



How ISO standards **connect the world**

There was clear support for the role of standardization in better serving economic trade and social development at ISO's 39th General Assembly in China, which brought together some 400 delegates from more than 120 ISO members.

President Xi Jinping of China underlined how “standards have become the common language of the world” in a written message addressed to some 400 delegates from over 120 member countries at the 39th ISO General Assembly (ISO GA), which ran in Beijing from 10 to 14 September 2016. The message was delivered by Zhi Shuping, Minister of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of the People's Republic of China.

“With the deepening of economic globalization, standardization is playing an increasingly important role in facilitating business transactions, supporting industrial development, promoting scientific progress and regulating social governance,” President Xi Jinping said. “Standards have become the common language of the world.”

In his message, the Chinese President pointed out how “International Standards are the major technical foundation of [...] the development of economic and trade cooperation”, leading the way for progress in our times.

Fostering partnerships

This was the second time that the ISO GA was held in China. “The first time was nearly 20 years ago,” reminisced ISO's President Dr Zhang Xiaogang. “Much has changed during that time, but the importance of different countries working together to solve global challenges, rather than acting alone, remains as important as ever.”

The week-long event was hosted by SAC, ISO's member in China. Tian Shihong, Administrator of SAC, pledged his country's full dedication to the collaborative work done in ISO. “China will continue to increase exchanges with other countries and international organizations in terms of its development strategies, and enhance cooperation in standardization,” he said.

To mark the occasion, China Post issued a stamp for the 39th ISO General Assembly a day before its opening, making it the first commemorative stamp in the history of the ISO GA – and a nice token of China's commitment to world standardization.



Kevin McKinley, Acting Secretary-General of ISO.

Highlights of the week

During the ISO Week in China, delegates reviewed a broad spectrum of business on the ISO agenda and heard excellent speakers on a theme that runs through ISO's general goal – supporting global economic and social development.

Key issues in standardization from the perspectives of ISO's partner organizations, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), were highlighted by Frans Vreeswijk, General Secretary of IEC, and Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU, who provided insights on the ongoing good collaboration among all three organizations.

Among the myriad meetings taking place during General Assembly week were:

- Four breakout sessions devoted to engaging public authorities in international standardization ; services ; upcoming high-impact ISO standards ; and ISO governance review
- The 50th meeting of the ISO Committee on developing country matters (ISO/DEVCO) on 11 September 2016
- A panel discussion on ISO's regional engagement strategy, currently under development
- A panel discussion on innovation, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals¹⁾ and standardization

These interactive discussions served as a platform for extensive engagement and in-depth exchanges to help shape the direction of ISO's future products, services and systems.

1) Adopted by the United Nations in September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals are a vision and a roadmap for a future of peace, dignity and prosperity on earth. The 17 aspirational goals aim to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



The stamp for the 39th ISO General Assembly issued by China Post.

ISO 14001 experts win technical excellence award

The group of experts that develops ISO 14001, the world's most recognized framework for environmental management systems, was awarded the Lawrence D. Eicher Award for excellence in technical work during the GA week. The distinction recognizes the significant contribution of an ISO technical committee or subcommittee to the development of International Standards.

According to ISO President Dr Zhang Xiaogang, ISO technical committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, subcommittee SC 1, *Environmental management systems*, was chosen for introducing "a number of innovations to help support its members and to promote its work externally".

This year, the standard celebrates its 20th anniversary. "For two decades, ISO 14001 has been helping organizations to better manage the impact of their activities on the environment," said Acting ISO Secretary-General Kevin McKinley during the awards ceremony. "It is implemented in over 300 000 organizations and helps to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."

Jordanian wins ISO/DIN essay contest for young standardizers

An essay on the role of standards in the Jordanian economy was announced as the winning entry in the ISO/DIN contest for young standardizers in developing countries. The author is Majd Majed Shatnawi, Standardization Officer at the Jordan Standards and Metrology Organization (JSMO).

The contest, which is organized by ISO and sponsored by DIN, the German Institute for Standardization, aims to challenge and give an opportunity to young standards professionals to present their views based on their country's experience. The 2016 edition focused on "the role of International Standards in improving quality of life in urban areas".

Announcing the winner, DIN Director Christoph Winterhalter declared: "Mrs Shatnawi's essay was chosen as it successfully explains how International Standards can provide solutions to the many issues that her country is currently facing.

In a video related to her essay, Majd Majed Shatnawi affirmed: "So while quality of life may mean different things to Ahmad a performer in Amman, Ali a baker in Irbid, Mohammad a shopkeeper in Zarqa, Khaled a doctor in Aqaba, ISO standards help to keep them all in a good quality of life."



ISO President **Dr Zhang** presented the Lawrence D. Eicher Award to **Richard Taylor**, Standards Market Development Director at the British Standards Institution (BSI), which holds the secretariat of ISO/TC 207/SC 1, pictured here with **Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha**, ISO Vice-President (technical management), and **Kevin McKinley**, Acting Secretary-General of ISO.

