



Commission Electrotechnique Internationale
International Electrotechnical Commission
Международная Электротехническая Комиссия

Address to 2004 ISO General Assembly

Sei-ichi Takayanagi
IEC President

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Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the last time that I will be addressing your General Assembly as IEC President. It has been a great honour for me to represent the IEC and its community whenever I come here to speak to you. Being IEC President has been both challenging and rewarding. I am sure that my successor, Renzo Tani, will find it just as rewarding.

Today I wish to focus on the growing co-operation between our two organizations and then just mention two other topics. We know that the very nature of consensus-based standards requires co-operation as one of the basics. Without it we would not have IEC or ISO standards. So in our very essence we are co-operative.

In the late 1970s there was a computer tournament held to investigate theories of the evolution of co-operation. Co-operation theory is part of game theory, which is a branch of political science. Programs played against each other and against a program that made random moves; each game consisted of 200 rounds. The winning game was called "Tit for Tat". It co-operated on its first move, then did exactly what its opponent did on every subsequent move. Bit by bit, those who did not co-operate disappeared and, in the end, only co-operators remained.

We, at the IEC, share the same values in standards development, and in the processes and mechanisms that we use to create our standards, as you do at the ISO. The first of these is that we support international trade. The second is that our aim is to improve the quality of life worldwide, particularly as it relates to safety and the environment. The third is easier interoperability. And all of our work is done in a transparent and democratic way. These things make us different from others who have other orientations. This ensures that we, together with the ITU, stand out from others in the market, and that our standards are recognized as being truly international and truly representative. This situation puts us at the top of the standards world.



ISO has existed for more than 50 years and the IEC for about 100 years. Longevity, in part, is based on co-operative strategies. Between our two organizations I am very encouraged to see this appear in various ways:

- First, the IEC and ISO have improved the exchange of information. Exchanging information means “communicating”. I think everyone would agree that good communications are important for our respective communities.
- Second, I am very happy to see that technical coordination is working very well between us and that there are no remaining issues for the Joint Technical Advisory Board to be concerned about, and this has been for quite a long period of time.
- Third, I have seen that there is a lot of effort going into sharing best practices and experiences between the Central Offices of each organization, as well as exchanging views on policy issues between the organizations.
- And finally, one of the most encouraging recent examples of co-operation is the joint database for symbols. Here, we have worked side-by-side to bring together two similar but separate products and give the market efficient, easy access. In other words, together we found a way to serve our markets in a combined manner.

Another example is the World Standards Co-operation. Here, it is not just ISO and the IEC. The ITU is present, too. Our joint efforts in 2003 at the World Summit on the Information Society to recognize International Standards in the final recommendations’ document produced by the WSIS was not possible without the strong co-operation of our three organizations. Our joint sponsorship of the Workshop on Medical Technologies held at the World Health Organization in Geneva this year is another area of work where we have common interests. Next week in Geneva the WSC is putting on a course for those managers from National Standards Bodies and National Committees who will someday move into top positions. The seminar is teaching them about the processes, the similarities and the differences that exist between us. These are the first few efforts by the WSC, but I expect to see much more in the future as success breeds success. The WSC is the right platform for us to work together in a positive manner and at the same time each remain who we are with our own identities and constituencies.

In addition to this, the WTO is important to both our organizations. The TBT Agreement is the most obvious case where this is true, but there’s more to it than that. Our Affiliate Country Programme corresponds to WTO wishes to see broader representation in the IEC. As an international organization, it is our interest and our responsibility to open the doors to everyone who wants to participate. This means finding ways to encourage those who are just starting toward industrialization. The WTO is a significant partner for both of us, and at the IEC we intend to continue and deepen this relationship to the benefit of everyone.

Ladies and gentlemen, co-operation is very much at the heart of both of our organizations. It is a basic part of consensus and it is a basic part of long-term effectiveness in business. The IEC has a good working relationship with ISO, and with the WTO, in addition to other participants in the market. Our aim, now and in the future, is to work to maintain those good relations for the benefit of everyone. This means the stakeholders in the IEC, industry as a whole and consumers everywhere. I am convinced that ISO has the same objective and that, together, we can work to create a better world.

Your President-Elect, Mr. Tanaka, is to be taking over at the beginning of next year. I want to wish him well during his term of office. The IEC and ISO have similar but separate communities and I'm sure that Mr. Tanaka will see further co-operation between them during his presidency.

And with these final words, I wish to thank Mr. Smoot, ISO President and you all for your kind attention throughout my term as IEC President.

Thank you very much.