

# Standards MATTER



Your Quality Advocate

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## Toy Safety In Malaysia



Quality Management  
System Certification



Avoiding Potential Pitfalls  
in Consumer Safety Standards  
Development



ISO 26000 – Guidance On  
Social Responsibility



**STANDARDS  
MALAYSIA**

**1996-2006**

DSM: A Decade of Advancing  
Excellence in Standards  
& Accreditation

and many more features in our Inaugural Issue of **STANDARDS MATTER**



# Message from Director General

“... improving  
quality of life of  
Malaysians by  
enhancing the  
need for safety  
and performance  
standards for  
consumer  
products and  
services ...”

I am pleased to introduce to the readers the inaugural issue of the STANDARDS MATTER magazine.

This magazine is published twice yearly and it provides information on a thematic basis to users of standards i.e industry, government, consumers, students and others. The contents are relevant to current issues such as product safety and social responsibility. The inaugural issue includes a feature on quality management system and issues on certification. The writer who is a very experienced auditor at one of the leading certification body accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia has provided readers with valuable information on certification, the problems and how to avoid or overcome them.

I am happy that the inaugural issue of STANDARDS MATTER has also covered the achievements of the Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA) since its establishment in 1996.

The Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users) has assisted STANDARDS MALAYSIA in promoting the importance of standards among consumers since 2004. It is good to know that their outreach capacity has increased from year to year. In addition to that, Standards Users also represents consumers at the ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility meetings and is the Co-Convenor for the Working Group on Product Safety for the ISO Committee on Consumer Policy (ISO COPOLCO).

One of the landmark achievements in consumer protection came when the Department of Standards Malaysia and Standards Users successfully engaged Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) to make standards for toy safety, mandatory.

We are proud to say that Standards Users has grown and developed its capacity in just three years and is able to share their thoughts and also promote the importance of standards to all stakeholders with the publication of the STANDARDS MATTER magazine.

I bid them good luck and congratulations.

**Fadilah Baharin**  
*Director General*  
Department of Standards Malaysia  
Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation



# Message from the President

“... improving quality of life of Malaysians by enhancing the need for safety and performance standards for consumer products and services ...”

**A**s President of the Malaysian Association of Standards Users, I would like to maintain a dialogue with our readers so that we can provide updates on developments pertaining to standards that affect consumers in Malaysia, as well as news and developments in and around the world. This magazine is published twice a year and is circulated to industries and consumer organisations around Malaysia.

The Malaysian Association of Standards Users is a non-government organisation dedicated to supporting initiatives to improve the quality of life of Malaysians by enhancing the need for safety and performance standards for consumer products and services. Compliance with standards, either voluntary or mandatory, minimises safety and health risks to humans and the environment.

The association has worked with various government and non-government organisations, namely the Department of Standards Malaysia (or STANDARDS MALAYSIA), the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) and the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA) to enhance awareness of the importance of standards to achieve better quality of life for consumers. In doing so, the association has taken part in many standards development committees to ensure consumer views are considered during the development of standards – in Malaysia and at the international level at the ISO's (International Organisation for Standardisation) consumer policy committee (ISO COPOLCO).

Standards Users is a member of the National Standards Committee (MyNSC), the National Electrotechnical Committee (MyENC), ISO SR (Social Responsibility) and the secretariat for the National Mirror Committee on ISO COPOLCO. Standards

Users has also conducted studies on consumer perception of organic standards and service industry standardisation requirements.

With all these efforts it, is only fair to bring the news, happenings and latest developments in the world of standards to the industry and business.

Standards have an undeniable role in shaping the way business is done throughout the world. Everything from planting to harvesting, processing and packaging and sales and distribution are all influenced and facilitated by international standards or some form of consensus-derived guidelines across the globe.

Increasing stress on the environment has resulted in development of standards to include aspects that influence the quality of our environment and social context of a business. Malaysian businesses have only benefits to reap from the compliance with standards, both in terms of image enhancement and profitability.

This magazine will provide briefs on standards development and sources and resources to enable industries and consumer organisations to keep abreast with the development in standards and standardisation, as well as to utilise the knowledge to enhance their businesses and operations.

I hope you will find the magazine useful and informative. Please let us know what more you would like to see in future editions.

Kind regards,

**Datuk Marimuthu Nadason**

## Editorial

I am delighted to provide an update on what has been achieved by the Malaysian Association of Standards Users in the area of standards development, which is so pertinent to both industry and consumers.

We have in this issue :

- Safety Standards for Toys
- Social Responsibility (SR)
- Quality Management System Certification
- and much more

Please forward us your comments on this issue to [info@standardsusers.org](mailto:info@standardsusers.org) and we shall consider your comments for future issues.

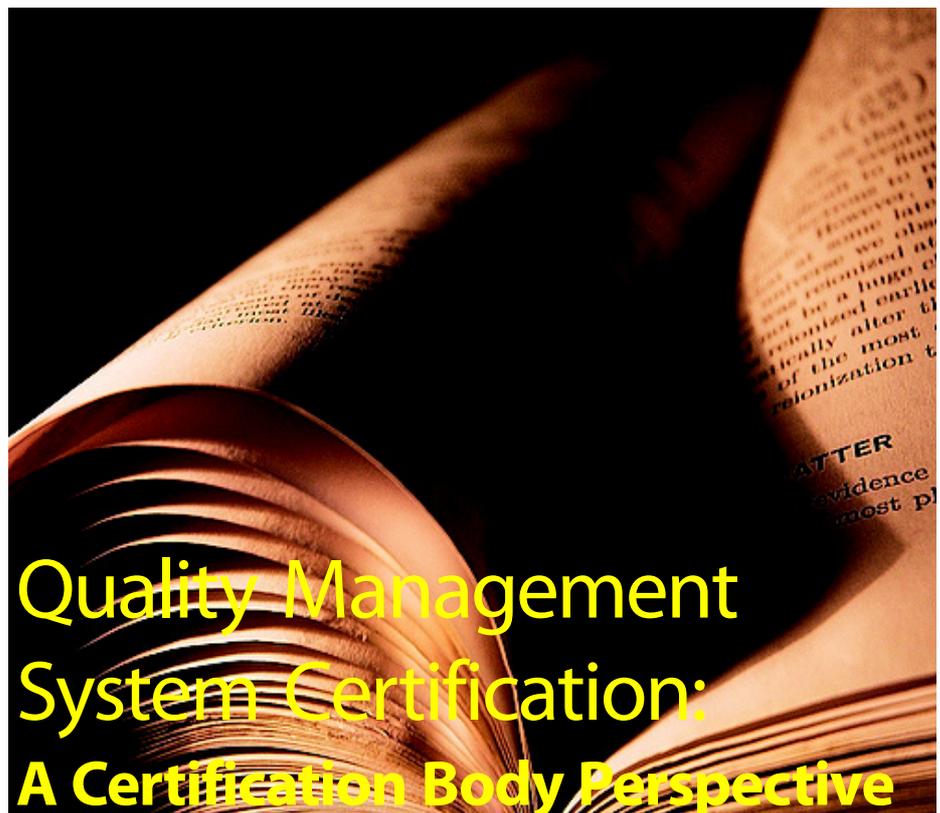
Thank you and Best Regards.