ISO standards help meet SDGs

Trade and standards are key for meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), said Cecile Fruman, World Bank Group Director, Trade and Competitiveness Global Practices, speaking at the annual meeting of ISO DEVCO, which took place on 11 September 2016.

The SDGs are a priority for the World Bank Group, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ISO in March 2016 to help increase countries' involvement in the development, adoption and use of International Standards that promote open, fair and transparent trade.



Cecile Fruman, World Bank Group Director, Trade and Competitiveness Global Practices.

“South-South trade is a key feature of the new international trade landscape,” she said, and standards build the confidence that underpins these different exchanges. She emphasized two powerful ways in which ISO standards contribute to achieving the SDGs, by helping to increase developing country participation in trade and as a vessel for practical solutions to implement the SDGs.

Promoting standardization is therefore an important goal for the World Bank Group. “As we intensify our work in the area of standards, together with ISO and many of you represented here today... closer cooperation and support, especially for developing countries, will be needed to maximize the opportunities that exist.”



The ISO General Assembly elected **John Walter** as ISO President.

Appreciation, appointments and elections

The ISO President presented ISO Vice-Presidents Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha (VP technical management from 2012 to 2016) and Olivier Peyrat (VP Finance from 2014 to 2016), whose terms of office finish at the end of 2016, with the ISO bracelet and cufflinks as a token of ISO's appreciation for their contributions to ISO. In presenting the gifts, Dr Zhang paid tribute to the outstanding leadership and forward-thinking of Elisabeth and Olivier.

The ISO General Assembly elected John Walter (Canada) as ISO President for the 2018-2019 term. Mr Walter, who has served as ISO Vice-President (policy) since 2014, thanked the delegates of the General Assembly. “I am delighted and honoured to have been elected to this important international role and look forward to promoting the value and importance of standards, particularly as they support innovation and international trade,” he said. Mr Walter will serve as President-elect for one year starting on 1 January 2017.

The ISO General Assembly also appointed Dr Bronwyn Evans (Australia) as Vice-President (finance). Dr Evans' term in office takes effect on 1 January 2017.



Dr Bronwyn Evans (Australia) has been appointed as Vice-President (finance).

Standards key for growth of Chinese economy

High-level Chinese officials, including the country's Premier Li Keqiang, highlighted the importance of International Standards at the Open Session on “Standards Improve Global Connectivity”, which took place on 14 September 2016. This was a chance for China to feature its special contribution to international standardization through presentations by many leaders from local business and industry.

Speaking to a gathering of over 500 representatives from national standards bodies, international organizations, public authorities and business, Premier Li stressed the relevance of standards to help China recover from its sluggish economic growth. “Standards are the basis for technological advancement,” he explained, adding that with today's rapidly evolving technologies, we need to speed up the implementation, formulation and revision of standards. China has already intensified its efforts to apply International Standards, said Premier Li. Yet to maintain steady economic growth, the country must now focus on reform and upgrading its economic structure and manufacturing, which he referred to as the backbone of the Chinese economy, in pursuit of a greener, more sustainable economy. For China's Premier, it is also time for the country to modernize its administration, so that the government is no longer the sole supplier of standards.

The event also featured presentations from other Chinese government officials and national examples from China illustrating how standardization is promoted in the various regions.

Representatives of UNCTAD, UNIDO, ITC, the World Bank Group and other international organizations also highlighted the role of standards as a “passport” for international trade and development – a cost-effective way to boost economic recovery and ensure sustainable patterns of production and consumption for the future.

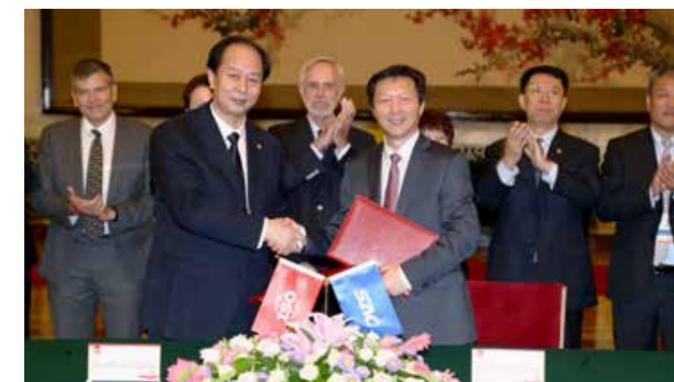
Concluding a very fruitful meeting, SAC and ISO reiterated the ISO General Assembly's commitment to enhancing regional and international cooperation on standardization as an important means to improve global connectivity and jointly signed what will come to be known as the “Beijing Statement”.

Next General Assemblies

The 2017 ISO General Assembly will be held on 20-22 September 2017 in Berlin, Germany, at the invitation of ISO's member for the country, DIN. The 2018 GA will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, at the invitation of ISO's national member, SNV, and the ISO Central Secretariat. ■



“Standards are the basis for technological advancement”, underlined Chinese Premier **Li Keqiang** at the Open Session during the ISO Week in China.



ISO President **Dr Zhang** and **Tian Shihong**, Administrator of SAC, after signing the Beijing Statement.