and environmental management. The CSD also emphasized the need to enhance capacity in developing countries for developing, implementing and enforcing regulations, codes and standards.

The number of private standards has been increasing rapidly; thousands exist in the agro-food sector alone. Small producers find it challenging to keep track, implement and finance compliance with these new standards. ISO's standards have the virtue of being transparent, participatory, inclusive and pre-

dictable. Bringing coherence and predictability to standards setting – that is, the standardization of standards – should help ensure that they facilitate rather than obstruct international trade.

The most widely recognized ISO standards – on quality management (ISO 9000) and environmental management (ISO 14000) – can support worldwide efforts to bring our societies towards sustainable consumption and production patterns. The two series are now implemented by over a million organizations in 170 countries. These standards are consensus-based International Standards where all stakeholders are represented and developing countries participate in their formulation.

Today, China has the largest number of ISO 9001-certified organizations and comes second after Japan in ISO 14001 certifications. Organizations have also acquired certification in many other developing countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa and United Arab Emirates.

The forthcoming publication of the social responsibility standard (ISO 26000) in 2010, could provide important guidance for corporations operating in the global economy. We hope that it will bring coherence to what is a crowded field of initiatives for corporate social responsibility, support sustainable global supply chains, reflect a consensus among all stakeholders, and make adequate provision to assist developing countries with implementation of the standard. The work on sustainable consumption and production in my Department is very much concerned with these issues.

I commend ISO on its important work in support of global economic integration and improved corporate environmental and social governance. I encourage continued cooperation between ISO and the UN system to ensure appropriate participation of developing countries in the consensus-building process on new standards and to provide capacity-building for implementation. ■