



African Organisation For Standardisation
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Honouring African President with a big Heart for Standardisation

Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, GCSK, CSK, PhD President of the Republic of Mauritius designated as ARSO Standardisation Goodwill Ambassador



A wide range of organisations employ goodwill ambassadors to promote their programs and reach out to others with programs that are based on good relations, from multinational groups such as the United Nations and United Nations Associations, the African Union and the European Union.

Under Schedule I, Rules of Procedure for the General Assembly of the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), Rule 2 on membership, paragraph 2.4.1.2 admits Organisations and by extension individuals who are ready to serve as ARSO goodwill ambassador. (Source of Photo:

<http://president.govmu.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>)

With the increasing globalization of markets, standards have become critical to ensuring access to export markets as Standards and Conformity Assessment are the 'pillars' that underpin the global trading system.

In this respect, the significant challenges associated with trade liberalisation are emerging as priorities for developing countries especially in Africa. As a result, this has significantly raised the profile of the need for a well-coordinated Quality Infrastructure in Africa to ensure participation in the global trading system.

The ARSO Goodwill Ambassadors help generate public awareness and understanding of ARSO, Standardisation and its benefits, as well as inspire broad, positive, committed action in support of ARSO's mandate and priorities. Her Excellency is passionate and inspiring about trade issues, standardisation, and African economic development. Her Excellency, being a Scientist, was an ARSO Expert in African Traditional Medicine under the Technical Harmonisation Committee 13.



Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (right) participating in the meeting of the ARSO THC 13 on Traditional Medicine as an Expert, in Nairobi, Kenya on 2nd-5th December 2014. Source: ARSO.

It is acknowledged that many developing countries in Africa face significant standardisation challenges, including inability to adequately participate in international standards development and lack of the basic technical infrastructure for conformity assessment activities. This makes it impossible for them to effectively participate in global trading activities, becoming signatories to international agreements, developing a strong base for sustainable economic development and slowing the process of Africa's quest for deeper integration into the Global system.

The ARSO Council recognised the importance of ARSO Goodwill Ambassadors in helping to generate public awareness and understanding of ARSO, Standardisation and its benefits, as well as inspiring broad, positive, committed actions in support of ARSO's mandate and priorities, and taking note of the passion Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim has for standardisation, designated Her Excellency as ARSO Standardisation Goodwill.



Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (seated right) participating in the ARSO THC 13 on Traditional Medicine as an Expert, led by ARSO Technical Director, Nairobi, Kenya February 2014.

Source: ARSO

The African Traditional Medicine (ATM) is Africa's common heritage and is a reality in regional trade. The global trade in traditional medicine is estimated at US\$ 83 billion dominated mainly by western herbal medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Ayurveda with the African share being insignificant yet the African wealth in biodiversity makes it a bio-prospecting hotspot.

ARSO promotes the harmonisation of African Standards (ARS) with particular emphasis on quality and safety of African Traditional Medicine (ATM) to facilitate regional and international trade with an initial focus on: terminology, raw material and processed products specifications. Across the world, traditional medicine (TM) which demand is important and its services is increasing, but often underestimated, is either the mainstay of health care delivery or serves as a complement to it. Several African countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are having initiatives to incorporate ATM in their healthcare systems. 80% – 90 % of people in Africa depend on traditional medicine for their primary healthcare WHO, 2003) and the demand is growing at between 10 % to 20 % annually across the world.

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The ARSO work is in line with the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023 that aims at building the knowledge base and formulating national policies; strengthening safety, proven quality and effectiveness through regulation; and, promoting universal health coverage by integrating T&CM services and self-health care into national health systems.



Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim (standing - 2nd left) Joins other ARSO THC 13 on Traditional Medicine as an Expert, Nairobi, Kenya February 2014. Source: ARSO.