



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



GENERAL

E/C.2/240  
26 January 1950

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

---

COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

CO-ORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

IN THE SPHERE OF STANDARDIZATION

Communication from the International Organization for Standardization

Distributed in accordance with rule 81 of the rules of procedure, in full,  
at the request of a member of the Council.

17 November 1949.

Mr. Trygve Lie,  
Secretary-General,  
United Nations,  
Lake Success,  
New York.

Dear Mr. Lie:

On behalf of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), an organization granted consultative status (b) by the Economic and Social Council, we have the honor to submit herewith a statement in three copies entitled STATEMENT BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION REGARDING COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE SPHERE OF STANDARDIZATION. It would be greatly appreciated if you would have this statement circulated to the members of the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the decision of the Council contained in Resolution 2/3, Economic and Social Council Official Records, First Year, Second Session, pages 360-365. It is also requested that the statement be brought to the attention of the following Commissions:

Economic and Employment Commission  
Transport and Communications Commission  
Statistical Commission  
Social Commission  
Economic Commission for Europe  
Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East  
Economic Commission for Latin America.

The enclosed statement has been prepared in pursuance of action taken by the ISO Council at Paris on 6 July 1949.

We have the honor to remain,

Respectfully yours,

(Signed)

(Signed)

Henry St. Leger	Howard Coonley
General Secretary	President
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION	

A:618-E

STATEMENT

by

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

regarding

COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE SPHERE OF

STANDARDIZATION

---

Statement by  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION  
regarding  
COORDINATION OF INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE SPHERE OF STANDARDIZATION

-----

THE NEED FOR COORDINATION

Perusal of the reports of the Functional and Regional Commissions to the Economic and Social Council, and of the Secretary-General on work programs of the Economic and Social Departments and Commissions, discloses many activities in the sphere of standardization, many of which concern subjects also being dealt with by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Similarly, several of the specialized agencies are engaging in, or have expressed an interest in, standardizing activities which fall within the field of activity of ISO. In some instances (e.g. building construction) Commissions, specialized agencies and ISO are all concerned with the same subject of standardization. It is obvious that there is a need for coordination of these activities if much overlapping, and perhaps discordant standards, are to be avoided.

Annex I presents a conspectus of the standardizing activities or interests of United Nations organs, specialized agencies, and related work of the International Organization for Standardization. It will be noted that no less than 38 Technical Committees of ISO (and its Electrical Division, IEC) are working on subjects that are also being dealt with by, or which are known to be of interest to, United Nations bodies or one or more of the specialized agencies.

Although the consultative status of ISO with the Council does not embrace the specialized agencies, the activities of some of these agencies in the various fields of standardization are included in the tabulation, because it does not seem feasible to bring about balanced coordination of international standardization without considering the problem as a whole, and taking into account all of the important agencies which have an interest in that activity.

The position of ISO in relation to international standardization is briefly defined by its Constitutional objective: "to facilitate the coordination and unification of the standards of the Member Bodies". The Member Bodies of ISO are the recognized national standardizing organizations of 27 countries. Two additional United Nations member countries are represented by the U.S.S.R. membership in ISO. The International Electrotechnical Commission, the membership of which represents 23 countries, constitutes the Electrical Division of ISO. On the national level ISO Member Bodies are in some cases departments or offices of national Governments; others are private bodies, but with Government participation in standardizing activities. Many of the organizations receive financial support from their Governments; others are wholly supported by government. ISO, therefore, occupies a quasi-official position in the sphere of its activities.

In order to clarify the national positions of the Member Bodies of ISO Annex II is submitted. This Annex comprises concise statements, prepared by each Member Body specifically for this communication, setting out in a few words the Constitutional character of the member.

The membership of ISO is representative of the membership of those of the Functional Commissions which have an interest in standardization. It is also representative of the membership of the Economic Commissions for Europe, and Asia and the Far East. Owing, however, to the large membership of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the limited number of countries in that region which at present have national standards organizations, there is not in this instance the same comparability with the ISO membership. The extent of agreement between ISO membership and the present membership of the Commissions, and certain of the specialized agencies, which are known to have an interest in international standardization is shown in tabular form in Annex III.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR COORDINATION

In order to accomplish coordination of standardizing activities in the fields with which the Commissions, or the Secretariat-General, are concerned ISO offers its services as a coordinating agency, and as a basis for discussion suggests:

1. That a Commission, or the Secretariat-General, when contemplating activities involving the preparation or unification of standards in any field, might confer with ISO regarding the most desirable procedure;
2. That a Commission, or the Secretariat-General, contemplating standardizing activities might utilize the facilities of ISO to accomplish its object whenever possible;
3. That representatives of Commissions, or the Secretariat-General, and of ISO confer with reference to standardizing activities now being conducted by the Commissions or the Secretariat, with a view to the avoidance of overlapping, or the production of discordant standards.

