

WELCOMING REMARKS

Regional Consultation on “Quality Management: Linking Trade Promotion Organisations and National Standards Bodies for Export Success”

1-3 December 2009,

Sheraton Imperial, Kuala Lumpur

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ISO Officials

TPOs and NSBs Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my great pleasure to be here today to welcome all of you to the Regional Consultation on “Quality Management: Linking Trade Promotion Organisations and National Standards Bodies for Export Success”. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for choosing Malaysia to host this

international event. This three-day consultative workshop is organized to serve as a platform for senior officials and representatives from National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) from developing countries to share experiences, to discuss best practice cases, and to consider common challenges with regard to strengthening their inter-linkages.

This regional consultation is intended to provide a framework for NSBs and TPOs of participating countries in finding the best approach to develop and strengthen their cooperation towards supporting the international competitiveness of SMEs. I am happy to note that representatives from 16 countries are taking part in this consultation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, implementing ISO standards brings advantages to developing countries such as

- avoiding the waste of resources,
- transferring state-of-the-art technological know-how,
- safeguarding public health and safety, and
- providing internationally accepted specifications that can be applied to the development, manufacturing and marketing of local goods and services, thus raising the country's ability to compete in export markets worldwide.

Standards and regulations can, therefore, improve quality of life, create shared consumption benefits for the public, and solve common product and quality problems. Well-defined standards can facilitate trade by reducing transaction costs and improve connections among firms across industries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia trade with more than two hundred nations worldwide. Malaysia's total trade in 2008 amounted to US\$322.9 billion, an increase of 6.8 per cent from US\$302.5 billion in 2007.

In 2008, Malaysia's trade with 16 countries participating in today's programme amounted to US\$52.2 billion. Trade with these countries accounted for approximately 16 percent of Malaysia's overall global trade for the year. Malaysia's economic relations with the participating countries present today are not limited to external trade alone as there have been cross-flows of investments between Malaysia and these countries. The increasing globalisation and liberalisation of trade and investment makes it imperative for the developing and emerging economies to collaborate and expand bilateral trade and investment ties.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope that all of you will have a productive deliberation in every session, with the belief that your participation will create stronger linkages between Malaysia and each of your respective countries. I believe that you will be able to effectively reap the benefits of this programme.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a wonderful stay in Kuala Lumpur and I hope that it will be the one that stays closest to your heart. Upon your return to your beautiful countries, please share your memorable experiences of visiting Malaysia with your beloved family and friends, and convince them that the uniqueness of this country is like no other – making every visit worth your valuable time and money.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for collaborating with MATRADE to make this programme, a success.

On that note, let me once again welcome all of you to today's workshop and wish you success in your business endeavour.

Thank you.