

OPENING ADDRESS  
**by MRS. WENDY POULTON, MEMBER OF THE SABS BOARD**  
**at the ISO OPEN SESSION ON ENERGY**  
**Cape Town, South Africa**

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Dr Alan Morrison, President of the International Organization for Standardization  
Mr Rob Steele, ISO Secretary General  
Mr Jacques Régis, President of the International Electrotechnical Commission  
Mr Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency  
Mr Mohammed Valli Moosa, Vice-Chair of the World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa  
Mr Dolf Gielen, Chief Energy and Partnership Unit; United Nations Industrial Development Organization  
Mr Tshediso Matona, Director General of the Department of Trade and Industry  
Dr Bonakele Mehlomakhulu, Chief Executive Officer of the South African Bureau of Standards

Ladies and gentlemen, today's Open Session is a highlight of the 32<sup>nd</sup> ISO General Assembly. It is the one session in which ISO opens its doors to the public and invites interested stakeholders to attend discussions around a key theme. For this year's General Assembly, the theme is "Energy: why International Standards are vital". In the context of a world facing the multifaceted challenges of energy access and climate change, it could equally be said that today's Open Session is vital. South Africa is an energy intensive country and as such fills a special niche in the climate change debate. While it is not classified as a developed nation, it has the highest greenhouse gas emissions on the African continent due to not only our energy intensity but also to the high use of fossil fuels in our energy mix. As such, South Africa is positioned to see both sides of the North-South debate, to understand the challenges and the expectations of each, and to serve as a neutral party and convener of discussions in the ongoing energy and climate change debates.

Meeting the energy needs of the world in a sustainable way which addresses the challenge of climate change is one of the greatest challenges we will collectively face as mankind. Energy demand is increasing, particularly in developing countries and is a vital part of any economy as it fuels economic growth and uplifts millions of people around the world through access to modern energy services. However energy production and consumption impact on the environment and in particular with respect to climate change. We need to find new and innovative ways to generate, distribute and consume energy. However what is required goes far beyond a technological solution. We also need to change behaviour on a corporate and personal level and focus on the sustainable consumption side of the equation whilst also improving efficiency and decarbonising production and transport. Standards play a critical role in this process along the entire value chain. This applies not only to mandatory or regulatory based standards, but also to voluntary standards. Standards can assist with raising awareness, setting investment criteria, managing risk, guiding longer term thinking and implementing policy. Business often effectively uses standards to voluntarily improve performance. Improved

environmental performance has resulted from the uptake of ISO 14001 and there are many other examples.

South Africa is currently dealing with an era of energy expansion and is looking at opportunities to progressively decarbonise our energy processes over time. Options include renewable energies such as wind, large scale solar and large hydro imports, nuclear power, gas and clean coal technologies and new transport solutions. We are also focusing on improving the efficiency of our processes and educating our consumers on the importance of energy efficiency and the conservation of our natural resources. South Africa is a very innovative in developing new technologies and adapting others to suit our national circumstances. Examples of this include developments in thin film PV, concentrating solar thermal power, underground coal gasification and demand side management technologies that allow consumers to make informed choices. South Africa is also a water constrained country and so many energy expansion projects increase our national water requirements. Studies have also shown that due to expected changes in the climate, we will become increasingly drier and our water more precious so it is a critical area.

ISO can play an instrumental role by continuing to supporting National Standards Bodies in developing and implementing standards relating energy and climate change. In the energy field our stakeholders have called for more active engagement by ISO. Specifically, we would encourage ISO to look to giving effect to the UNFCCC and global energy efficiency efforts and call for momentum towards voluntary standards on baseline methodologies and Monitoring and Verification as a cornerstone for identifying concrete measures for improving our energy outlook. Given the drive for renewable energy on a global scale we would also encourage ISO to further broaden its scope on standards related to renewable energies in its programme of work. This would be of great benefit to developing countries are seeking to provide energy to their citizens and drive their economies by potentially leapfrogging to lower carbon emitting technologies that also meet their developmental and economic goals.

South Africa also fills a special niche in the area of international standards development. Although we see ourselves primarily as a standards taker, we are a founder member of ISO. We have a long history of contributions to international standardisation, and we continue to play an active and committed role through our involvement with organisations such as ISO and the IEC. In specialised areas such as deep level mining, the national standards developed in South Africa have been adopted by many countries as de facto international standards.

It is important for South Africa to sustain this role as a credible and impartial contributor to international efforts in standardisation. In order to do so, we have to demonstrate that we are aligned with world best practice. Since last year's ISO General Assembly in Dubai, the South African Bureau of Standards has taken great strides forward in this regard.

Historically, the SABS was tasked with a range of responsibilities that included the development of national standards, product testing, certification, and regulation of certain products that are subject to compulsory specifications. This led to complaints from local industry that the SABS was playing the role of policeman, judge and jury in certain areas. In response, Parliament passed two new laws - the new Standards Act and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications Act. These Acts prescribed the separation of the

Regulatory division from the SABS to form a new independent body, the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications. This separation was completed in September 2008.

The SABS group's commercial division, which offers certification, testing, consignment inspection and other services to industry, was also ring-fenced from the Standards division. In response to its new mandate, the SABS also formulated a new Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals. This fundamental restructuring has brought the SABS in line with world best practice. It has allowed the organisation to tackle existing and future challenges from a position of sustainable integrity, independence and impartiality. In short, the SABS that is hosting this General Assembly is an improved, leaner and more focused organisation than before.

Although one thing hasn't changed, and that is our commitment to standards, whether at national, regional or international level. Over the past year, the SABS has again exceeded its targets for producing new or revised standards, developing new private specifications, and the number of ISO listings in systems certification. Almost 70% of our national standards are now harmonised with international standards. We have also succeeded in getting external stakeholders more actively involved in the standards development process, especially in technical committee meetings for international standards.

We are particularly pleased with the work that has been done by SADCSTAN, the standardisation authority for the Southern African Development Community. The SABS currently holds the Secretariat for SADCSTAN, which aims to remove trade barriers between the 14 member nations by harmonising standards across the region.

Training in standards is another priority area for the SABS. We continue to offer ISO 9001 and HACCP training to South African small and medium enterprises who wish to competitively access international markets. We have also facilitated experiential training for standards officers from our neighbouring African countries.

However, in today's open session, we are not here to train, but to learn from the range of international experts on the programme. I am looking forward to their presentations, and I'm sure they will provide plenty of food for thought. Energy issues are already profoundly significant in all our lives, and will become even more so in the near future. The challenges of energy are critical, of national importance and need to be tackled objectively, taking into consideration national circumstances and related implications. I trust that today's session will lay the foundation and give impetus to our goal of developing international energy standards which are relevant and beneficial to the global markets that they serve. Thank you for your time, and I wish you all a most productive and informative open session.