Ratna Devi Nadarajan  
STANDARDS MATTER

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What, you may ask, is a management system? A quality management system (QMS) refers to the processes and procedures established and implemented by an organisation to achieve its quality policy and related objectives. An organisation implementing a quality management system should have processes and procedures in place to ensure that customer requirements are clearly understood and consistently met.

### History of quality management systems

Quality management systems have been implemented by organisations since the early 1950s. At that time, these were mainly used by suppliers to the defence industry. Subsequently, in the 1960s, major automotive organisations established company-level QMS standards which they imposed on suppliers. In the 1970s and 1980s, national standards were established in the USA, Canada and the UK.

The widespread application of QMS only took place after the publication of the

ISO 9000 series of standards in 1987. The standards were developed by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), with the sole purpose of addressing the proliferation of QMS standards that were being developed at the national and industry-level. Organisations were increasingly being required to implement different systems to satisfy the requirements of different customers. ISO 9000 was developed as a generic standard that could be used by organisations of all sizes, operating in any sector of the economy, whether in manufacturing or services, public or private.

### ISO 9000, ISO 9001 or MS ISO 9001?

Although the generic term "ISO 9000" is generally used, certification is actually carried out to the current ISO 9001:2000 standard. Other standards in the ISO 9000 family have mainly been developed to provide guidance to users in the development and maintenance of their quality management systems.

In Malaysia, one often hears about

# Certification of quality management systems, particularly to a widely recognised standard such as the ISO 9001, is very useful in business-to-business relationships



certification to MS ISO 9001:2000. It is basically the same standard, identical in content to the International Standard, which has been adopted and published as a Malaysian Standard, hence the prefix “MS”.

It is common practice, at the national level, to adopt and publish the International Standard as a national standard. Hence, one also encounters standards such as “BS EN ISO 9001:2000”, (the UK version) and SS ISO 9001:2000 (the Singapore version).

For some curious reason, we have often encountered situations where organisations have indicated that they have obtained certification from particular certification bodies (CBs) because the standard the CBs certified to was “ISO 9001:2000” or “BS EN ISO 9001:2000” and not MS ISO 9001:2000. The generally held view that MS ISO 9001:2000 is different from the International Standard and certification to that standard is somehow inferior to ISO 9001:2000 or BS EN ISO 9001:2000. **This perception can be attributed to unscrupulous consultants propagating this view in their attempt to steer clients to particular CBs of their choice.**

## ISO and its role in the certification business

The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is only responsible for the publication of the ISO 9000 standards. **It is not, in any way, involved in the certification of organisations.**

Certification, which is a third-party verification of conformity, is provided by certification bodies that are independent of the organisations certified. ISO, mainly through its Conformity Assessment Committee (CASCO), is involved in the development of a portfolio of standards aimed at ensuring that certification is

carried out in a consistent, impartial and credible manner. The standard applicable to management system certification bodies is ISO/IEC 17021:2006. This standard is used by **accreditation bodies** in their assessment of **certification bodies**.

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**ISO is not in any way involved in the certification of organisations.**

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## Quality management certification and its benefits

Certification of quality management systems, particularly to a widely recognised standard such as the ISO 9001, is very useful in business-to-business relationships. It provides independent assurance to the purchaser of the supplier’s ability to ensure that his requirements will be consistently met. Even if the buyer does receive the occasional non-conforming product, he can rest assured that the supplier’s quality management system, which requires him to implement corrective action in such a situation, would prevent a repetition of any failure.

On an on-going basis, the supplier’s performance should improve and hence further enhance the satisfaction of the buyer. This is what should happen if ISO 9001:2000 is implemented in the right spirit by organisations and certification is carried out by competent certification bodies (carrying out their activities in an impartial manner). The worldwide growth in ISO 9001 certifications (777,000 certificates in 162 countries) is an indication that many people still have a lot of faith in ISO 9001 certification and many organisations actually rely on third party certification of this standard in the course of their daily business dealings.

The question one might ask is whether this confidence is justified. Quite frankly,

this is a difficult question to answer. As a representative of an organisation that places extremely high priority on ensuring that certification is carried out in a credible manner, I would certainly hope it is. After all, that is what certification is all about. We are in the credibility business. *The piece of paper we issue to organisations (the certificate, I mean) must mean something.*

## Loss of credibility of certification

However, developments in recent years in some parts of the world, including Malaysia, have raised serious concerns about the credibility of management system certification. These concerns have mainly come about as a result of unethical practices of some CBs. It would not be totally correct to attribute the blame to one party alone. Others, such as organisations seeking certification, and consultants who help organisations establish their systems, also have to take some share of the blame.

Let’s take the case of Malaysia. Although the certification market has grown over the last 10 years, it would be difficult to justify the substantial increase in the number of certification bodies operating in the country, from around four to nearly 30, during the same period. With the exception of one or two local bodies, all the others are either subsidiaries of foreign CBs or local agents representing foreign CBs. Although all of them operate under some form of accreditation and issue accredited certificates, only a handful have obtained local accreditation from the Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA).

The fact that the majority are not under local accreditation and hence not subject to supervision by the local body is one of the factors that gives them a free rein to operate. The accreditation under which

they operate generally covers the parent company and a multitude of branch offices and agencies around the world. With the limited resources accreditation bodies have, these remote offices with insignificant (in relation to the total) number of certificates are missed out in the sampling of sites to be covered by the accreditation bodies when they carry out their surveillance activities. Given the lax supervision over their activities, these CBs have a tendency to break all the rules.

In an extremely competitive certification market, the deciding factor is very often the cost of certification. It is even better if you can obtain cheap and hassle-free certification from an international (read this as anything that sounds foreign) CB, which is another major selling point for these CBs.

Factors that contribute to the overall certification costs can mainly be attributed to: (1) auditor days, i.e. the time spent in carrying out an audit and (2) the auditor's daily rate, i.e. the certification body's charges for the auditor's professional

greatly on the competence of the auditors. With regard to auditor competence, two aspects are crucial. First, the auditors should possess the necessary auditing skills, which are generic and applicable to all auditors.

