



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

World Standards Day 2021 Commemorative Event

FEATUE ADDRESS
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE PAULA GOPEE-SCOON
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

OCTOBER 15TH, 2021

SALUTATIONS:

- Members of TTBS' Board of Directors
- Mr Derek Luk Pat, Executive Director, TTBS
- Dr Axel Kravatzky, Vice-Chair, ISO TC 309 & Managing Partner, Syntegra-ESG
- Dr Marissa Gowrie, Deputy Environmental Manager, Environmental Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Ms Nadita Ramachala, Manager, Standardization Division and the Management Team of TTBS
- Members of the esteemed panel
- Specially invited guests
- Members of the media
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning and Happy World Standards Day 2021!

I am pleased to join in celebrating World Standards Day 2021, themed “**Standards for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — Shared Vision for a Better World.**” Today provides us with the opportunity to recognize and promote the importance of standardization and to acknowledge all stakeholders locally, regionally and internationally who continue to collaborate to develop and implement national, regional and International Standards.

The TTBS plays a critical role in monitoring and implementing international standards locally. As the National Standards Body, they represent the interests of stakeholders in two of the well-known International Standards Bodies, namely:

- International Standardization for Organization (ISO)
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

Representation in these bodies allows our national experts and stakeholders to directly contribute to the development of International Standards and to ensure that these standards meet the needs of Trinidad and Tobago, for accelerated socio-economic transformation and increased global competitiveness.

This year's theme recognises the integral role that standardization plays in the achievement of the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals which were adopted by all United Nations Members as a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

These SDGs recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, while simultaneously tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. Attainment of the SDG goals requires the cooperation of public and private partners guided by national, regional and international

standards, coupled with the relevant conformity assessment tools to support the implementation of these standards.

Standardization and related activities are key elements in the sustainable development of our national economy, the health and safety of our citizens, reducing energy consumption, promoting efficient work and reducing product failures, and the protection of our environment. Standards assist in enhancing local and international business competitiveness, reduce technical barriers to trade, contribute to strong export markets and assist firms to compete in regional and international markets. On an individual level, standards provide consumer confidence as it gives the assurance of quality, safety and reliability.

Ladies and gentlemen, you would have recently heard the Honourable Minister of Finance, Colm Imbert state in the Fiscal 2022 budget presentation that this Government is focused on accelerating the implementation of the National Quality Policy with particular focus on the manufacturing sector to ensure adherence to international standards and technical regulations. The policy will improve the reliability of measurements and increase the number of accredited, testing and certification facilities.

To ensure that we effectively meet required international standards, the Government remains steadfast on strengthening our National Quality Infrastructure. The Quality Infrastructure is the institutional framework that sets out and implements standardization, conformity and accreditation processes that will create a strong foundation for international trade, and enhances the capability of our companies to compete. It also ensures that products and services sold in Trinidad and Tobago, meet the minimum requirements for the protection of the consumer, health and safety and the environment.

To this end, a National Standardization Strategy (NSS) 2019-2022, was developed with critical input from local stakeholders and is currently being implemented. The NSS is guided by three main themes, which are: -

- Ensuring a robust and responsive NSS
- Creation of a conscious standards society
- Utilization of ICT tools to modernize the standards development process and improve access to standards.

The NSS is essential to the implementation of the National Quality Policy, as it identifies the key standardization requirements of the country for improved trade facilitation and overall global competitiveness.

To date, several standards have been approved in alignment with the NSS that include: -

- Standards:
 - for Information Security Management Systems and Standards on Cloud computing in support of the GORTT's thrust for the digitization of the economy; These standards are essential tools for data protection and privacy, and the overall digital transformation, which is critical to the diversification thrust.
 - for construction, textiles, consumer products and electrical cables to support economic diversification;
 - on Good Agricultural Practices to support the drive towards ensuring food security and economic sustainability;
 - for electrical vehicle charging systems and relevant infrastructure to support the initiative for low carbon emissions, and;
 - for non-medical face masks and cleaning chemicals to protect public health and safety during the COVID 19 pandemic; and

Collaboration is currently being undertaken with WASA to update the national plumbing code to ensure clean and safe water for all.

These standards are all relevant to SDGs as they aim to create an equitable, safe, healthy, sustainable, robust and well-functioning society.

In addition to the standards highlighted, targeted programmes are being undertaken to further facilitate a standards and quality focused culture:

- The Certification Programme for Food and Beverage Standards and Product Compliance (CPFSPC) and labelling and product testing support through the Export Booster Initiative. Funding has been allocated to assist manufacturers in achieving international certification that will cover the costs related to standards adoption and implementation, including audits and inspections, the acquisition of the specialised equipment, infrastructural modifications, as well as certification costs.

To date, we have had a number of applications, of which six (6) have been approved and seven (7) are currently being processed. These applicants represent a range of firms in the agro- processing sector, food and beverage and engineering and industrial sectors.

-The establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (TTASCA), an independent National Accreditation body which will inspect how a body, product or service meets specified requirements. The draft legislation has been prepared and is currently being reviewed;

Recently, the TTBS launched its Building a Quality Culture in Trinidad and Tobago project which is a significant step to creating a quality culture among our manufacturers, exporters, consumers and citizens. This project will further promote the benefits and application of standards by all stakeholders.

Ladies and gentlemen we must recognise and personally congratulate Ms. Andia Persad-Maharaj, a member of the Standardization Division at the TTBS for receiving the prestigious 2021 ISO Next Generation Award which recognizes young professionals from ISO members, who are championing sustainability-driven standardization and the value of partnerships to tackle issues from a multidisciplinary perspective.

The management and staff of the TTBS must also be congratulated for the tremendous work being executed as they continue to champion the development and implementation of standards, measurement systems and conformity assessment services for the competitiveness and sustainability of Trinidad and Tobago. Further, the development of standards requires key expert groups and stakeholders in the relevant sector and so we would like to recognize the contributions made by these individuals.

As I close, I wish to reiterate the Ministry's commitment to supporting the work of the TTBS and encourage you, our valued stakeholders to join us in fostering standards to create a viable environment, which promotes high value products and services to provide a better quality of life for every citizen.

Once again, I wish you Happy World Standards Day 2021.

I thank you.