CROSQ Celebrates World Standards Day

Every year on October 14, the three international standards-setting bodies - International Organisation for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) - celebrate World Standards Day. This is a time that brings into focus the role and importance that standards play in every aspect of our lives and this year is no different. The theme for World Standards Day 2010 is “Accessibility for all with International Standards.”

Accessibility is the degree to which a product, device, service, environment or facility is usable by as many people as possible, including those who are differently-abled (congenital or acquired). It is noteworthy that the number of persons who are differently-abled is significant worldwide and in the CARICOM Region.

Standardization can be a powerful tool for strengthening accessibility in all areas by setting the same standards throughout the world for accessible products, devices, services, environments and facilities. In the development of standards for the design of products and services, horizontal issues such as accessibility must be considered. Accessibility places the human factor at the center of the process, so that issues such as individual abilities, preferences and needs are built in to the design of products.

CROSQ Urged to Adopt Standards Management Systems

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Mr. Reginald Budhan, has called on CROSQ to explore adopting a standards management system, tailored for micro enterprises.

He said the need for such a system is critical, as Small Island Developing States are largely dominated by micro businesses that do not have the level of specialisation nor human resources to implement an ISO 9001 system. “Yet, those businesses are expected to produce the same standard and quality and export to the European Union (EU), for example, and compete with large transnational corporations. If CROSQ is going to be relevant to us, it must develop, adapt and adopt standards that are applicable to the vast majority of micro enterprises that dominate the small island states of CARICOM,” he asserted.

Mr. Budhan was addressing the opening of the 17th CROSQ Council Meeting at the Knutsford Court Hotel in Kingston, on 19 October 2010.

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Standards should promote emphasis on individuals with special and specific needs, and provide guidance on processes and clear examples for solutions.

Differently-abled persons demand equal access to social, political and economic life. For them, as well as for the able-bodied, access to information and communication is as important as is the ability to use an elevator, enter a building, surf the Internet, travel, or safely turn on and use a device.

Standards facilitate everyone’s access to products, structures and services. They include safety considerations, design characteristics and harmonized test methods all geared to increase accessibility.

CROSQ Urged to Adopt...(continued)

Mr. Budhan pointed out that even while the Ministry continues to encourage businesses to be ISO certified, it faces the challenge of small enterprises being able to meet these standards, because of their size.

Meanwhile, the Permanent Secretary noted the increasing loss of preferential treatment and competition that developing economies face, and that in light of this, CARICOM nations must focus on increasing the competitiveness of their export sectors, through improved products, enhanced service, economic efficiency and greater standardisation.

He said it is now imperative that CARICOM engage other nations in the global economic arena. “The European Partnership Agreement, for example, gives regional manufacturers and service providers access to some 27 markets of the EU. Conversely, their products will also have access to our markets. It is incumbent on exporters to be capable of satisfying technical and quality requirements of their customers abroad, as well as the health and safety and environmental rules of the importing nations,” Mr. Budhan emphasised.

He argued that quality requirements, which are essential to trade, are usually embodied in standards, and that exporters can derive great benefits from obtaining ISO certification, including increased market share; more profit margins; significantly reduce documentation; improve organisation efficiency and reduce cost incurred by conformity assessment procedures that are necessary to enter new markets.

Chairman of CROSQ, Mrs. Dianne Lalla-Rodrigues, said that the face of global trade is changing, with the intensive and extensive movements of persons and goods and services, and that this is further enhanced by the various trade agreements that CARICOM has signed with developed nations. In most cases, she noted, these nations have fully developed regulatory and business systems.

Mrs. Rodrigues said these systems have become increasingly important as tariffs are eroded and developing nations are faced with the task of building their own systems with very limited human and financial resources, even as governments face serious challenges in maintaining their revenue streams. “CROSQ is one of the region's responses to these challenges in building crucial business support systems and regulatory systems,” she noted.

The organisation's mandate is the establishment and harmonisation of standards to enhance the efficiency and improve quality in the production of goods and services in CARICOM, to protect the consumer and the environment, and to improve trade within the Community and with other states.