The second aspect, specific to each assignment, relates to the auditor's technical knowledge of the organisation's processes. Here again, in their efforts to keep operating costs to a minimum, some certification bodies rely on the lowest cost auditors they can find, paying very little attention to auditor competence. Auditors with little knowledge of the processes of an organisation can only perform superficial audits, which will neither lead to reliable conclusions nor add any value to the organisation.

In the majority of cases, the CBs get away with this because they have customers who are merely looking for a certificate. These are organisations that would be delighted if the auditors raised no findings, thus greatly facilitating the certification process. The net result is that CBs that place emphasis on competent

level, include:

- Implementation of ISO/IEC 17021:2006, the new standard governing the activities of management system certification bodies, which places emphasis on issues that should enhance the credibility of certification;
- The cross-frontier accreditation policy of the International Accreditation Federation (IAF), which should enhance the supervision of branch offices of CBs operating all over the world, away from accredited head office;
- The new ISO/IEC 17021 Part 2 (currently in draft stage), which is intended to ensure that auditor competence is defined and measured in a more consistent manner; and
- ISO \_\_\_\_\_ on consultants .....

These steps that have been taken will certainly help in improving the situation. However, it is clear that a lot more needs to be done. Organisations need to be made aware that the quality management

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services.

In order to perform an effective audit, an auditor must be given enough time. There is guidance from accreditation bodies on the amount of time that should be spent on audits. It is mainly determined by the number of employees in an organisation, with adjustments upwards or downwards based on other factors such as physical size of the organisation, complexity of processes, repetitive nature of operations, etc. The more credible among the certification bodies follow these guidelines in the allocation of audit time. However, there are many who pay scant regard to these guidelines in their effort to win clients. With so little time spent on the audit, it is difficult to imagine how the auditors can evaluate sufficient samples to arrive at a conclusion that can be relied upon. Both the depth and breadth of coverage of the system is often the cause of suspicions.

The reliability of the audit findings and conclusions reached also depend very

and impartial services will find it difficult to do business, thus further contributing to the downward spiral of certification standards.

### Conclusion

The good news is that it is not all gloom and doom. There are still many good (meaning honest, ethical, competent, etc.) CBs out there and there are also many good organisations looking for competent auditors capable of raising audit findings that will help improve their business processes and ultimately, the bottomline of the organisations.

The widespread implementation of ISO 9001 quality management systems and the certification of organisations to this standard have also had the effect of significantly raising the level of quality awareness in the country in recent years.

Some recent initiatives to restore the credibility of management system certification, initiated at the international

system, if implemented and maintained well, can bring them significant benefits. Only with this realization will they pay more attention to the maintenance of the QMS and choose CBs that provide auditing and certification services which can help them further improve the effectiveness of their systems.

In addition to this, customers who require their suppliers to be certified should be more discerning in the acceptance of certificates presented to them. They should pay particular attention to the CBs issuing the certificates. Accreditation bodies should not hold back reprimanding certification bodies that engage in unethical practices. These certification bodies should be publicly named and shamed and be barred from offering their services. Only then will we see the real value of quality management system certification.

# Toy Safety In Malaysia

Ratna Devi Nadarajan  
Director  
Malaysian Association of Standards Users

**The Malaysian Association of Standards Users is very concerned with the safety of toys sold in Malaysia**



Toys are meant to entertain, educate, inspire imagination and in some cases, enhance the dexterity of children or infants. Some toys become subject of such fascination that they become collectibles pursued even by adults, such as the famous Barbie Doll and Beanies.

## Problems and issues

Poorly designed toys cause injuries and take the pleasure out of play. It is sad that injuries brought about by toys are poorly recorded in Malaysia but in the United States, according to data from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (US CPSC), at least 16 children none older than nine years old died in 2004 from toy-related injuries. Seven of the children died from choking or asphyxiating on a toy or toy part. Approximately 210,300 people sought treatment in hospital emergency rooms in 2004 for toy-related injuries. At least 72,800 (35 per cent) of those injured were younger than five years old. Riding toys, such as non-powered scooters, accounted for more injuries than any other category of toy i.e. 34 per cent. (*Memo from Joyce McDonald, Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), "Toy Related Deaths and Injuries, Calendar Year 2004", dated Oct 13, 2005.*)

In the US, despite federal regulations

designed to reduce toy-related choking deaths, at least 157 children choked to death on children's products between 1990 and 2004, a rate of about 10 deaths a year. This accounts for more than half of all toy-related deaths (*Trouble in Toyland: The 21st Annual Survey of Toy Safety, by US PIRG Education Fund November 2006.*)

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**Without regulations, who actually imposes any ban on behalf of Malaysian consumers against toy consignments that are unsafe, and based on what criteria?**

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## Toy safety laws and standards

Many countries around the world have passed laws or regulations against the marketing of unsafe toys to consumers. Most of these laws or regulations incorporate requirements for toys manufactured or sold in the country to comply with various safety standards. Among these standards include a ban on phthalates (plastic residues), lead in paint, design (i.e exclusion of sharp or pointy

edges) and size (small parts as potential choking hazards).

Infants perhaps under the age of three or even four tend to put toys into their mouths. With this in mind the standard outlines requirements to prevent choking and transfer of hazardous chemicals from the toy into the infant's body. The materials used to make toys are also required to prevent fire hazards and poisoning.

In Europe, toys must meet the criteria set by the EC Toy Safety Directive (European Standard EN71) in order for them to carry the CE mark. The British Safety Standards help to ensure that the Toy (Safety) Regulations 1995 Act is followed for products on sale in the UK, and that they meet BS 5665 standards. The UK Trading Standards Officers have the power to immediately withdraw a toy from sale on safety grounds. In Canada, the government department Health Canada has the responsibility of ensuring product safety, just as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (US CPSC) does in the United States.

In countries like Albania, regulations against unsafe toys have been implemented, such as the Essential Requirement and Conformity Assessment of Toys. For readers' information, Albania is behind Malaysia in terms of economic development. Albania has a GDP per capita of \$4,900 (2004 est.) while Malaysia has a GDP per capita of \$9,700

(2004 est.). But sadly, young Malaysian consumers are unable to enjoy the legal protection for toys they enjoy so much, as those in Albania.

The *Associated Press* reported a voluntary recall exercised by Fisher-Price (parent company of Mattel) on 83 types of toys — including the popular Big Bird, Elmo, Dora and Diego characters, because their paint contains excessive amounts of lead.

The worldwide recall announced on August 2, 2007 involved 967,000 plastic pre-school toys made in China and sold in the United States between May and August 2007.

