



ADDRESS
by ISO PRESIDENT *DR. ALAN MORRISON*
at 31st COPOLCO meeting
New Delhi, India
27 May 2009

Madame Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, good morning, and congratulations to each and every one of you. Now, I know it's a little unusual to start off a speech by congratulating the audience, but in this case, it's really appropriate. You see, it's you – representatives of COPOLCO – and everyone you've been able to motivate and energize – who have brought meaningful and long-lasting contributions to ISO.

Today I'm going to be sharing with you some areas where your voice contributes and stimulates our work and perspectives – and will continue to do so as we confront a multitude of interlocking worldwide challenges such as the following:

- Facilitation of the global trade in products and services in a way that does not compromise with the level of safety and quality of life to which the citizens of the global village aspire, in the context of an increasing and, in some regions, aging world population;
- The financial crisis which began in 2008 illustrates the need to restore confidence, to promote good business and governance practice, as well as the need for better risk management and ensuring business continuity;
- The interrelated challenges of responding to climate change, while ensuring a sustainable energy future, optimizing the use of and access to water, and providing the world's growing population with adequate food supplies in a safe and sustainable way;
- The pervasiveness and fast growth of information and communication technologies, which revolutionize daily life as well as production processes and business practice;
- The UN Millennium Goals, which include the eradication of poverty and hunger and granting access to education and better health conditions for all the people of the world.

ISO International Standards provide the international community with practical tools for tackling these issues. ISO's track record and particularly its achievements under the current Strategic Plan give it a solid foundation to address these global challenges. However, in order to continue its successful development, ISO needs to innovate and to identify the best way to add value in the evolving world framework. ISO is addressing these questions in the newly launched consultation on the *ISO Strategic Plan 2011-2015*.

As members of COPOLCO you already know that a wide consultation is underway of ISO's members to capture their suggestions and expectations, including those of their stakeholders, to update ISO's strategy for 2011-2015.

As we go forward, your comments and input are important, so that we know for sure that ISO is on track and doing everything it can to help you and your constituency, the consumers in your country.

I therefore urge you to convey your input, expertise and expectations through your respective national members, who have the leading responsibility for standardization in your country, and I have been invited to send a consolidated response to the Secretary-General by 30 September. ISO's long-term success depends in part on how well we take account of stakeholders' input to standardization, including that of consumers.

The subsequent Plan will be submitted for approval at the General Assembly in Oslo, Norway, in September 2010.

That brings me to the second item:

This year's COPOLCO workshop focused on the issue of interoperability. The questions addressed were, "does it fit, will it work and can standards help?" And the answer to the third question is an emphatic, yes; standards can help. Interoperability is at the heart of one of ISO's main objectives, i.e. to facilitate trade of goods and services among people of all countries. Interoperability is ISO's core business and here are a few examples to prove it: freight containers, bank card sizes, personal identification numbers (PIN) as well as country and currency codes, all based on ISO standards.

During this meeting, you will discuss the conclusions of the workshop and highlight a few more potential areas where ISO could positively impact on interoperability. The COPOLCO workshop, as always, is a welcome source of new ideas and critical input for ISO's future directions.

Let me move on now to the third item: COPOLCO's terms of reference and constituency. Council, which received an interim report at its March meeting, is looking forward to your final recommendation on the subject following your plenary meeting here in New Delhi.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy once said, "Our goal is to again influence history instead of merely observing it." I encourage you to do exactly that: shape history by helping to launch standards initiatives that will make a difference – a difference to the quality and safety of products and services, a difference to the economies of your countries, and to people's working and home lives.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a successful meeting.