-- Adapted from Jamaica Information Service, 25 October, 2010

Note from CROSQ:

In February 2010, the CARICOM Regional Standard (CRS11) “Good Management Practices for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises” was approved at the 29th Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) for voluntary member state adoption. CROSQ will support the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (and other National Standard Bodies in the Region) in raising awareness of the standard and its requirements.

CROSQ Builds Capacity of Standards Officers in Standards Drafting

At its Thirteenth Meeting in 2008, the CROSQ Council approved the ISO standard format as the preferred format for the drafting and formatting of CARICOM Standards. This format is specified in the ISO/IEC Directives Part 2, Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards and includes requirements for structure, arrangement, verbal expressions and content for individual sections. ISO has created a template to assist in the development of standards that conform to these directives, which automatically creates the formatting styles specified in the ISO/IEC directives.

As a consequence of Council’s approval of the ISO format, all CARICOM standards developed under CROSQ must follow the ISO format and as such, with funding provided under the Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP) of the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), CROSQ conducted a training workshop on 12-13 October 2010 in the use of the ISO STD Template in Trinidad and Tobago.

The workshop was hosted by the Premier Quality Services Limited (POSL), a subsidiary company of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) and was facilitated by Mr Darryl Thompson and Mr. Sheva Serrattan, of TTBS. The workshop was attended by Standards Officers of the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) of the CARICOM Member States.

Capacity building of the NSBs in the drafting of standards will continue with additional workshops being offered in 2011.
CROSQ staged a week-long mission to the Bahamas, meeting with the private sector, plus the Government and social organisations, to discuss establishing a Bahamas Bureau of Standards.

The Bahamas signed up to CROSQ membership under the former Christie-led PLP administration, but has never created its own formal Standards Bureau, as demanded by legislation passed during the previous government’s 2002-2007 tenure. This means that the Standards Act, while passed into law, has never been enforced.

“CROSQ has been trying to see how the Bahamas could set up its Standards Bureau for quite some time,” Mr Forbes stated. “We’ve been looking at various means and the opportune time that the Standards Bureau could take effect.”

He described the role of any Bahamian Standards Bureau as “facilitative, not prohibitive”, anticipating the concerns of some in the private sector who are likely to fear such a body would merely add another layer of bureaucracy and red tape, thus increasing business costs.

Pointing to the benefits of a Standards Bureau as an educational tool, Mr Forbes said it would ensure that all goods and services traded and sold locally met acceptable quality criteria, thus protecting Bahamian consumers.

It would scrutinise imports to ensure they met acceptable standards, and also help Bahamian goods and services exporters to meet standard requirements in overseas countries.

“I think it is safe to say that it is closer than it was 10 years ago,” Mr Forbes said speaking on the creation of a Bahamian Standards Bureau. “It is to facilitate trade and commerce.”

On August 23, CROSQ in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Development hosted the launch of a National Technical Sub-Committee (NTSC) for Bahamas at the Governor's Suite British Colonial Hilton. The NTSC forms one of the bodies required under the Caribbean's Regional Building Standards Programme being implemented by CROSQ.

The Bahamas was one of only two Caribbean countries still lacking such a sub-committee, Mr Forbes said, the initiative's overall aim being the creation of uniform safe building construction standards in the Caribbean, ensure they complied with international standards.

CROSQ also held a workshop for small and medium-sized Bahamian companies, followed by a seminar Wednesday on Regional Quality Infrastructure, dealing with standards and their awareness and various methodologies.

The final two days of CROSQ’s visit involved public and private sector consultations to determine “the general overall view of the acceptance of a Standards Bureau in the Bahamas”.

Mr. Forbes, however, said the Government would be guided by its own agenda and timelines on the implementation of a Bahamian Standards Bureau.

-- Adapted from the Tribune Business Editor, The Tribune, 23 August 2010

CROSQ Wishes Farewell to a Member of Staff

On 27 September 2010, CROSQ said goodbye to Mrs. Gina Teemul-Tash who served as Technical Officer - Metrology at CROSQ for the past year.

As Technical Officer, Mrs. Teemul-Tash was responsible for the technical work in CROSQ in regional development and harmonization in the area of Metrology. She coordinated activities of CARIMET (the regional arm of the Sistema Interamericana Metrologia (SIM)), which was integrated into CROSQ as a Technical Committee, and successfully liaised with other partners to provide awareness-raising and training activities within the Member States of CROSQ.