## Concerns with safety of toys in Malaysia

The Malaysian Association of Standards Users is very concerned with the safety of toys sold in Malaysia. The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs drafted a toy safety regulation about four to five years ago. We are yet to see it implemented. Without regulations, who actually imposes any ban on behalf of Malaysian consumers against toy consignments that are unsafe, and based on what criteria?

The Department of Standards Malaysia has developed a series of standards pertaining to toy safety and all that needs to be done is to adopt these standards as technical regulations or make compliance with these standards mandatory.

These standards are:

- MS 1774: Part 6:1998 on Safety Of Toys – Part 6: Graphical Symbol For Age Warning Labelling
- MS 1774: Part 4:1998 on Safety Of Toys – Part 4: Experimental Sets For Chemistry And Related Activities
- MS 1774: PART 5:1998 on Safety Of Toys – Part 5: Chemical Toys (Sets) Other Than Experimental SETS
- MS 1725:2004 Safety Of Electric Toys
- MS ISO 8124-3: 2002 Safety Of Toys : Part 3 : Migration Of Certain Elements
- MS ISO 8124-1: 2001 Safety Of Toys: Part 1: Safety Aspects Related To Mechanical And Physical Properties
- MS ISO 8124-2:1999 Safety Of Toys – Part 2: Flammability

## Position of and strong request from the Malaysian Association of Standards Users

- The Malaysian Association of Standards Users calls upon the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs to take immediate action to regulate toys and other child protection equipment (such as

car seats, baby carriers, prams, walkers, etc).

- The regulations must include crucial requirements of product recall and injury reporting or collection of data on injuries due to toys or from any child protection equipment.
- Standard Users also calls upon the Ministry to engage other government agencies like the Violence and Injury Prevention Unit of the Ministry of Health to conduct surveys and test toy products currently in the market to establish the status of their level of physical, chemical and design safety.

This report must be made available to all stakeholders (especially consumers and consumer organisations) in order to further enhance awareness among consumers on the safety of products.

- We also call upon the Ministry to further promote awareness of the compliance with the regulations among industries, importers, wholesalers and relevant government agencies.

### For more information:

e-mail : [info@standardsusers.org](mailto:info@standardsusers.org)

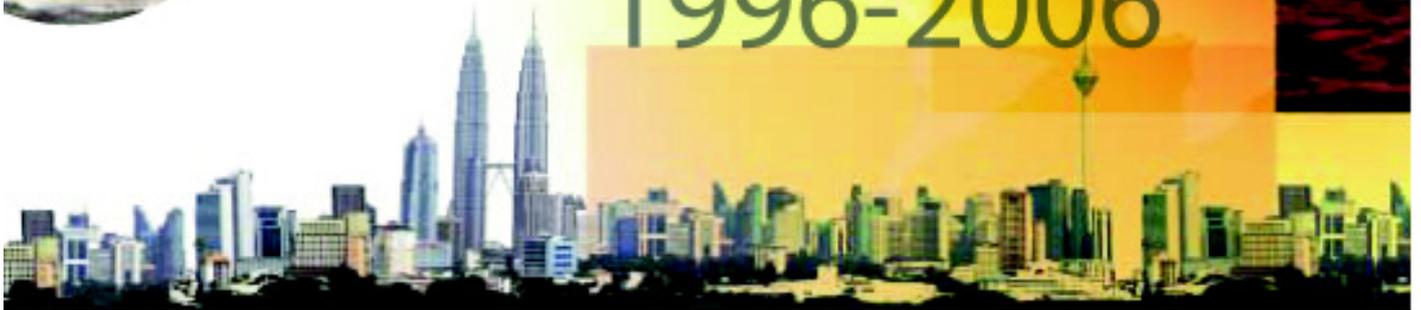
or visit URL : [www.standardsusers.org](http://www.standardsusers.org)



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# STANDARDS MALAYSIA 1996-2006



## Department of Standards Malaysia

A Decade of Advancing Excellence in Standards & Accreditation  
10th Anniversary (1996-2006)

Ten years on and we still remain steadfast in our endeavours to advance standards and accreditation in Malaysia. Since our establishment on Aug 28, 1996 we have continuously assessed our performance and moved forward to serve the nation and people better.

The milestones of our achievements include the passing of the Standards of Malaysia Act 1996 on April 23, 1996 and the establishment of Department of Standards Malaysia through the Standards of Malaysia Act (Act 549) on Aug 28, 1996. Over the years, both standardisation and accreditation activities have progressed significantly. We played hosts to numerous meetings; held Secretariat positions in international standards organisations; and remained active members of and signatories to various international bodies such as Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

Other achievements include the approval by the government of the National Standards Strategies and Action Plans and official recognition of the National Accreditation Systems; the successful development of Malaysian

Standards (MS) whereby up to Dec 31, 2007 close to 5,000 Malaysian Standards have been developed. The creation of MS Online System; and the launching of MS 1500:2004 – Halal Food-Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage - General Guidelines are among additional achievements. Our Malaysian Laboratory Accreditation Scheme or *Skim Akreditasi Makmal Malaysia* (SAMM) and Accreditation of Certification Bodies (ACB) schemes were also expanded and this included the landmark accreditation of medical testing laboratories. We are intensifying our efforts for the benefit of Malaysia's economy and the well being of the people.

### How does STANDARDS MALAYSIA help in enhancing quality of life?

- **By advancing the quality of products**

One of the many roles of STANDARDS MALAYSIA as a national standards body or NSB is to ensure the safety and quality of products for the benefit of consumers. Through standardisation and accreditation, STANDARDS MALAYSIA defines the quality, safety and compatibility

requirements for a very wide range of consumer products and services. In doing so, we help build consumer confidence, hence compelling industries to achieve high product quality and safety standards. We are also directly involved in the development of halal standards to ensure maximum protection for the requirements of Muslim consumers pertaining to the production, preparation, handling and storage of halal food. Conformance with this standard eliminates any doubt a Muslim may have about claims made by those in the food industry.

### Promoting better services

Standards and accreditation have made an impact on a wide spectrum of industries. Accreditation encompasses assessment of laboratories that conduct various tests, such as medical and veterinary. Consumers will be assured of the reliability of tests conducted by accredited laboratories. In accrediting these laboratories, STANDARDS MALAYSIA assesses, among others, their capability and competency in carrying out the tests. In the fields of Information Technology (IT) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the NSB has also played a role in combating cyber crimes,

such as credit card fraud, by implementing the Information Security Management System (ISMS) to ensure the security of users and the information is published in cyberspace. Accreditation also ensures laboratories engage only competent personnel who can provide reliable and efficient services that in turn will assure the confidence of consumers.

