

REPORT

33rd ISO DEVCO Meeting Beijing (18–19 October 1999)

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The 33rd meeting of the ISO Committee on Developing Country Matters (DEVCO) was held at the Beijing International Convention Centre, Beijing from 18–19 October 1999. Key points are summarized below.

Chairman's Virtual Advisory Group (CVAG):

This was established following the last meeting, and discussion topics had been posted on the ISO web site. Representatives from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, India, Pacific and South America have taken part in the CVAG; it was felt that the group could now begin to play a more active role.

Development manuals:

Development Manual 10, *Environmental Management and ISO 14000*, was published last year. A programme for systematically reviewing all the manuals was considered necessary.

Regional training seminars:

Ten regional training seminars on three separate topics had been held since the last DEVCO meeting, enabling over 750 individuals to be trained.

Funding:

The continuing problems caused by a low level of funding were identified, including a lack of continuity in the work programme, which hampers good planning and gives rise to continuous appeals. It was therefore decided that DEVCO would recommend to the ISO Council that 1 % of subscriptions should be allocated to the Funds-in-Trust.

Use of the Internet by developing countries:

The joint ISO DEVPRO/UNCTAD project which promotes Internet for ISO Members from developing countries was discussed: a 1998 survey had shown that less than half of developing country members had e-mail, but this percentage has now increased significantly. There has also been the UNCTAD *Mediterranean 2000* project, established in partnership with ILO, ISO, UNIDO and WIPO, with funding from the Italian Government,

which aims to assist in establishing and/or upgrading the information technology and telecommunications infrastructure in beneficiary countries in the Mediterranean basin and in the Horn of Africa.

CASCO activities:

There was some discussion about the proposed joint CASCO/DEVCO workshop, *Facilitating Recognition of Conformity Assessment Activities in the 21st Century*, which will take place on 25 September 2000 in Milan.

COPOLCO activities:

The Chairman of COPOLCO reported on its activities over the last year, and expressed his wish for the increased participation of developing countries (even if only by correspondence) since there is generally less consumer protection legislation in these countries.

Cooperation between DEVCO and REMCO:

During the last year, a further project to upgrade analytical laboratories had been undertaken in three Latin American countries.

UNIDO pre-peer evaluation project:

Dr. Octavio Maizzo-Neto, UNIDO Director, reported on the results of evaluations which had been carried out in the Philippines and in Columbia. He reiterated the need for developing countries to follow ISO Guide 61 when establishing accreditation bodies.

Collaboration with the WTO TBT:

Mrs. Vivien Liu gave a presentation on developments on technical barriers to trade, which provoked much discussion on technical assistance and on the role which conformity assessment bodies and trade associations should play in the WTO TBT process.

The next ISO DEVCO meeting will be held on 28 September 2000 in Milan, Italy, preceded by the joint CASCO/DEVCO workshop mentioned above. ■