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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

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ARSO ACTIVITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WTO TBT AGREEMENT

STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN REGIONAL STANDARDS ORGANIZATION

This document contains information provided by ARSO at the TBT Committee meeting of 9-10 March 2016 under Agenda Item 5 (Update by Observers).

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. ARSO appreciates the opportunity to attend and participate in the WTO TBT Committee meeting as an observer. ARSO therefore would like to associate itself with the objectives and Goals of the WTO TBT Committee.

1.2. Understandably, one of the main challenges facing the African countries is the variation in Regulatory framework, standards, certification, testing, and inspection practices used by different countries. This makes trade between the countries difficult, contentious, and expensive. This explains the low level of intra African Trade 12% and participation in the global trade (3%).

1.3. For this, ARSO - African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), an intergovernmental body was established by Organisation of African Unity (OAU, currently African Union (AU)) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in 1977 and given the mandate to harmonise African Standards and conformity assessment procedures in order to reduce these Technical Barriers to Trade, promote intra-African and international Trade. This entails the mandate to:

- a. Harmonise national and/or sub-regional standards as African Standards;
- b. Encourage and facilitate the adoption of international standards by member bodies as the basis of Sound Regulatory Practices and Conformity Assessment procedures;
- c. Initiate and co-ordinate the development of African Standards (ARS) with references to products which are of peculiar interest to Africa and where no international standards exist;
- d. Develop tools for Good Conformity Assessment practices including Mutual Recognition Arrangements;
- e. Promote Capacity building and awareness creation in standardisation activities;
- f. Avail relevant information on standards, Technical Regulations, Conformity Assessments;
- g. Co-ordinate the views of its members at the ISO, IEC, OIML, Codex and other international organisations concerned with standardisation activities.

1.1 Membership

1.4. ARSO membership is drawn from African countries through their National Bureaus of Standards. Currently ARSO has 36 member States (Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana,

Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

2 ARSO PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1. Current programmes and activities are implemented under the current strategic plan 2012 – 2017 and may I bring to the attention of the Committee the following ARSO programmes which aims at facilitating the implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement.:

2.1 Standards Harmonisation Programme

2.2. The harmonisation programme Promotes Good Regulatory Practice and sound Conformity Assessment procedures (Common Regulatory Framework, Predictability and Certainty) and promotes the principle of One standard, one test, one certificate, accepted everywhere. The harmonisation work is based on:

- The ARSO Standards Harmonisation Manual (ARSO ASHAM) – National Standards.
- The ISO/IEC Directives - Adoption of International standards.
- The WTO TBT Agreements (article 4 and Annex 3 on the Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards. – Achieve members WTO TBT Obligations and rights in standardisation practice.

2.3. May I bring to the attention of the Committee that:

- a. ARSO is listed on page 182 of the 2015 edition of the WTO TBT Standards Code Directory, published in June 2015;
- b. Harmonisation work is carried out by 13 ARSO THCs – The last to be established – 13 – ATM - the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014–2023/World Health Assembly resolution on traditional medicine (WHA62.13) and as interrelated to the ISO/TC 249 - Traditional Chinese medicine.;
- c. The Experts are drawn from members NSBs, Industries/Private Sector, Academia, Research, Development Institutions, RECs. For 2016, the harmonisation work starts from March – December 2016;
- d. Two Experts one from public and one from Private Sector. This is to facilitate Bottom-up and horizontal approach to standardisation. National Mirror Committees/Networks.

2.1.1 ARSO Conformity Assessment System¹

2.4. The ARSO Conformity Assessment Programme (WTO TBT Agreement article 5, 6, 7, 8) aims at establishing various tools and capacity building for Good Conformity Assessment Practices (testing, certification, inspection, market surveillance, laboratory accreditation and calibration) and facilitating Mutual Recognition Arrangements in the principle of one standard, one test, one certificate accepted everywhere.

- Currently working on the establishment of African Mark of Quality and certification scheme
- The Programme is coordinated by a committee (ARSO Conformity Assessment Committee)
- ARSO CACO is currently comprised of Experts from 20 African countries²

¹ <http://www.arso-caco.org>

² ARSO is cooperating with the DNVGL (DET NORSKE VERITAS FRANCE) for the operationalization of the ARSO Conformity Assessment.