You want clean air and water and a safe environment. You demand quality products and efficient services. These are common expectations. However, without standards and accreditation, these expectations can hardly be met. STANDARDS MALAYSIA helps to foster your well being by utilising standards as a strategic instrument to address the vital concerns of safety, quality and environment protection. Standards serve as measurements of the level of performance of products, processes and services. The effective utilisation of standards and the adoption of transparent accreditation practices protect the interests of the people, industries and the nation as a whole.

The Department of Standards Malaysia's continued signatory status in APLAC and ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) and in PAC and IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA) allows accredited conformity assessment bodies (CABs) in Malaysia to be recognised as equivalent among member countries of the various bodies. Such mutual recognition contributes towards the reduction of technical barriers to trade between countries. Reducing the need for re-testing products can result in saving time and money. Through our involvement in these bodies, we help protect Malaysia's interests and build its competitiveness, as well as contribute towards the efficiency of the international trading system.

## Making the world we live in safe

The application of standards and accreditation is far reaching. Both encompass many aspects of safety, such as at home – from the usage of electrical products to the toys that children play; at work – from mechanisation and processes to construction and engineering works; and on the road – from transportation to related sectors. Then, there is also the aspect of safety against calamities such as fire and natural disasters as well as factors that affect the environment. Conformance with high standards and accreditation practices ensure our safety and more importantly, reduce the impact of fatalities and help make our world a safer place to live in.

# Avoiding Potential Pitfalls in Consumer Safety Standards Development



KITTY PILARZ

Director, Worldwide Product Safety

Mattel/Fisher Price,  
East Aurora, N.Y., and

Chair, ASTM Committee F15 on Consumer Products.

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Consumer product safety standards are the most effective method to improve product safety and reduce injuries. Safety standards affect all products in a given category, not just those made by one manufacturer. They have a greater impact than recalls, since even the most effective recalls generally result in the repair or replacement of only a small percentage of products in use by consumers. Eliminating the unsafe product before it is produced is most effective in improving product safety.

## Baby walkers

In August 1994, baby walkers were associated with more injuries than any other nursery product. Most of the incidents that produced serious injuries or deaths involved babies in walkers falling down stairs. As a result, ASTM Subcommittee F15.17 on Carriages, Strollers, Walkers and Stationary Activity

Centers approved a revision in 1996 to standard F 977, Consumer Safety Specification for Infant Walkers, that added new performance requirements to address falls down stairs. The revision included a performance test simulating a child in a walker moving across a floor, through a doorway, and toward a staircase. The walker is placed on a test platform and accelerated. A walker fails the test if it can pass through a 36-inch-wide [91 cm] opening representing the doorway, and falls off the platform.

## Baby walker-related injuries

By 2002, baby walker-related injuries dropped 63 per cent, from 20,100 emergency room-treated injuries to 7,400. United States Consumer Product Safety Commission studies indicated that most of the recent walker stair fall injuries involved older walkers that did not meet the revised ASTM F 977.



Chart highlighting cases of baby-walker related injuries

<sup>1</sup>Safety standard development offers unique opportunities to touch lives through preventing injuries and deaths.

## Is standards writing right for you?

Participating in the development of safety standards provides an excellent opportunity for studying safety data and interacting with safety experts from a variety of backgrounds. Typically, representatives include consumer advocates, government agency representatives, consultants, manufacturers, lawyers, educators and testing laboratories.

If not for the standard-setting process, these diverse interest groups rarely meet outside of a courtroom or legal proceeding. Standards meetings are informative and candid. Attendees share their experiences and knowledge to create better standards and, ultimately, better products. Safety standards are developed in response to incident data promulgated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. CPSC data sources include the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System, (NEISS), a national probability sample of hospitals in the US and its territories. <sup>2</sup>Other CPSC data sources are death certificates, medical examiners reports and reports from consumers, lawyers and news clippings. <sup>3</sup>Once presented with incident data, ASTM International committees analyse the information and determine appropriate standards or revisions.

## Challenges for standards writers

**1. If standard developers oversimplify issues or are not careful in their research, they may create new problems.**

Three words: Remember the airbag! Airbags have saved many lives, but they inflate at speeds up to 140mph [225km/h]. This blast of energy can severely injure or kill a child sitting too close to an airbag during inflation. <sup>4</sup>Many infant fatalities in low-speed crashes have been caused by airbags. In the early 1980s, airbag testing procedures were developed. At that time, approximately 15 per cent of front seat occupants wore seat belts. Thus, the speed and force at which air bags inflated were developed to protect unrestrained occupants rather than restrained occupants. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 208 required vehicles to be tested at 30 miles per hour [48 km/h] using a 50th percentile male crash test dummy that is 5 feet 8 inches [173cm] tall weighing 167 pounds [76 kg].<sup>5</sup> The airbag issue is an example of the tradeoffs inherent in safety regulations, standard development and in attempts to reduce risk. By addressing risk and injuries from one cause, another risk may be created. When the focus was unrestrained average adult males, what happened to the newborn 50th percentile female weighing only 7 pounds [3 kg]?

Airbags systems are more advanced today and incorporate smart technology. The airbag controversy serves as a reminder that standard writers and regulators must consider all potential users and not just one target group.

**2. Standards should not be design restrictive.**

Standard developers cannot easily foresee the unique and innovative designs of tomorrow's consumer products. Yet the standards developed today should not hinder the development of these products either.

Standards should be based on performance measurement rather than restricting design parameters. Performance-based standards may cost more in time and money to develop, because equipment and testing is necessary. If the first attempt fails, retesting and new equipment will be required. Yet the long-term benefits should not be underestimated. Standards that dictate design may be challenged and require modification in the future. And they may limit creativity and innovative product design.

**3. Keep consumer safety first.**

The purpose of standards is to make safer products for the consumer. Do not end up confusing that consumer by mistake. Making products overly complicated, or creating warnings that are not well researched, may confuse the consumer. Standards developers must remember that the user of the product may have very limited mechanical skills or understanding of safety issues. When developing safety standards, think about consumers, their use patterns, and their unique abilities to get things wrong. Warnings should educate and improve the consumer's understanding of the product, and his or her ability to use it safely. Warnings must be reasonable and based on communication of risks. Warnings that are cluttered with too many statements to "cover us" in the event of an injury ultimately do the consumer a disservice.

**4. Products must be functional and affordable.**

More safety requirements do not necessarily mean safer products. More is not always better. Without data supporting the need for safety features, there can be a downside.

