

SPEECH BY DR. ENG. KARANJA KIBICHO, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIALIZATION DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 5TH REGIONAL METROLOGY CONFERENCE (RMC) 2010 HELD AT THE SEVERIN SEA LODGE, MOMBASA ON 1ST DECEMBER 2010

Mr. David Nalo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the East African Community

Mr. Tobias Diergardt – Incharge of PTB EAC Project

Managing Director – Kenya Bureau of Standards

Members of the National Standards Council

KEBS staff and management

Distinguished Delegates and Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to join you today during the opening ceremony of the 5th Regional Metrology Conference (RMC 2010) that marks a critical step in the process of development of regional standards. I take this early opportunity to congratulate the organizers for putting together this well attended conference that aims to sensitize industry players on the contemporary measurement issues grouped together along the areas of mechanical, electromagnetic and metrology in Chemistry.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The timing of this conference is ideal as it comes very close to the 1st July 2010 for the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol that provides for the free movement of goods and services within the region. For this to be achieved effectively there is need to have standards and measurements to support the regional trade. The theme of the conference: “**measurements for enhancement of Trade within EAC**” corresponds to this need and is therefore appropriate for the conference and its deliberations. Similarly, the theme is relevant to the industrialization process of the region for the correct measurement for manufactured products can spur increased volumes of trade amongst the member states. This will enhance greater access to markets, development and integration of the not only industrialization but the entire productive sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may be aware, the current Regional Economic Communities such as EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS amongst others are building blocs towards Africa’s Economic Integration. This has already started as demonstrated by the drawing up of a negotiation road map for the proposed EAC/COMESA/SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement. The merging of the RECs will provide for a market for Africa’s total population of approximately 1.033 billion.

For the dream of a United Africa to be realized there is need to start reinforcing the regional Standardization Metrology and Conformity Assessment (SMCA) Infrastructure that will ensure a more interrelated system through the growing technical complimentarily. The EAC SQMT Act and upcoming EAC Metrology Bill show commitment to operationalize the regional common market protocol and development of an appropriate regional Standardization infrastructure.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Standards provide a quality reference point and the universal language for exchange of goods and services worldwide. The changes in conformity assessment of products/services in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) trade agreement has highlighted the need for organizations to have credible, reliable and trustworthy measurements systems, to enable acceptance of products/services nationally and across borders. Measurements are also crucial in the diagnosis of health, safety and environmental issues, the promotion of social economic development and the alleviation of unfair trade practices in our society.

In line with our aspirations to be a middle-income country as outlined in the *Kenya Vision 2030*, a robust national measurement system that supports this vision must therefore be established. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Industrialization has identified Standards and Quality Infrastructure as one of the Industrialization Policy framework area's. Quality infrastructure in the context of the policy refers to all aspects of standardization, meteorology, testing and quality management including certification and accreditation. The draft policy also proposes the establishment of a National Metrology Institute (NMI), in line with the international best practices, that will boost the development of measurements in the region.

The proposed Industrialization Policy also seeks to develop a National Quality, Standards and Anti-counterfeit Policy, which will address all issues related to the quality of local products and the market penetration of the same products especially in Europe where there is stringent enforcement of quality of products. This will enhance the competitiveness of Kenyan products.

To assist Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises to gradually meet required national and international standards, the Ministry of Industrialization is spearheading the MSE 2030 4K initiative, which involves the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), Kenya Intellectual Property Institute (KIPI) and the Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations. This 4K initiative ensures that there is a graduated and progressive standard for local Small and Medium Industries while at the same time the large Industries are not disadvantaged.

The draft National Industrialization Policy has also been aligned to the EAC Industrialization Policy and Strategy documents which amongst other issues, proposes fast tracking the harmonization and implementation of EAC and COMESA common quality standards.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Participation in this seminar shows commitment to eliminate any production or process errors which might have an impact on the quality of your products. The Government of Kenya through KEBS is committed to assisting the industries within the region improve the quality of their products and services. We will continue to participate in regional initiatives aimed at harmonizing standards and procedures for testing, quality assurance and inspection, metrology and certification.

The Standard ISO/IEC 17025 contains all the requirements that testing and calibration laboratories have to meet if they wish to demonstrate that they operate a quality system, and are able to generate technically valid results. I urge all to obtain accreditation for your respective laboratories, so that as a region we can speak one language – one certificate acceptable everywhere.

The customer relies on critical services namely calibration, testing and awareness on how to identify genuine quality products from substandard ones, therefore it is prudent that a sound measurement regime is put in place to assist the customer make wise choices and save billions of money wasted in importation and production of substandard products not to mention time wasted in lengthy litigation processes.

In conclusion, let me express my gratitude to the staff and management of Kenya Bureau of Standards, Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) of Germany and the East African Community Secretariat for making this important conference a reality. It is now my humble pleasure to declare the 5th Regional Metrology Conference officially open.

Thank you and May God bless you.