

## SUB-COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND CONFORMANCE (SCSC)

*including SCSC Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) and SCSC Joint Regulatory Advisory Committee on Electrical and Electronic Equipment Meeting (JRAC)*

### CONVENOR'S REPORT AND INPUTS FOR 2021 CTI ANNUAL REPORT TO MINISTERS

#### (a) Key outcomes and achievements in 2021

SCSC worked on various themes and activities;

- Reduce technical barriers to trade and enhance market access through standards and conformance;
- Continue to align national standards with international standards;
- Promote good regulatory practices in the preparation, adoption and application of standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures;
- Ensure greater transparency;
- Progress mutual recognition arrangements for conformity assessment within the region;
- Pursue regional cooperation in accordance with international agreements;
- Build capacity and capability and enhance competitiveness of business including micro, small and medium enterprises.

#### **Support for the Multilateral Trading System**

- Japan reported on the WTO TBT Committee meetings.
- China reported on the 79<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> WTO SPS Committee meeting.
- Peru reported on the “Initiative on Promoting Transparency of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) World Trade Organization (WTO) Notifications: Improving Completeness and Clearness of Information”. Preliminary results of self-funded study identify aspects of the TBT notification process that could be improved, and identify private sector perceptions. Results indicate the most important items in notifications were the objective, proposed date and description of content. The main challenges identified were a lack of information on draft measures, use of different languages and relevant international standards not being identified.

#### **Regional Economic Integration, including taking forward the Putrajaya Vision 2040 and contributing to the development of the Implementation Plan in 2021**

- Thailand presented on “Capacity Building Workshop on Testing Methods for Internet of Things (IoT) Products. This project aims to develop capability of testing skills by undertaking the round robin test based on globally relevant standards and recognize the testing methods for IoT products.
- Japan reported on “Capacity Building on the Development of Climate Actions for Sustainable Growth by use of ISO 14080”. The aim is to share challenge and potential needs of harmonization for reporting climate action (ISO 14080) and sustainable finances (ISO 14030; ISO14100 and ISO 14097) to improve communication between financiers and ISO standards.
- The United States reported on a project with APEC regional economies to build capacity and reduce trade barriers through good regulatory practices. Peru generously volunteered to be the pilot economy and work began in 2019 with a needs assessment, which provided a number of recommendations. Training on public consultation practices has been the focus, including a virtual training held in February 2021 that drew participants from 13 Peruvian ministries. Efforts with Peru are ongoing, and work

is beginning with Indonesia, which also volunteered to collaborate with the United States.

#### **Trade Facilitation and Connectivity**

- Japan reported on the results of 3<sup>rd</sup> survey of the 9<sup>th</sup> Voluntary Action Plan (VAP) that reviews the alignment between national and international standards. The degree of alignment with the standards in 13 economies on 52 international standards (and 14 categories) relating to "COVID-19 and future pandemics" was reported. Of the 13 economies that responded, 38% of standards are aligned with international standards. Among the 14 categories, medical devices and information security systems had a high degree of alignment. The category of antiviral and antibacterial products had a low rate of alignment. The 10th VAP is in October 2021. The next action will be to request a new set of target standards.

#### **In addition, several trade facilitation projects reported at SCSC include:**

- Australia reported on the project "Trade Facilitation through the Development of an APEC Food Safety Risk Communication Framework". This project aims to develop an APEC Framework, and associated Guidelines, for Food Safety Risk Communication to assist the food safety regulatory authorities of member economies.
- Australia reported on the project "APEC Workshop to identify future work on non-tariff measures (NTMs) affecting grain trade". This project is intended to foster a more consistent approach to NTMs, which will create sustained and long-term benefits for all economies engaged in the grain trade.
- China released a report on the project "Trade Facilitation by Ensuring a Safer Food Supply through Cross-border E-commerce".
- United States reported on the project "APEC FSCF PTIN Workshop on Pesticide Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) Harmonization: A Trade Facilitative Approach to MRL Compliance". Some highlights from the June 2021 workshop include the results of a survey assessing industry's main concerns related to pesticide MRL trade barriers, a mobile app that can be used to track pesticide residues, and a presentation by the almond industry on the importance of channels of trade provisions to prevent unnecessary trade barriers for agricultural products with long shelf lives. The next workshop is tentatively scheduled for January 2022.

#### **Inclusion**

- China reported on a project to develop standards and conformity assessment for an ageing-inclusive digital economy. A project that aims to bridge the digital divide for the elderly through standards and conformity assessment.
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) reported its initiatives to promote and strengthen diversity, in particular on stakeholder diversity, geographical diversity and gender diversity. A new webpage on Women in Standardization was recently introduced while on 11 Feb, a video campaign, #WomenatIEC was launched. SCSC members are encouraged to share the videos in their social network and to use the #WomenatIEC.

(b) Work Undertaken by the fora in response to COVID-19 (in particular in fulfilling the [2021 Ministers Responsible for Trade Statement & two annexes](#) & the [2020 Declaration on Facilitating the Movement of Essential Goods](#))

- The 9<sup>th</sup> VAP led by Japan focused on standards of measures against COVID-19 and future pandemics. Standards on medical equipment such as ventilators, Biological evaluation and PPE were the most highly selected. This survey aims to determine the alignment priority that contributes to the mitigation of COVID-19 impacts in the regions.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In addition, United States presented on their projects on personal protective equipment, which aims to create appropriate standards, policy and regulations to support addressing issues shortages of PPE and nasopharyngeal swabs as well as strengthening technical skills. The project is aimed at supporting public-private collaboration, and drafting needed standards.</li><li>• United States and Peru are collaborating on a project, which aims to support public consultation processes in urgent situations. Currently the project is focusing on Peru's new RIA law to support implementation of public consultation.</li></ul>
(c) Key Issues Under Discussion by the Fora (if any); <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of SCSC subsidiary bodies, Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF) is yet to reach consensus on their ToR.</li></ul>
(d) Items to submit to Senior Officials or Ministers (if applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Endorsed SCSC ToR and JRAC ToR to be endorsed and the renewal of these groups to be endorsed by Senior Officials.</li></ul>