If consumers are forced to seek

alternatives because they perceive the product is too expensive or complex, an increase in injuries could result. When babies are placed on sofas or adult beds they are at greater risk of injury than when placed in a full-size crib to sleep. If consumers make their own bed rails because the bed rails that meet the new ASTM International standard are too expensive, it is highly likely that more children will be hurt.

### Making a difference

Safety experts in government and the private sector have an obligation to participate in the process of developing standards. Both government and industry experts have access to data. There are many excuses as to why neither party participates to its fullest extent. Excuses usually involve time and money. "We don't have time to develop tests, attend meetings, and share data." Yet somehow, there is time to conduct recalls and to litigate.

Few of us are recognised even in our own organisations for accomplishments in this area. Individuals and organisations that do participate in standards development should be applauded for their contributions of time, talent and resources. At the end of the day, when we look back on our careers and important accomplishments, one of the top items on this list should be the contribution made to develop better safety standards. They really do make a difference.

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KITTY PILARZ is director of worldwide product safety for Mattel/Fisher Price, East Aurora, NY, and chair of ASTM Committee F15 on Consumer Products. In her role at Mattel/Fisher-Price, she is responsible for ensuring that the company's products conform to corporate safety requirements. Pilarz is vice chair of the Juvenile Product Manufacturers Association Certification Committee.



## ISO 26000 – Guidance On Social Responsibility: Stakeholders' Benefits

Khatijah Hashim

SIRIM Berhad and Member of the National Mirror Committee on ISO WG Social Responsibility

### ISO 26000 – What it means?

ISO 26000 is the designation of the future international standard providing guidance on social responsibility (SR). It contains issues that constitute social responsibility and on ways to implement social responsibility within an organisation. The standard is applicable to all types of organisations, including governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as business organisations, because every organisation has an impact on society and the environment.

The guidance on social responsibility is for voluntary use and is not intended for third party certification, or regulatory or contractual use. It is NOT intended to create non-tariff barriers to trade, nor does it alter an organisation's legal obligations. Every organisation is encouraged to become more socially responsible by using this standard, engaging with stakeholders and complying with applicable national laws, internationally recognised conventions and other authoritative instruments.

### Why SR and not CSR?

A socially responsible organisation applies to more than just business community and private companies. It has been broadened to include governmental agencies and other organisations that have a clear interest in showing how they work.

### Why Is SR standard important ?

In the wake of increasing globalisation, we have become increasingly conscious not only of what we buy, but also how the goods and services we buy have been produced.

Hence, sustainable business for organisations means not only providing products and services that satisfy the customer but also operating in a socially responsible manner, and doing so without jeopardising the environment. Environmentally harmful production, child labour, dangerous working environments and other inhumane conditions are examples of some of the issues that are

‘It is shortsighted for an organisation to ignore and fail to participate in International Standards and their development and still have an eye on becoming a global player.’



being brought into the open.

Factors and influences that have led to increasing attention devoted to SR include:

- Globalization – with its focus on cross-border trade, multinational enterprises and global supply chains are increasingly raising concerns about SR related to human resource management practices, environmental protection and health and safety;
- Consumers and investors are showing increasing interest in supporting responsible business practices and are demanding more information on how companies are addressing risks and opportunities related to social and environmental issues;
- Numerous serious and high profile breaches of corporate ethics have contributed to elevated public mistrust of corporations and public agencies. This led to highlighting the need for improved corporate governance, transparency, accountability and ethical standards;
- Citizens in many countries are making it clear that corporations should meet standards of social and environmental care, no matter where they operate;
- There is increasing awareness of the limits of government legislative and regulatory initiatives to effectively capture all the issues that social responsibility addresses; and
- Businesses are recognising that adopting an effective approach to SR can reduce risks of business disruptions, open up new

opportunities and enhance brand and company reputation. Far sighted organisational leaders recognise that lasting success must be built on credible business practices.

‘It is shortsighted for an organisation with an eye on becoming a global player to ignore and fail to participate in International Standards and their development.’

### So why all the excitement over the ISO 26000?

If you have read the news and seen the corporate profiles of large organisations, you might have come across many claims and reports of how they are doing their part to give back to society and the environment. Social responsibility has become an important aspect of corporate image-building and in various public relations campaigns of medium-sized and large corporations.

How do we as consumers or the general public or even the future and potential business partners verify all those claims on “doing their bit for society”? There has been a proliferation in numbers of high level declarations of principles related to SR and many individual SR programmes and initiatives. Interpretations of social responsibility vary from one programme to another.

Therefore, it was envisaged that an internationally accepted standard may be of benefit in helping to achieve a common perspective and understanding about the principles and practices of social responsibility. Besides, international standards put together by 156 member

countries of the International Organisation for Standardisation or ISO will definitely create an impact and enhance acceptance by all stakeholders.

Standards development in ISO is based on the principle of consensus, and through which the draft standards are subject to consultation.

ISO being a non-governmental organisation is well positioned to take

Some of the notable features of ISO standards are as follows:

- International standards provide globally-accepted benchmarks and criteria for businesses and their stakeholders and enhance clarity, regardless of location;
- In a global market, consumers and other stakeholders may have increased confidence that their interests will be protected when businesses adhere to the requirements of international standards;
- In the context of social responsibility, international standards facilitate the development of common approaches across jurisdictions where divergent approaches may exist between countries; and
- In keeping with WTO commitments that stipulate national / regional standards are to be based on international standards, such international standards help to promote equal opportunities in cross-border trade.

leadership with respect to the development of a voluntary ISO SR Standard. ISO also sees the importance of ensuring that such a standard is developed in close cooperation with other bodies that are leading in the efforts to devise effective SR approaches.

### Economic and social advantages from ISO 26000

Social Responsibility is the new business mantra. Everyone's doing it, but why? "Well you don't want to appear anti-social or irresponsible, do you? A lame but very typical response.

ISO 26000's goal therefore is to add value to existing initiatives for SR by providing harmonised, globally relevant guidance so as to encourage the implementation of best practices in SR worldwide.

Being able to say that a company complies with recognised and respected standards is an effective way of backing up claims and can be a deciding factor when a buyer chooses between two comparable suppliers.

The following are potential **benefits for business** of ISO social responsibility guidance, although they are not exhaustive:

- Enable organisations to demonstrate commitment to ethical business

practices in the most cost effective manner;

- Address the high cost of responding to a proliferation of standards;
- Companies complying with SR standards will have increased ability to attract foreign investors and improve capital;
- Enhance reputation and enable organisations to protect their brand value as a responsible company, thus attracting new consumers and increasing trust;
- Reduce compliance costs associated with the need to adhere to a range of divergent national initiatives;
- Reduce costs through waste reduction, such as reducing emission of gases, improved efficiency in the use of energy etc.;
- Enhance the ability of a company to make appropriate risk management decisions concerning SR issues and thereby better compete in the global marketplace;
- Promote growth of international trade through enhanced consumer confidence in global market mechanisms;
- And many more.

