



Facilitating international exchange of goods, services and know-how

Argentina 2003



Some 350 delegates from 110 countries participated in ISO's 26th General Assembly in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as guests of IRAM (*Instituto Argentino de Normalización*) – the first time this annual gathering of ISO's worldwide membership was held in a Latin American country.

ISO President Oliver Smoot reviewed the numerous evolutions that are increasing the need for International Standards and also the benefits of participating in ISO to develop them :

- the emergence of world markets – not only for products, but also for services ;

26th ISO General Assembly Opening Ceremony



Seated in the august and historic setting of the Colón Theatre, at the start of the ISO General Assembly, from left to right: Mr. Alan Bryden, Secretary-General of ISO ; Mr. Oliver Smoot, President of ISO ; Mr. Eduardo Hecker, Economic Development Secretary, Buenos Aires City Government ; Mr. Norberto Ivancich, Undersecretary of Public Affairs, Cabinet Office, Argentinian Government ; Mr. José Francisco López, President and Director General of IRAM ; Mr. Mario Giadorou, President of the organizing committee, Argentina 2003.

- the deregulation of sectors that now require voluntary standards, such as energy, water supply, transportation, telecommunications and postal services ;
- the consolidation of ever-larger multinational companies ;
- the pressure from developing countries and economies in transition for access to world markets ;
- the trust crisis in organizational governance and the need to demonstrate responsible practice according to internationally agreed criteria ;
- the systems-based approach to sustainable development, and
- the arrival of new and fast-growing technologies (new materials, nanotechnologies and biotechnologies) whose penetration of the market and expansion depend on the availability of global standards.

Oliver Smoot declared: “This past year, ISO has reinforced its potential and seen a growing awareness of the possibilities and the benefits that our International Standards can bring. Our standards are being ever more recognized at the ‘grass roots’ level of products and service delivery and also at the international policy level.”



World Standards Day 2003

ISO, the IEC and the ITU join together each year to issue a World Standards Day message and, in 2003, the theme was “Global Standards for the Global Information Society”. In this message, the three organizations underlined their commitment to bridging the so-called Digital Divide and making the benefits of information and communication technologies available to developing countries.

World Summit on the Information Society

ISO worked throughout 2003 with IEC, ITU-T – its partners in the World Standards Cooperation (WSC) – to ensure that, in the framework of the World Summit on the Information Society, the

strategic role of International Standards for development and trade be recognized and reflected in the resolutions/declarations emerging from the Summit.

The efforts of the WSC partners were highly successful. The first phase of the Summit in Geneva in December 2003 endorsed a Declaration of Principles that includes the following reference to standardization :

“Standardization is one of the essential building blocks of the Information Society. There should be particular emphasis on the development and adoption of international standards.”

Partnership with WTO

The level of ISO’s recognition by international institutions continues to rise. For example, in 2003, ISO continued and extended its participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) committees as an observer, and in WTO workshops covering both standardization and conformity assessment.



Mr. Juan Antonio Dorantes, Chairman of the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), speaking at the ISO General Assembly in Buenos Aires.



Further developments took place in collaboration with the WTO and the International Trade Centre (ITC) in the area of training. This covered technical barriers to trade (TBT), international standardization and conformity assessment issues. Support actions were also carried out for the benefit of developing countries in the area of standardization and related matters, including regional workshops, training and assistance projects.

The development of high-level contacts is progressing well. The ISO Secretary-General had several meetings with the principal officers of WTO and took part in the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún, Mexico. At the plenary meeting, the WTO Director General reported on the positive contribution of ISO to the implementation of the TBT Agreement, in particular in the areas of technical assistance and participation of developing countries. The conference also provided a good opportunity to network and to promote ISO.