

What ARSO does offer

- ◆ Development and management of evolving African Standardisation Road Map.
- ◆ Contribution, based on AUC's principle of shared responsibility for the collective good, of consensus regional standardisation component into African Common Market and NEPAD market Access Initiative .
- ◆ Co-ordination and harmonisation of regional procedures for conformity assessment, standards development, technical co-operation, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- ◆ Co-ordination, harmonisation, adaptation and/or adoption of member States' national/sub-regional and international standards as regional standards .
- ◆ Maintenance of database on ARSO approved African standards
- ◆ Promotion and advocacy of benefits of standardisation in socio-economic improvement of Africa/Africans.
- ◆ Advocacy of state of standardisation and its needs within and outside Africa.
- ◆ Maintenance of updated database of standardisation experts and expertise in Africa
- ◆ Maintenance of updated database of member States' published standards and/or technical regulations.
- ◆ Assistance in the establishment and operationalisation of NSBs in Africa as well as support operational/ existing NSBs and sub-regional standards infrastructure.
- ◆ Establishment, operationalisation and management of Regional Network of Testing, Metrology and Instrumentation Centres (ARSO-TMICNET).
- ◆ Establishment and management of Regional Standardisation enquiry point.
- ◆ Development, improvement and management of Human Resources through various training modules in standardization related productivity, performance, Trade (WTO/TBT/SPS, negotiation), information, communication technology subject areas.
- ◆ Monitoring these services to ensure that the resultant effects do not only lead to improved beyond-the-border trade in Africa but also guarantee effective participation of Africa, as a trade block, in global competitiveness.

Why Africa must embrace Standardisation.

Trade is a crucial driver of growth, yet Africa with 10% of the World population, represents less than 2% of World Trade. The evolution from protection to liberalization in the global trading system and the emphasis on development in the Doha Round offer opportunities for the advancement of trade and industry in Africa. In expanding trade the link between standards, access to foreign markets and development is at the forefront of policy debate. Low productivity and lack of competitiveness, expanded market access alone will not be enough to generate growth in the continent. Most of African economies are small and provide limited national markets for local trade that can spur faster growth rates for development. As a result, the pursuit of better access to foreign markets is, therefore, a crucial component of Africa's development strategy. African enterprises must strive to develop regional value chains and link with global supply chains to market their products internationally.

Africa includes many of the world's poorest countries, with 300 million of its peoples living on less than 1 \$ a day. Simply halving the number of the continents poor by 2015 will require an approximate annual growth of 7% as well as more equitable distribution of income. The improvement of this situation is dependent on access to markets and the continent's ability to exploit the export potential. On the one hand, this requires working on the supply side, enabling enterprises to manufacture products with high-export potential in the quantities and at the level of quality required by the markets. On the other hand, it requires evidence of market conformity with regard to product quality, safety, health and environmental impacts and proof from internationally recognized institutions that their products conform to the requirements of relevant international standards. Increasing its engagement in international trade and improving penetration of international markets can help achieve the much needed growth. While there are many complementary actions that are needed to improve the investment climate so as to allow a higher growth rate to be achieved, addressing the effect of product standards both as barriers to trade and opportunities to expand market access is likely to be one area where action will have a higher rate of return. This is particularly true to Africa. Even though African countries face critical challenges in improving domestic capacity to meet production and quality standards that are required in foreign markets.

Non compliance with international trade deprives African farmers access to key international markets, and may lead to a further reduction in market share – especially in agricultural products like horticulture and fisheries, and light manufactures like textiles. Without addressing market access and international standards compliance issues, African firms and farmers will be unable to take full advantage of recent market opening initiatives such as US African Growth Opportunity and Opportunity Act and the EU's Everything But Arms initiative.

In a nut shell standards prevent barriers to trade, provide technical support for legislation, and promote competitiveness of industries. They are the basis for agreement on the design, manufacture, performance and testing of products, services, or operations and they are sometimes the basis for mandatory legislation. The need, therefore, to support and strengthen effective continental programmes and initiatives designed to improve the ability of the continent to comply with international standards and to support the harmonization of African Standards and Technical regulations regionally cannot be overemphasized.