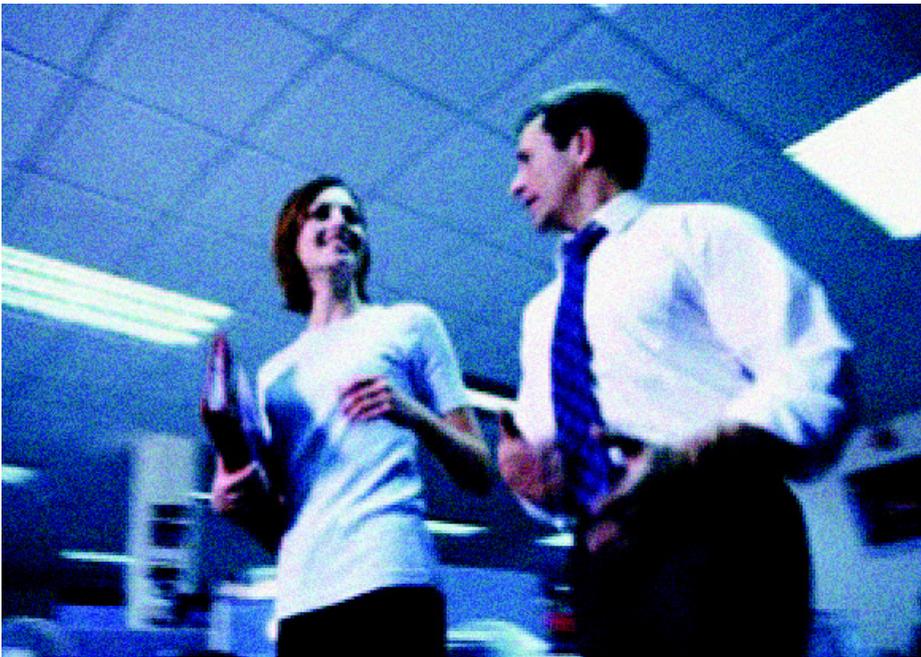
In summary, it is essential that businesses build on universal values, subscribe to moral and ethical practices and nurture a system of shared beliefs that will translate into socially responsible behaviour.

The potential **benefits for government / regulatory agencies** from adopting SR principles include the following:

- The concepts of transparency, ethics and accountability have been cornerstones of many current administration strategies to improve the country's global competitiveness and are part and parcel of the achievement of good governance and the eventual eradication of corrupt practices from the private and public sectors;
- Regulatory authorities can choose to supplement SR requirements in ISO with additional elements as they see fit;
- Enhance the ability of business and consumers to resolve problems by themselves, without the need for early regulatory intervention;
- Facilitate adherence of firms to regulations, thereby assisting regulatory authorities in accomplishing their objectives;
- And many others.

ISO 26000's goal therefore is to add value to existing initiatives for SR by providing harmonised, globally relevant guidance so as to encourage the implementation of best practices in SR worldwide.





The principles of social responsibility recognise one fact: That there are new issues that organisations need to consider and respond to in order to stay competitive.

The potential **benefits for investors/ shareholders** from adoption of SR include the following:

- Offers the prospect of meaningful, verifiable, and measurable claims by firms about progress toward SR objectives;
- Increases confidence of investors and shareholders that they are investing in reputable firms whose systems are based on socially responsible values;
- SR can be a standard for joint ventures and other business partners to meet, which can facilitate global business; and
- Assist in identifying new market opportunities, through regular engagement with the full range of a firm's stakeholders.

## Conclusion

Organisations should recognise that socially responsible activities translate into greater trust from stakeholders, greater market competitiveness and higher profit. Therefore they should voluntarily reexamine how to incorporate SR in their day-to-day operations for their own benefit and for meeting client demands.

The principles of social responsibility recognise one fact, that there are new issues that organisations need to consider and respond to in order to stay competitive.

Issues such as globalisation, governance and regulation, environmental concerns and social expectations may not seem to have a

direct impact on the activities of some organisations. However these issues are influencing people's attitudes towards businesses in significant ways.

More and more people want to buy from ethical companies and consider ethics and social responsibility important. Consumers want to purchase goods and services from companies that are active in achieving their social, environmental and economic obligations.

Indeed, SR initiatives will be a powerful tool to assist organisations to move from good intentions to good actions and help to integrate developing and economy in transition (EIT) in the world trade and economic system.

**Organisations should recognize that socially responsible activities translate into greater trust from stakeholders, greater market competitiveness and higher profit.**



# Standards Users In the News

Bernama.com (Features)

July 17, 2007

Safety Of Consumer Products

By Melati Mohd Ariff

As an average individual, we use hundreds of products daily, either for consumption or application. Naturally, we expect these products to be harmless, but this is not always the case. According to Malaysian Association of Standards Users (Standards Users) Director, Ratna Devi Nadarajan, there have been incidents where people get sick or injured when consuming or applying certain products. "In the United Kingdom, it was reported that an average working woman uses 20 different types of substances a day and absorbs more than 2kg of chemicals through the skin, nose and mouth. "In terms of food, we consume a cocktail of food additives and wear attires that are treated and dyed and drive around town where by-products of engine combustion are involuntarily inhaled," she told Bernama.

According to Ratna Devi, tonnes of detergents and their substances enter our water resources and may end up in the food that we eat through aquatic products. "Pesticides are used to enable better yields for vegetables, fruits and cash crops. Pesticides too may enter our water resources and arrive at our tables inside aquatic food sources," she said.

## What is product safety?

Products are made to satisfy the needs of consumers to make their lives easier, apart from establishing their status. However the same products, due to their design, content and the way they are used, misused or abused, will pose dangers to consumers' safety and health. Ratna Devi said the extent to which a product poses danger to consumer safety and health is determined by the presence of detriments and their likelihood to cause harm under either normal or abnormal conditions. Citing the presence of fuel in a vehicle as an example, she said the fuel itself is a hazardous substance to human and environmental health. "The likelihood that it will spill, be consumed or come in contact with the vehicle user and causes harm under normal use is minimum. Thus under normal conditions the vehicle is relatively safe as long as the fuel, tank and other devices in the combustion

system are manufactured according to specified standards. "Deliberate contact with the fuel or ingestion will definitely result in severe safety and health problems. Such is the result under abnormal use, or if the vehicle is involved in an accident. The same goes for ointments for external applications, where it will only cause harm to consumers if ingested," she explained.

