

**WORLD EXPORT DEVELOPMENT FORUM 2007**  
**Bringing Down the Barriers –**  
**Creating a Dynamic Export Development Agenda**

**Wednesday, 10 October 2007**

**Meeting Technical Regulations and Standards for Export Success**

**Breakout Series 3: Building Markets**

Alan Bryden, Secretary-General, International Organization for Standardization, Switzerland,  
Eddy Yeung, Director, Ciel Group, Mauritius  
Shyam K. Gujadhur, Senior Adviser, on Standards and Quality Management, ITC  
Ouseph Chacko Padickakudi, Program Manager, Trade Capacity Building, UNIDO

Moderator: H. Lal, Chairman, Director-General, Quality Forum, Federation of Indian Chambers  
of Commerce and Industry, India

Technical regulations and standards established both by destination countries and by customers loom as major challenges to exporters from the developing world. “As an exporter, we do not have a choice,” said Eddy Yeung, Director, Ciel Group, Mauritius. “It is a market-driven and consumer-driven phenomenon. We have to build the capacity to respond to consumer demand.”

A businessman from Bangladesh, speaking from the floor, agreed: “We have begun to accept that it is part of our business. As we have a sales department, we also have a compliance department.”

Based on that premise, much of the discussion during the session focused on how exporters can achieve the standards needed for compliance.

### **Adapting to regulations**

Alan Bryden, Secretary-General of the Geneva-based International Organization for Standardization, offered suggestions for how entrepreneurs from developing countries can adapt to regulation requirements:

- They must learn what they need to do by consulting databases organized by the World Trade Organization, national information centres, the ITC, and others.
- They must learn how to comply; and
- They must demonstrate to their customers that they are in compliance.

For smaller and poorer countries, he suggested that regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Pacific Islands Forum might be able to lead regional initiatives.

Yeung pointed out that most of the standards that his company is forced to meet are private, set by customers and not governments. In Europe, for instance, retailers like Marks & Spencer and Hema have their own standards and requirements for suppliers.

Increasingly important are social and environmental issues, fair trade and organic production. To guarantee compliance companies must maintain laboratories for testing and hire well-educated and highly trained workers to staff them.

Shyam K. Gujadhur, ITC Senior Adviser on Standards and Quality Management, also stressed that developing countries need to be more active in influencing standards. He also stressed

access to information, infrastructure for quality management and measurement, and regional cooperation.

Public-private partnerships can also be useful, he said. For example, the government might ensure credibility and transparency while leaving private companies to do the actual product testing.

## **Social and environmental responsibility**

Ouseph Chacko Padickakudi of UNIDO outlined how his organization can help developing country exporters develop the capacities to meet the requirements of destination markets. UNIDO and other agencies are developing country-specific and regional programmes to help address the issue.

One of the main issues raised during the discussion period was that of social and environmental responsibility and fair trade. ISO has developed its 26000 standards to cover social responsibility and is studying the question of fair trade. “There has been an evolution on this issue,” said Bryden. “First there was pressure from consumers. Then corporate social responsibility became a big topic. And when we began to address quality management for ISO 14000, we included the concept of the ‘stakeholder satisfaction.’”

Regarding fair trade, Bryden observed that societal and environmental labelling is prevalent in countries such as Switzerland and that it might be time for some common standards. “We at ISO are in contact with the fair trade movement,” he said.

## **Best practices**

A representative of a Brazilian exporters group, speaking from the floor, made three suggestions:

1. Collect and share best practices.
2. Promote public-private partnerships worldwide; and
3. Change and modernize the language (“We shouldn’t be talking about norms but about processes,” he said.)

Gujadhur noted that the ITC has put together some data about best practices.

Other issues raised during the discussion period included:

- the possibility of taking into account the local culture of the supplier
- the need to focus not only on products but also on services
- how to get politicians interested in the issue
- carbon footprints as non-tariff barriers
- the need for exporters to educate the local suppliers of their inputs, such as the sheep farmers who supply wool for the textile industry.