

SPEECH BY MR. EDDY NJOROGE, THE ISO PRESIDENT-ELECT TO THE 41st COPOLCO MEETING .

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INCLUSIVE COMMERCE: WHAT ROLE FOR STANDARDS

Honorable Nqobizitha Mangaliso Ndhlovu; Minister of Industry and Commerce

Honorable Raj Modi; Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce

Dr Mavis Siyanda; Permanent Secretary Ministry of Industry and Commerce

Mr. Sergio Mujica; ISO Secretary General

Dr Eve Gadzikwa; SAZ Director General, ARSO President

Miss Rosemary Siyachitema; Consumer Council of Zimbabwe Executive Director

Mr. Guillermo Zucal; ISO COPOLCO Chair

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am deeply humbled and pleased to be here at the 41st COPOLCO meeting being held in Harare Zimbabwe – a first one in the sub Saharan Africa. I wish to thank Dr. Eve Gadzikwa and her entire team for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this important ISO meeting in Harare.

Honorable minister, it is worth noting that the presidency of the African Regional Standardization Organization (ARSO) is currently held currently by Zimbabwe, with none other than Dr. Eve Gadzikwa, during her tenure, ARSO has achieved tremendous milestones. She has been on the fore front of promoting Pan-African harmonization of national technical regulations, standards and Conformity Assessment which are key in delivering the African Continental Free Trade Area (Acfta). Indeed, we are privileged as a continent and Standardization fraternity at large to have her, we have not only benefited from her wise counsel but also from her stewardship on standardization matters.

This is truly an exciting opportunity for the developing countries not only to host some of these important meetings within the ISO calendar but also to actively participate in the important deliberations that affect the both the industry and the consumers. I wish to reiterate that active participation in these meetings is becoming an increasingly critical imperative of our international ecosystem. I would like to encourage members from the developing countries to take the advantage of these opportunities.

Honorable minister, ladies and gentlemen,

The economies around the world are integrating into a global economy at an extra ordinary pace and as a result, nations around the world have liberalized trade. This has led to intensified international flows of goods, and services. With the open markets, firms across the world have experienced higher demand for their products, as well as benefit from economies of scale. This in turn has led to a reduction in average production costs. While that has been happening, rapid developments in the area of information technology has put trading of goods and services in real time across the world something which was unheard of several decades ago.

Even though globalization offers immediate benefits like faster economic growth, higher living standards and increased opportunities for business, not all players have benefited equally from the globalization phenomena. Growth in 'traditional' business has mainly benefited large businesses because they have necessary capital and infrastructure to take on the investments required to engage in global trade. Those that do not have the technical capabilities, infrastructure and institutional capacity found themselves falling behind even further especially small and medium enterprises, therefore the need for an all-inclusive commerce model that guarantees equal opportunity for all to take part and succeed in global commerce.

Honorable minister, ladies and gentlemen,

Technology-enabled trade will be the silver bullet that will deliver the inclusive commerce because it is more robust than its traditional counterpart which transacted manually and relied on print. More often than not, the participation of SMEs in the global trade has been largely to supply large multi-national corporations' with various inputs. However, with the emergence of technology and internet of things, a parallel model is emerging in the way business is conducted worldwide. Businesses of any size whether big or small can now access consumers anywhere around the world through internet! This model is more efficient and inclusive than the traditional model.

In order to harness the potential of technology enabled trade, right policies to encourage internet connectivity must be in place. It is worthwhile noting that The SADC Industrialization Strategy and roadmap 2015-2063 recognizes the role of ICT as an enabler and a catalyst to industrialization. It is my hope that Zimbabwe will be the amongst the first nations within SADC to reap the benefits of technology led trade.

A robust Infrastructure system like the one envisaged in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) will determine proper delivery goods and services by all market players' hence boosting inclusivity.

To this end, standards will play a crucial role in

- Disseminating the best industry practice, support resuscitation and growth of key industries
- Supporting public policy and innovation in the area of technology and Zimbabwe can harness this, to support the revival of the motor industry sector as envisioned in the Zimbabwe Motor Industry Development Policy (2017 - 2030).
- Supporting cross-border trade of goods and services through harmonized standards especially now that the African Continental Free Trade Area is coming into force.

I wish to say that, ISO will seek to ensure that its standards are market driven and meet the needs of the users and that Standards will play a significant role in assuring that products and services meet essential consumer requirements for quality, health and safety, which is a key tool in promoting consumer protection.

Lastly I wish to say that it is an honor to participate in this 41st COPOLCO meeting which is the first one in the sub Saharan Africa as the first ISO president –elect from Africa, I wish you all a very successful plenary meeting and workshop and look forward to the outcomes of your deliberations which I am sure will greatly contribute towards ISO's set objectives.

Thank you and God bless you.