2.1.2 ARSO Consumers Committee³

2.5. This programme is in response to the 1999 United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection and mirroring the ISO COPOLCO to ensure the Consumer participation and involvement in African Standardisation. The programme is intended to counter the Counterfeits and promote Quality Culture in Africa. For the interest of the Committee, we highlight ARSO Workshop on the African Consumers role in standardization Workshop - on 14 August 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – organized in collaboration with ISO/COPOLCO/Consumer International/BSI – UK.

2.1.3 ARSO Documentation and Information Networks⁴

2.6. This programme is in respect of Article 10 of WTO TBT Agreement – Availing Information about standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment. It promotes transparency, openness and good standardisation practices in Africa through exchange of standardisation programmes. It is also coordinated by a committee of Experts from 20 African countries (WTO TBT Focal point staff). The ARSO DISNET comprises of a Library, publishing house, ICT (Facebook, websites, twitter, you Tube), Quarterly newsletter (<http://www.arso-oran.org/publications>). I bring to the attention of the Committee to the ARSO Trade Web Portal (African Trade Help Desk) - trade requirements for African countries products- Mirroring the EU Export Help Desk and the role of DISNET in leveraging the effectiveness of the African countries National Enquiry Points.

2.7. I note that, between 2001 and 2006, ARSO cooperated with ITC/UNCTAD/WTO in the joint Integrated Technical Assistance Program (JITAP) to set up National Enquiry points (NEP) in some of its member States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, functioning well to date.

2.8. ARSO organises Capacity building for the Experts from time to time. During such Sessions one day is dedicated to the TBT Agreement awareness seminar and with Implementation Partners - PTB Germany, ACP-EU-TBT Programme

2.1.4 ARSO Standards Education, Training Workshops and Seminars

2.1.4.1 Standardisation Education Programme

2.9. I refer to the ARSO Standardisation Education Programme which is in tandem with the UN World Program of Action for Youth - 2000 and Beyond (WPAY), AU African Youth Decade, 2008-2018 Plan of Action (DPoA) and of course EU Youth Strategy (2010 – 2018):

- a. Focuses on *African Education systems and University as a Major Pillar* for strengthening Quality Infrastructure and Good Regulatory Framework in Africa.
- b. Promoting the integration of standardisation education into the academic programs of the African schools and Education systems with developed curriculum and training modules. ACADEMIC/Professional Training.

2.10. I wish to highlight:

- a. Master's programme at the - Catholic University of East Africa in Kenya to launch (2016)
- b. KATS (Korean Agency for Technology and Standards cooperation) Korea – Curriculum Training materials.
- c. The school of advanced studies of standardization, Communication and Metrology of DR Congo and a University in Cameroon on the same.

³ <http://www.arso-coco.org/>

⁴ ARSO DISNET - <http://www.arso-disnet.org/>

2.1.4.2 ARSO Standards Essay Competition

2.11. May I bring to the attention of this Committee the ARSO Standards Essay Competition. Initiated in 2013 and focuses on African Youth below 35 Years. It focuses on standardisation, TR, CA. It has been carried out three times - (1st - 2013 – 2014; 2nd 2014-2015; 3rd on-going 2015-2016). So far 25 African countries participating.

2.1.4.3 ARSO Standardisation Training and Awareness Workshops

2.12. ARSO Periodically holds training seminars focusing on, standardisation, Conformity Assessment and Technical Regulations and the related TBTs issues. May I highlight:

- a. The regular ARSO one day TBT Training for every scheduled ARSO THCs meetings (ARSO Calendar of events, 2016) on the TBT Issues to create awareness on the WTO TBT Agreement.- Members to Understand their Obligations and Rights.
- b. 14 December 2015, Nairobi, Kenya - ARSO, Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) jointly organised A WORKSHOP ON "Delivering on the Trade Facilitation Agreement: the role of standards and regulatory frameworks" as A side event to the " 10th WTO Ministerial Conference held in Nairobi on 15–18 December 2015. We highlight the participation of: Sheri Rosenow – WTO Counsellor, Trade Facilitation – Implementing the WTO TFA and Lorenza Jachia – Head Regulatory Cooperation Unit, UNECE –Facilitating Trade through Regulatory Cooperation
- c. 22–25 June 2015, Abuja Nigeria – ARSO President Forum – Mobilisation Forum for African TBT/standardisation Agenda.
- d. 16 October 2015, Nairobi, Kenya, ARSO organised a Quality Infrastructure Mobilisation and Awareness Seminar, for the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA - Committee for Agriculture, Tourism and Natural resource) Members (Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania) of Parliamentarian.
- e. Highlighting their Legislative responsibility – WTO TBT Agreement, QI development in Africa – EU New standardisation Approach informs such decisions.