She provided instrumental support to activities of the CROSQ/IDB Regional Quality Infrastructure (RQI) project and did excellent work on the second project for RQI. Additionally, she played a fundamental role in the planning and development for a third project being implemented by CROSQ for the establishment of RQI.

We take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Teemul-Tash for her valuable inputs and contribution to the regional development of metrology, and wish her well in her future endeavours.
The CROSQ Technical Management Committee (TMC) held its Sixteenth and Seventeenth Meetings from 12-14 April 2010 and 27-30 September 2010 respectively, at the CROSQ Secretariat in Barbados.

**SIXTEENTH TMC**

The 16th Meeting was attended by representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, and was sponsored by the CROSQ/IDB SME Project.

The TMC recommended that the following standards be presented to the CROSQ Council for endorsement and presentation to the 30th Meeting of the Council for Trade & Economic Development (COTED) for adoption as a voluntary CARICOM standard:

- Specification for Packaged Water;
- Specification for Natural Coconut Water;
- Specification for Short Term Vehicle Rental;
- Labelling of Prepackaged Food;
- Specification for Wooden Furniture;
- Specification for Indigenous Furniture (Bamboo, Rattan, Wicker, Nibbi);
- Specification for Labelling of Tobacco Products (including Cigarettes);
- Specification for Labelling of Retail Packages of Aerosol Insecticides;
- Code of Practice for Packaged Water;
- Code of Practice for Natural Coconut Water;
- Code of Practice for Tour Guides;
- Code of Hygiene Practice for the Handling of Fish and Fishery Products; and
- Code of Practice for Inbound Tour Operators.

The Committee also recommended the following New Work Item Proposals (NWIPs) to the Council for approval:

- Specification for Red Kidney Beans (RTC in Belize);
- Revision of the Specification for Rice (RTC in Guyana);
- Specification for Liquid Chlorine Bleach (RTC in Trinidad and Tobago); and
- Electrical Cables (RTC in Trinidad and Tobago).

The Eleventh Meeting of the CROSQ Editorial Committee was held in Antigua and Barbuda, and was sponsored by the CROSQ/IDB SME Project.

The TMC was briefed on the decision of the 30th Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED). The following standards are to be submitted to the 31st Meeting of COTED after endorsement by the CROSQ Council:

- Specification of Spices and Sauces;
- Specification for Tourist Accommodation - Part 1: General Requirements;
- Specification for Amchar and Kuchela;
- Specification for Poultry Feeds and Feed ingredients; and
- Labelling of Retail packages of Aerosol Insecticides.

Activities during the Meeting also included the development of an action plan for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Regional Standards Development and Harmonisation Process within the next 5 years for funding under the 10th EDF. Elections were held for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the TMC with Barbados being elected as the Chair of the TMC and Jamaica elected as the Vice Chair.

The new Chair vowed to continue the good work of the TMC and asked for the continued support of the TMC members in assisting the CROSQ Secretariat to meet its mandate in respect to regional standards development and harmonization.

The Eleventh Meeting of the CROSQ Editorial Committee was held at the CROSQ Secretariat in Barbados from September 23-25. The meeting focused on editing 8 normative documents:

- Specification for Amchar and Kuchela;
- Specification for Spices and Sauces;
- Specification for Honey;
- Code of Practice for Organically Produced Foods - Part 1;
- Specification for Tourist Accommodation - Part 1: General requirements;
- Specification for Poultry Feed and Feed Ingredients;
- Specification for Poultry Products; and

On the agenda was also the election of new officers as the term of the current Executive Committee had come to an end. Ms. Vonetta Nurse-Thompson from the Bureau of Standards Jamaica (BSJ) replaced Mr. Julius James as Chair of the Committee, with Mr. Fabian Scott from the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) elected as Secretary.

Present at this particular meeting were also a number of observers who attended in an effort to build capacity in the editing of regional standards. Amongst these was newly appointed Standards Officer of the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards (SLBS), Mr. Chad Alexander, as well as four staff members from BNSI. The Secretariat welcomes the initiative of the two Standards Bureaux and encourages the other Bureaux to follow suit in an effort to continue to build capacity in this area.