Therefore, according to Ratna Devi, a safe product means any product when used under normal conditions does not present any risk or only minimum risks, when the product is used as intended. The categories of consumers at risk when using the product should also be considered, particularly children, the disabled and the elderly.

the country. "There are other products such as prams and cribs for infants and children that are not regulated in terms of safety. Perfumed products like air fresheners and doop sticks are also not regulated although they use man-made chemicals," she said.

She also discussed the usage of water filters, which are fast becoming an indispensable part of a household. "Who regulates to ensure that the domestic water treatment devices meet safety requirements? Without proper maintenance, accumulation of slime and dirt on the filters (high in bacterial content) may get into the water we are drinking and may cause poisoning. Consumers are also taken in by promises of better health if they purchase the water treatment

**But for most products, there are neither laws nor an accessible mode to communicate incidents or accidents easily to the relevant agencies**



## Issues And Challenges

Ratna Devi said the extent of safety issues cannot be established since consumers, people in the medical profession and industries are not compelled to report safety incidents or accidents caused by products to the relevant authorities. "But for most products there are neither laws nor an accessible mode to communicate the incidents or accidents easily to the relevant agencies," she claimed. She also said many products, especially for vulnerable groups like children and the elderly, are not regulated. "For instance, toys in Malaysia are not regulated (in terms of safety). Even a country like Albania, which is still behind Malaysia in terms of economic development, has already regulated the import of toys into

devices," she said.

Another point of contention for Standards Users, said Ratna Devi, is that consumers are not provided with easy access to making inquiries on the safety of products. According to her, there are different agencies regulating different types of products. "The Food Safety and Quality Division (an agency under the Ministry of Health) regulates food products as per the Food Act 1983 and Food Regulations 1985 while the National Pharmaceutical Control Board (NPCB) regulates cosmetics, drugs and pharmaceutical products. The regulation of electrical products comes under the Energy Commission (under Ministry of Water, Energy and Communication). Regulation of pesticides comes under the Pesticides Board," she said.



## Some Suggestions From Standards Users

Standards Users therefore suggested that the authorities establish a centralised agency to handle all product safety complaints or even all types of consumer complaints. "Bodies like the National Consumers Complaints Centre (NCCC), which has handled about 18,000 complaints in 2006, can be supported to do just that," said Ratna Devi.

Standards Users also recommended that accidents / incidents / injuries reporting mechanisms be established in order to capture relevant data for product safety monitoring and administrative purposes. Ratna Devi said the industries must be provided with adequate information and implementation support to comply with both voluntary and mandatory safety standards. "Free consultation for small / medium-scale enterprises and industries, periodic training and retraining will help build capacity to ensure the manufacture and distribution of safe products," she said.

She said consumers should also be proactive in dealing with this issue of products' safety. Consumers, she said, should take time to read the products' labels and be inquisitive before purchasing products that are believed to have safety issues.

"More importantly, do not take safety for granted and lodge complaints, as many times as we feel necessary, until we get a satisfactory reply," she added. - Bernama

# Standards Users Events



## Forum on ISO 26000 – Guidance on Social Responsibility with stakeholders

April 13, 2007, Grand Blue Wave Hotel, Shah Alam



Organised by the Department of Standards Malaysia with the Cooperation of Malaysian Association of Standards Users

**M**ore than 50 participants from the various stakeholder groups, such as government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), consumer groups, industry, institutes of higher learning and labour unions attended the one day forum on ISO 26000 – Guidance on Social Responsibility which was organised by the Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA) with the cooperation of the Malaysian Association of Standards Users.

The objective of the forum was to engage the participation of six types of stakeholders (as identified under the ISO 26000 draft definition) and to obtain feedback from the broad input of participants with a serious interest in social responsibility. It is significantly important to ensure that provisions laid down in the guidance standard take into account the needs of stakeholders and the safeguarding of the sovereignty of the country.



## Awareness Programme on the Importance of Safety Standards for Consumer Products and Services at Primary and Secondary Schools

Organised By Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) with the Cooperation of Malaysian Association of Standards Users and Department of Standards Malaysia

The programme was aimed at establishing and enhancing awareness of the importance of safety standards to school students, both at primary and secondary levels. Specific aims of the programme were to:

- a. Create awareness among students of an impressionable age about the importance of standards for safety of consumer products and services;
- b. Enhance understanding on the importance of exercising the right to safety and right to be informed; and
- c. Identify ways to expand and introduce variation in the activities of school consumer clubs with regard to standards awareness.

The first session was conducted at SMJK Seg Hwa, Segamat, Johor on Sept 4, 2007. A total of 68 students participated.

The second session was held on Sept 11 at SK RKT Bersia, Gerik, Perak, in which 80 students participated.



Group Activities During the Programme at SMJK Seg Hwa, Segamat Johore – Sept 4, 2007



SK RKT Bersia, Gerik, Perak – Sept 11, 2007

# Standards Users | Events

## Awareness Training on Importance of Standards for Consumers for Teaching Professionals

Organised By Department of Standards Malaysia with the cooperation of Malaysian Association of Standards Users



Some images from the training conducted

Awareness training sessions on Importance of Standards for Consumers for Teaching Professionals were conducted on:

1. July 21, 2007 at Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris, Tanjong Malim
  - a. Total number of participants was 75.
2. July 28, 2007 at Institut Perguruan Sarawak, Miri.
  - a. Total number of participants was 59.
3. Objectives of the training programme were:
  - a. To create awareness among teachers on the importance of standards for safety and performance of products and services;
  - b. To encourage teachers to teach students standards and standardisation in a fun and interesting manner, using the Young Consumers and Standards workbook.

# ABOUT THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF STANDARDS USERS

The Malaysian Association of Standards Users (or Standards Users) is a non government organization established in September 2004, with the support and endorsement from the Department of Standards Malaysia (or STANDARDS MALAYSIA) - an agency under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI).

Standards Users represents consumers' interest in the development of standards, at national and international level.

In its effort to improve the quality of life of consumers, well being of the environment and the sustainable growth of industry, Standards Users strongly advocates importance of compliance with safety and environment standards by organisations and individuals.

## VISION

Standards Users aims to be an accredited certification body of choice for consumer products and services and eventually become a financially self sufficient and independent organization driven by socially responsible values.

## MISSION

We seek to establish awareness on the importance of standards for the safety of consumers and sustainability of industries through self empowerment and international recognition. We seek to achieve the above guided by values based on:

- quality • dedication • integrity • respect • accountability • teamwork



*Your Quality Advocate*

**Malaysian Association of Standards Users**

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