2.13. Proposed for 2016:

- a. 22nd ARSO GA - 21st June 2016 Arusha Tanzania - Training on "Implementation of standards for trade facilitation: Focusing on Good Practices for conformity assessment systems" – 21st June 2016.
- b. Tuesday thematic sessions on CA- GPs – Presentations invitations.
- c. October 2016, Nairobi, Kenya - TBT workshop as a side meeting of the 7th meeting ACP-EU-TBT Programme in Nairobi Kenya.
- d. June – August 2016 - Conformity Assessment - Best Practices and Mutual Agreement Arrangements – Workshop for the ARSO CACO Experts - ARSO and DGNVL France.

2.2 African Day of Standardisation

2.14. Initiated in June 2013, this yearly event aims at raising awareness among African Regulators, Industry, Academia, Consumers and the entire African Citizens on the benefits of standardisation on Africa's economy. The Event is precursor to the World Standards Day celebrations and its importance with regard to the implementation of International standards – as a Basis for formulation of TR and CA. It has been held as follows:

- a. 1st, 2013 – Yaoundé Cameroon – Theme – "Celebrating Standardisation as a Strategic Resource to Africa's economic integration",

- b. 2nd, 25 June 2014 – Kigali, Rwanda, Theme "Standardisation as a driver for improving Africa's Competitiveness"
- c. 3rd, 12 August 2015 – African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - Theme "The role of Standards in promoting sustainable Agriculture and food security in Africa."

2.15. For the interest of this Committee, once more, it is important to underline that, The WTO Director General Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, through personal intervention, sent a representative, Mr. Devin McDaniels who delivered a lecture on "The Importance of standards for international trade and the role of the WTO TBT Agreement – WTO TBT Programme.

2.16. The focus for the 4th African Day of standardisation to be held on 22nd June 2016 – Arusha, Tanzania will be on "Implementation of standards for trade facilitation: Focus on conformity assessment systems". ARSO is organizing this event with the Standards Alliance, a public-private partnership between USAID and American National Standards Institute (ANSI). We noted with Interest the presentations on the Conformity Assessment and would wish to invite, with your permission, the Presenters to the 22nd ARSO GA events to share this experience.

2.2.1 Made In Africa Expo

2.17. Made in Africa Expo gives the opportunity for the African entrepreneurs and SMEs to understand how standardisation and Conformity Assessment brings competitiveness. It has been held as follows:

2015

- Kenya – 17 March 2015,
- Nigeria – 22–24 June 2015,
- South Africa - May 2015.
- Ghana - February 2015
- Ethiopia – 21-24 August 2015

2016

- Ghana – 19 February 2016
- Zimbabwe – 24 February 2016
- Kenya – 30 March 2016
- Tanzania – 10–14 June 2016, 22nd ARSO GA Events.

2.18. These are available at ARSO YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGpHH6mL-14DM1SX1xS8Vaw>.

2.3 Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) Forum and Cooperation with RECs

2.3.1 Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) – Highlighted /SADC

- PAQI, inaugurated on 30 August 2013 by the Director for Trade and Industry, African Union Commission (AUC),
- PAQI is a forum of 4 QI pillars in Africa - African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC (Accreditation - <http://www.intra-frac.com>), the Intra-Africa Metrology System (AFRIMETS (Metrology - <http://www.afrimets.org/SitePages/Home.aspx>)), the African Electro technical Standardisation Commission (AFSEC – Electro technical Standards - <http://www.afsec-africa.org>) and the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO (Standards, Conformity Assessment – <http://www.arso-ora.org>).
- PAQI promotes the cooperation of African standardisation stakeholders for a coherent and effective Quality Infrastructure in Africa.