CROSQ wishes to thank the IDB for providing financial support through the IDB/SME project.
Five Year Strategic Plans for CROSQ Committees Presented to Council

A Validation Workshop was held on 19 October 2010 at the Hotel Knutsford Court, Kingston, Jamaica during the weeklong activities of the Seventeenth Meeting of the CROSQ Council. The workshop was chaired and facilitated by Mr. Deryck Omar, Executive Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS).

At the workshop, the work programmes for the next 5 years for several disciplines were presented to the CROSQ Council, based on a series of intensive, collaborative planning meetings undertaken by each planning group.

The work plan for Caribbean Standards Development focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Regional Standards Development/Harmonisation Process, with the main objectives of:

- developing and maximising the use of regional standards;
- enhancing participation of NSBs in regional and international standards development; and
- establishing a regional technical regulatory framework governing standards development.

The CARIMET (Caribbean Metrology) work programme highlighted 5 strategic objectives identified for the next 5 years:

- CARIMET proactively and effectively influences the development of policy and legislation;
- the Regional Metrology system is in a better position to satisfy SMEs’ and other priority sectors’ metrological needs;
- international recognition of National and Regional Metrology services has significantly increased;
- CARIMET operates effectively, adopts a participatory approach, is recognized within and outside the region and develops as an agent of change; and
- the Member states of CARIMET have attained the defined basic metrology Infrastructure that is sustainable and recognized.

Laboratory Accreditation is a process which gives formal recognition to the technical competence of a laboratory to perform specific tests or calibrations. The process requires the maintenance of a documented quality management system and identification of personnel qualified and authorized to perform tasks related to the scope of accreditation.

From 4-8 October 2010, CROSQ conducted a workshop in St. Lucia under a Technical Assistance through the CROSQ/EDF Project, designed specifically for the National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) in the Caribbean region. The workshop, focusing on the requirements of ISO 17011 (Conformity Assessment General requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment bodies) and the ILAC/IAF Recognition criteria, consisted of several different presentations carried out by consultant, Inger Cecilie Laake from Norwegian Accreditation, and assisted by the CROSQ/EDF CLAS Project Coordinator.

Each NAB was also required to make a summary presentation including background of the Accreditation Body, the status of each body (staffing, accreditation schemes in operation, number and type of accredited bodies) and future plans regarding development, expansion and peer evaluation.

The topics covered in the workshop included a detailed look at the ISO 17011, its requirements and interpretation to operation of an effective Accreditation body. Participants also discussed the ILAC Key Performance Indicators (KPI), including what they are and how they are used in the Peer evaluation process. Several examples of completed KPI reports and peer evaluation reports were shown to the participants to give them an idea of the content for such documents.

As a first exercise, the ILAC/IAF Checklist on the ISO 17011 and KPIs was completed in its entirety by each NAB. The checklist is designed to give an overview of which documents the NAB had developed to support its operations, and what gaps existed in the QMS. Each NAB was then required to prepare their own KPI self assessment report describing their Accreditation system. This report will then be sent to the Peer evaluator as a resource document for the upcoming Pre-Peer evaluation planned for late November.
Setting National Standardization Strategies

In 2009, the ISO Committee for Developing Country Matters (DEVCO) recommended that guidance be developed on the formulation of national standardization strategies. As a result, a new classroom version of the ISO e-Learning Module 3 "Assessing national priorities" has recently been developed by the ISO Central Secretariat as part of the DEVCO 2010 Technical Assistance programme. This is especially of interest to CARICOM Member States as the issue of the development of national standardization strategies is highly important to the region.

The overall objective of the programme is to facilitate the establishment of multi-year national standardization strategies by participating National Standards Bodies (NSBs). The programme is organized in three distinct parts, centered around an intensive six-day residential training course. The first pilot course will be organized for the English-speaking Caribbean and Central America region, and will be held in Paramaribo, Suriname on 8-13 November 2010, in collaboration with the Suriname Standards Bureau (SBS) and the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). ISO is providing full sponsorship for attendance to its Member bodies, Correspondent Members and Subscriber Members. CROSQ will provide sponsorship for the non-ISO Members through the 9th European Development Fund (EDF).

