

2005 World Standards Day Seminar

In commemoration of the 2005 World Standards Day (WSD), SAZ held a half-day seminar on Thursday 27 October 2005 at its head office in Borrowdale, Harare. The theme for the seminar, which was in line with the rest of the world, was “*Standards for a Safer World*”. This seminar, the fourth to be run by the SAZ since 2002, was organized to coincide with the WSD celebrations.

Each year on 14 October members of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) celebrate the birth of ISO. WSD is also a way of paying tribute to thousands of men and women of different political and religious persuasion, national and racial origins and cultural backgrounds who come together within ISO, IEC and ITU to cooperate effectively on the task of achieving international consensus on standards.

On this day, way back in 1946, delegates from 25 countries held a meeting in London and decided to create a new international organization whose objective was to facilitate the international coordination and unification of industrial standards. ISO is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies, currently comprising over 155 members one in each country. SAZ has been a member of ISO since 1990 and a member of IEC since 2001. In addition, SAZ participates in 40 ISO committees of economic and social interest for Zimbabwe and is also a member of three ISO policy committees.

The objective of ISO is to promote the development of standardization and related activities in the world with a view to facilitate international trade as well as developing cooperation in the spheres of intellectual, scientific, technological and economic activity. The results of ISO technical work are published as International Standards.

The first WSD was celebrated on 14 October 1970 at the initiative of the then ISO President, Mr Faruk Sunter from Turkey. The aim of these celebrations is to raise awareness of the importance of global standardization to the world economy and to promote its role in helping meet the needs of business, industry, government and consumers worldwide. This international event is meant to pay tribute to the thousands of volunteers around the world who participate in standardization activities.

The theme of the 2005 celebrations was even more appropriate, as the world has of late been increasingly ravaged by various natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, landslides, tsunamis, transportation and domestic accidents, epidemics and industrial disasters that have accounted for many thousands of deaths and injuries each year. Some Asian and African countries are still recovering from the 2004 tsunami with parts of the United States of America also recovering from hurricane Katrina.

As was the case in 2004, the seminar was very well attended with several presenters taking turns to highlight the importance of standards and the role of standards in ensuring safety. The guest of honour at the seminar was Mr Graham Holloway from the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) nicknamed 'Mr Condom', because of his chairmanship of ISO TC 157, which develops standards on mechanical contraceptive including condoms. The day's presentations were rounded off with a presentation by Mr Pawadyira from the Civil Protection Unit.

The climax of the seminar was an award presentation ceremony in honour of three experts who were being recognized for their outstanding contribution to standardization work. These were the second group of technical committee (TC) members to receive such awards following the launch of the TC Member award in 2004.

The annual award, which coincide with the WSD celebrations is the SAZ's own way of paying tribute to many national experts who participate in standardization work be it at national, regional or international level. TC members are the backbone of any standardization system. They give a lot of time and effort to prepare standards with out remuneration. SAZ TC members consist of representatives of all relevant interests such as manufacturers, trade associations, consumers, government departments and educational, research, professional and testing institutions etc.

The three award winners were Engineer Michael Patrick Grant, Engineer E. A. Christer and Mr Emmanuel Muzah. An award was also presented to the inaugural winner of the SAZ Reporter of the Year award. McDonald Rainosi from the New Ziana won this inaugural award.