2.3.2 Achievements

2.19. I wish to highlight the following:

- a. Drafting the Pan African Quality Infrastructure Policy/Strategy for Africa - 2015
- b. Stock taking (Document) on the status of Quality Infrastructure in Africa (2014) and the African Quality Infrastructure Strategy (http://www.paqi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/EN_PAQI_Stock_Taking_29052015_web.pdf)
- c. Consultations with African Union on the TBT Chapter on the CFTA negotiations, and the declaration of the 2017 as year of Quality for Africa with a focus on the TBT issues in Africa.
- d. Greater cooperation among African Quality Players on Good QI practices to eliminate TBTs and increase trade.
- e. The latest meeting - 7th strategy meeting - 25th -26th February 2016 – Hilton Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.

2.3.3 ARSO Cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

2.20. The ARSO-RECs cooperation is based on the signed MoUs (EAC, 2008; COMESA, 2009; ECOWAS, 2008; SADC – 2015). I wish to highlight that:

- a. Currently, ARSO and ECOWAS through the support of Sida – Sweden, through the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS), are involved in a project that aims at strengthening the ECOWAS countries in participating and adopting the International and African standards.
- b. In the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement (Article 10 and Annex 3 ARSO has been tasked with the role of harmonising the tripartite standards. ARSO has developed guidelines on implementation of MoUs with the RECs.

3 ARSO TECHNICAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

3.1. On Policy matters, I wish to mention the following documents prepared by ARSO:

- a. Criteria for Classification and Identification of Non-Tariff Barriers in Africa (RECs) 2014
- b. General African Quality Policy for African Countries - 2014
- c. General Technical Regulations Framework for African Countries - 2014
- d. African Standardisation Education Policy – 2014
- e. Protocol on Standardization, Metrology, Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (AU SMACA Protocol) - 2015.

4 ARSO STANDARDISATION GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR

4.1. To address the Quality Infrastructure issues at the national, regional and continental Policy level, Madam Chair, ARSO initiated in 2013 the ARSO Goodwill Standardisation Ambassadors. Currently they are Her Excellency Mrs Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, GCSK, CSK, PhD President of the Republic of Mauritius as ARSO Standardisation Goodwill Ambassador – 2015 and H.E. Hon. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

4.2. Finally, I highlight the ARSO partners: African Development Bank (AfDB), The European Union (EU), African Union, WorldFish, ACP-EU TBT Programme in Brussels and Geneva, PTB/GIZ-Germany, Medical Research Council (UK), African Academy of Sciences, Proctor and Gamble - UK,

ASTM International and the ANSI (USA/USAID, CENCENELEC, ISO, IEC, WTO - Secretariat, ITC, UNECE, UNECA, British Standards Institute, Swedish Standards Institute (Sida), RNF/AFNOR, DNGVL – France, AFRIMETS, AFRAC, AFSEC, RECs, NSBs.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1. Madam Chair, ARSO wishes to thank the WTO TBT Committee for granting it the Observer Status on 6th November 2015. ARSO believes that this position will enable it work with the ACP countries and Stakeholders (PASC & CARICOM) on facilitating the implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement.

5.2. ARSO wishes to further thank Uganda, USA, Canada, Jamaica, China, India, South Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and the African countries of Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria and South Africa for the support accorded ARSO on its quest for the Observer Status. ARSO remains thankful to ACP-EU-TBT Programme for the immense support.

5.3. ARSO is open to cooperation with all the WTO and WTO members in the implementation of its programmes and activities for the implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement. *This is especially with regard to Article 11 of the WTO TBTB Agreement on Technical Assistance to developing Countries.* For more information on ARSO visit (<http://www.arsso-oran.org>).

5.4. ARSO family, Madam Chair, reiterates its commitment to facilitate the Implementation of the WTO TBT Agreement and Continuous participation actively as an Observer in the WTO TBT Committee. ARSO will be represented by (as per 53rd ARSO Council resolution, held in South Africa, November 2015, WTO TORs for Observers) Philip Okungu from the Central Secretariat, Abiola Komalkafe from the President's office and Mr. Guy Fondja from the Vice President's office.