For up to one month prior to the course, and under the guidance of the course mentor, participants will be required to carry out research on the national economic and social priorities in their country. Based upon the results, a number of countries will be chosen as case studies for further elaboration during the residential course, during which participants of the selected countries will be taken through the methodology for establishing national standardization strategies. These participants will be work in small groups to formulate strategies based on the research carried out prior to the course. The residential course is focused on providing 4 outputs:

- assessing priorities and communication with stakeholders;
- identifying International and regional standards corresponding to priority needs;
- drafting a multi-year standardization plan; and
- guidance on accommodating stakeholder feedback and follow-up on the standardization plan.

On completion of the course, participants will be expected to develop their own model national standardization plan in their home country. A copy of this plan is to be submitted to the ISO Central Secretariat six months after the course completion, which will then be used to evaluate the outcome of the course. For up to two months after completion, the course mentor will be available to assess the work and provide online support to participants.

The programme is expected to:

- impart to participants (mainly standards officers from ISO member bodies) a good knowledge of the factors that should be taken into consideration when assessing priorities for national standardization and to give them the skills needed to balance those factors against each other to come up with a set of prioritized needs for developing national standards;
- impart to participants the skills needed to estimate human resources available to a NSB with regard to the standards development process;
- show participants how to match needs and priorities with available resources to come up with a realistic plan for standards development;
- impart to participants an awareness of the importance of stakeholder participation in all stages of planning and development of standards and to develop skills for interacting with stakeholders to encourage their proactive participation in the standardization process; and
- convince participants of the importance of giving priority to the adoption of international standards as national standards.

The programme is targeted at standards technical directors or officers with responsibility for planning activities. It is imperative that the person participating will also be able to utilize and disseminate the information provided during the programme within their own NSB. In particular, the nominated participant will need to be able to allocate time to carry out in-depth economic and social research, prior to the residential, and also to continue to work on an actual national standardization plan following the course.

Saint Lucia is the venue for the hosting of the 16th Annual General Assembly of SIM (Sistema Interamericana Metrologia) from November 1st to the 2nd. The SIM AGA will bring regional and international metrology experts together to chart the course for SIM for the next year.

SIM is a regional agreement among National Metrology Institutes or the organizations responsible for the national measurement standards of the Member Nations of the Organization of American States. The Saint Lucia Bureau of Standards is a member of SIM and shares the goal of promoting international and regional cooperation in order to contribute to the improvement of activities in the field of scientific, industrial and legal metrology.

SIM’s objectives include its contribution to the development of measurement infrastructure required to promote equity in trade, creating an enabling environment for competitiveness and quality of the manufacturing sector in order to promote trade and commerce, the identification of sectors and institutions that can conduct specific multinational activities in support of metrology and contribute to the development of metrological infrastructure required to protect the environment and to promote the general well-being of the population, including its health and safety. The SIM AGA will be held at the Bay Gardens Hotel. An opening ceremony to welcome SIM delegates will take place on Monday 1st November, from 2pm at the Bay Gardens Hotel. The opening will be addressed by Minister of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs Senator Honourable Charlotte Tessa Mangal who will declare the 16th SIM AGA open.

-- St. Lucia Bureau of Standards Press Release, 26 October 2010

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
Photo Gallery of Events

Mr. Rudolph Christopher (Montserrat), Mr. Noel Osbourne (Executive Director, BSJ) and Mr. Deryck Omar (Executive Director, TTBS) at the 17th Council Meeting of CROSQ

Mr. Michael Wood (CROSQ/CDB CBS Project Coordinator) presenting at the 2010 Annual ICC Conference in North Carolina, USA

Mr. Eugene Torchon-Newry, Mr. Joshua Sears, Mrs Dianne Lalla-Rodrigues, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, and Mr. Alphaeus Forbes during the CROSQ Mission to the Bahamas

Attendees of ISO 17011 training in St. Lucia

Attendees of the 17th Council Meeting of CROSQ

Members of the CROSQ Certification Team at a planning meeting held in Barbados

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
## CROSQ'S MISSION

The promotion and development of standards and standards related activities to facilitate international competitiveness and the sustainable production of goods and services within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) for the enhancement of social and economic development.

For further information, please contact: CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality

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Please visit our website: www.crosq.org

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### 2010 Calendar of Events (October - December)

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