

FOR RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr Hermogene Nsengimana
Secretary General

African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) Central Secretariat 3rd Floor, International House,
Mama Ngina Street P.O Box 57363-00200, Nairobi, Kenya Tel:+254-020-224561, 311608, 311641

Fax:+254-020-218792

Cell:+254716888522

Email: ars@arso-oran.org

**PRESS RELEASE: SIGNING CEREMONY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - PAN AFRICAN
QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE (PAQI)**

Nairobi, Kenya – 30 August, 2013 – Members comprising of the African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC), the Intra-Africa Metrology System (AFRIMETS), and the African Electrotechnical Standardisation Commission (AFSEC) have formalised their cooperation as members of the Pan African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

Quality Infrastructure is a term now used for everything that is needed to ensure satisfactory quality and safety of products, services, protection of the environment and health. It comprises standards, measurement, testing, conformity assessment and accreditation. It is a powerful tool for successful penetration of the regional and international market.

Trade is widely accepted as an important engine of economic growth and development. In African countries the quality of exports is the vehicle to lift a country from poverty to prosperity and ensure a sustainable future.

African goods and services needs to be placed at a competitive level against goods and services in the global market and the continents vulnerability to global shocks should be minimised. This can only be done by promoting intra-Africa trade and adopting a non-compromising attitude towards quality.

The newly developed PAQI structure, as the latest addition to the AU family is underlined by a shared objective to improve quality in Africa, increase regional integration as well as intra-Africa trade and work towards establishing a harmonised policy on standardisation and quality assurance on goods and services on the continent. The various pan African Quality Infrastructure institutions aim to draw on each other's insight and expertise and use quality as a driver towards achieving the common interest goals of the continent in line with the African Union Integration agenda.

The Chairperson of PAQI, Dr Hermogène Nsengimana welcomed everybody present and remarked that all is set to improve the intra African trade using standardisation tools as all of its components being standards, measurements, testing, conformity assessment and accreditation are in place. He reaffirmed the commitment of the PAQI institutions to continue implementing their own activities and look at synergies geared at African economic development and the implementation of a new agenda of industrialisation.

Speaking during the signing ceremony Dr Wilson Songa, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry Industrialisation & Enterprise Development Kenya remarked that Africa now find itself in a different dispensation. Where in the past there were talks about resources, potential and future workings, now there is talk about what is happening and what can be done. Africa is moving towards an area of self-management, we have learned from our mistakes and are now working in tandem for a common purpose. He added that it is encouraging to note that six of the ten fastest growing countries are from within the African continent. He concluded by saying that: “Structures such as PAQI are going to lead this new phase in Africa’s history and will ensure that the value perception of the African goods will now be a reality. “

The establishment of PAQI is in accordance with the alliance of the Abuja treaty of 1994, and speaks to the objectives of this treaty in particular with regards to the strengthening of integration at regional and continental levels, harmonising activities and promoting trade. In her opening remarks Ms Treasure Maphanga, the Director of Trade & Industry representing the AUC at the event highlighted that “We are encouraged with the way Africa’s integration efforts are moving forward, and we are drawing inspiration from the competitive tools like PAQI in this process.” She continued to talk to the importance of partnerships, shared experiences and learning from the past and stated that the AUC remains open to suggestions from the PAQI stakeholders on how best AUC can support this initiative within the framework of AU decisions and programmes or alternatively how to include PAQI activities on standards, quality and measurement within the implementation of the approved 2014-2017 AUC Strategic Plan.

She eluded that the presence of the AUC at the meeting signifies the beginning of a new phase in the relationship between the AUC and the structures and reconfirmed the support of the AUC to the structures and the work that they are doing. Ms Maphanga expressed her anticipation on working together on specific, targeted interventions in future. She summarised by saying: “I wish the PAQI structures tremendous success, not only for the the stakeholders that attended this event, but also for the stakeholders on the continent that we serve.”



ANNEXURE

ARSO

ARSO is Africa's intergovernmental standards body formed by the OAU (currently AU) and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa ("UNECA") in 1977 in Accra, Ghana with membership drawn from national standards bodies.

The main objective of ARSO is to develop tools for standards development, standards harmonization and implementation of these systems to enhance Africa's internal trading capacity, increase Africa's product and service competitiveness globally, and uplift the welfare of African consumers creating a continental standardization forum to influence future prospects in international trade referencing for Africa's benefit and advantage.

AFRAC

AFRAC was established in 2010 and is a cooperation of accreditation bodies, sub-regional accreditation cooperations and stakeholders.

The main objective of AFRAC is to provide accreditation support to industry and trade and to contribute to the protection of health and safety of the public and the protection of the environment, in Africa and thereby improve Africa's competitiveness.

AFRIMETS

AFRIMETS was formed in 2006 with membership drawn from the African Sub-regional Metrology Organizations ("**SRMO**"). The principal members of AFRIMETS are the six Sub-regional metrology organisations, CEMACMET ("**CEMAC**"), EAMET ("**EAC**"), MAGMET ("**AMU**"), NEWMET ("**ECOWAS**", "**COMESA**"), SADC MET/MEL ("**SADC**") and SOAMET ("**UEMOA**"). Other members include countries or institutes responsible for metrology in and out of Africa as well as stakeholders.

The main objective of AFRIMETS is to promote metrology and related activities in Africa with the view of facilitating intra African and international trade and to ensure the safety and health of the public and environmental protection.

AFSEC

AFSEC was established in February 2008 as an organised association and has legal status in accordance with Article 24 of the Convention of the African Energy Commission. The members of AFSEC are National Electrotechnical Committees from each African Member State and also include Regional Electrotechnical Committees; AFSEC is recognised by the IEC through a cooperation agreement signed in 2009.

The main objective of AFSEC is to support African electricity Infrastructure development with standards and conformity assessment services in order to improve access to electricity in Africa.