**African Organisation
for
Standardisation**



ARSO IN BRIEF

Mission

To facilitate intra-African and global trade through providing harmonised standards and facilitating implementation standards.

Vision

To be an excellent standardisation centre that promotes trade and industry.

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ESTABLISHMENT

The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) is an African intergovernmental organization established in January 1977 by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, currently African Union (AU)) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Standardisation and Measurement System are integral part of the 1991 Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. The OAU Lagos Plan of Action spelt out the mandate of ARSO.

Object of the Organisation

The object of the organization shall be to promote standardization and related activities in Africa with the view of facilitating intra-African trade and international exchange of goods and services, participation and cooperation at the international level of its members in the sphere of scientific, technological and economic activity.

As a means to these ends, the organization may inter alia:

- ◆ Harmonize national and/or sub-regional standards and issue necessary recommendations to Member Bodies for this purpose;
- ◆ Initiate and coordinate the development of African Standards with references to products which are of particular interest to Africa;
- ◆ Encourage and facilitate adoption of International standards by Member Bodies;
- ◆ Promote and facilitate the exchange of experts, information & cooperation in the training of personnel in standardization activities.
- ◆ Coordinate the views of its members at the ISO, IEC, OIML, CODEX and other International organizations concerned with standardization activities;
- ◆ Create appropriate bodies in addition to the organs of the Organization for the purposes of fulfilling its objectives .

STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

The General Assembly, consisting of the member States of the Organization is the supreme organ of ARSO. At its sessions held yearly, the Assembly devotes its attention to general policy matters and priority programmes, reviews achievements under earlier programmes, considers and approves future proposals.

The Council , consists of 12 elected members from the member States, including the President, the Vice-President and the Treasurer. It guides, subject to the directions of the General Assembly, the activities of the Organization.

The Council also directs the implementation of resolutions, approves annual programmes of work and budget and reviews achievements made thereof.

Present Council Members (2008-210)are:

- President — **Dr. Eng. Kioko Mang'eli**
- Vice President - D. R. Congo
- Treasurer — Ghana
- Members: — Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Nigeria, Madagascar, Sudan, Tanzania and Tunisia.

The Secretariat, headed by the Secretary General, services the General Assembly, meetings of the Council and the subsidiary organs of the Organisation. The Secretariat subject to the general directions of the Council is entrusted with the administration of the Organization and carries out resolutions and implements work programmes and priorities.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of ARSO is open to all African Countries through their quality institutions. Currently there are 25 member States, namely: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

ARSO Strategy

- ◆ Capacity-building – comprising of courses, seminars and trainings on standardization and conformance evaluation and on topics of standardization relating to market access and export potential, Exchange of Experts through ARSO Sabbatical Leave Programme and twinning arrangement.
- ◆ Awareness creation— comprising conferences and standardisation forums, press reports, the publication and presentation of compendia of standards and standardisation experts, participation in fairs and conventions, developing information networks, workshops on the application of standards.
- ◆ Resource mobilisation through cooperation with Donors, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Technical Partners and various standardisation stakeholders.
- ◆ Delivery of harmonised African Standards through the African Standardisation Model (ASHAM) and adoption of International standards to improve Africa's competitiveness in the global market.
- ◆ Promotion of Research and trend analysis to provide standardisation stakeholders an overview of the trends and needs for research and future standardisation in selected areas in light of recent research , industry application, and on going demand for preparation of standards.

ARSO Programme for 2009

- ◆ Awareness creation through workshops, conferences
- ◆ Development of a database of African Standardisation, Quality and Conformity Assessment Experts;
- ◆ Harmonization of Conformity Assessment Procedures for NSBs in Africa;
- ◆ ARSO membership drive targeted at African countries which have not joined ARSO;
- ◆ Harmonization of Regional Standards as African Standards (Harmonization of at least 10 critical standards using the African Standards Harmonization Model (ASHAM) in the area of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Food Safety in Tourism Industry based on ISO 22000:2005. – the process to start in May 2009.
- ◆ Zoned Human Resource Development;
- ◆ Needs Assessment and Technical Assistance of African States without NSBs, ARSO Council – July 2009; and ARSO General Assembly – November 2009.