The Council of ISO is prepared to consider an extension of the activities of its Technical Committees, or the establishment of new Committees, in order adequately to cover the subjects of standardization in which the Commissions or the Secretariat are, or may become, interested.

It is further suggested that in implementing these arrangements a similar uniform basis of collaboration between the specialized agencies and ISO be established under the auspices of the appropriate division of the United Nations Secretariat-General.

While the ISO Council does not consider it necessary or desirable at this time to put forward specific suggestions relative to the financial implications of the coordination of standardizing activities, it is obvious that in the event of the transfer of expense from one organization to another this should be compensated for by suitable financial arrangements between the organizations participating in the work, or in some other satisfactory manner.

It is realized that there will be instances in which the subjects of standardization is of such a nature that ISO has no special competence (e.g. biological standardization and the unification of pharmacopoeias by WHO). It is evident, however, that much the greater portion of such standardizing work as is now being carried on by the Commissions, the Secretariat-General, and some of the specialized agencies, lies within the sphere of activity of ISO, and that substantial advantages will accrue to the United Nations from the greater utilization of the Organization's facilities.

Respectfully submitted, in pursuance of action taken by the ISO Council at Paris on 6 July 1949,

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

17 November 1949.

(Signed)

---

Henry St. Leger  
General Secretary

(Signed)

---

Howard Coonley  
President.

## STANDARDIZING ACTIVITIES OF UNITED NATIONS ORGANS, SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, AND RELATED WORK OF I S O

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	<u>COMMISSIONS</u>	<u>SPECIALIZED AGENCIES</u>	<u>I S O</u>
<b>RAW MATERIALS</b>			
Raw materials for paint, varnish and lacquers	ECAFE: Regional materials		ISO/TC 35 Raw materials for paints, varnishes and lacquers
Rubber	ECAFE: "	FAO: Rubber studies	ISO/TC 45 Rubber
Lac and lac products	ECAFE: "	"	ISO/TC 50 Lac & lac products
Mica	ECAFE: "	"	ISO/TC 56 Mica
Essential oils	ECLA: "	"	ISO/TC 54 Essential oils
<b>INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS</b>			
Iron and steel	ECE: Steel Committee		ISO/TC 17 Iron and steel
	ECAFE: Sub-Committee on Iron and Steel		ISO/TC 25 Cast iron and cast steel
Refractory materials	ECE: Industry & Materials Committee		ISO/TC 33 Refractories
Ball & roller bearings	ECE: Industry & Materials Committee		ISO/TC 4 Ball and roller bearings
Textiles		FAO: Production, trade and consumption of natural & synthetic fibres	ISO/TC 38 Textiles (including fibres entering therein)
Paper		FAO: Wood Chemistry Committee	ISO/TC 72 Textile machinery
Laboratory glassware		WMO: Meteorological thermometers	ISO/TC 6 Paper
			ISO/TC 48 Laboratory glassware (collaborates with WMO re thermometers)
<b>ELECTRICAL</b>			
Electrical equipment	ECE: Committee on Electric Power		ISO/IEC/AC.5 Steam turbines (collaborates with ECE re turbo-alternators)
Electrical units		UNESCO: ICWM*: Standardization of measures	ISO/IEC/AC.24 Electric and magnetic magnitudes and units

SUBJECTSCOMMISSIONSSPECIALIZED AGENCIESI S OELECTRICAL (Continued)

Telecommunications

ITU: Radio regulations

ISO/IEC/CISPR\* Re radio interference

Voltages, current ratings &amp; frequencies

ECE: Committee on Electric Power

ISO/IEC/AC.8 Standard voltages, current ratings &amp; frequencies

AGRICULTURAL

Agricultural products

ECE: Agricultural problems

FAO: Grading of agricultural products

ISO/TC 34 Agricultural products

Food packaging

ECE: Food marketing

WHO: Standardization of food products

ISO/TC 52 Hermetically sealed metal food containers

ECAFE: Food marketing

FAO: Food marketing

ISO/TC 53 Packaging of frozen foods

Agricultural machinery

ECE: Industry &amp; Materials Committee

FAO: Farm machinery coordination

ISO/TC 23 Agricultural machines (collaborates with CIGR\* and FAO European Regional Office)

FUELS

Solid mineral fuels

ECE: Coal Committee

ISO/TC 27 Solid mineral fuels (collaborates with ECE Coal Committee re classification)

TRANSPORT

Road transport

ECE: Inland Transport Committee

ISO/TC 22 Automobiles (collaborates with ECE and CONF.8 re automobiles)

CONF.8: Road and motor transport

ISO/TC 31 Tyres, rims and valves



SUBJECTSCOMMISSIONSSPECIALIZED AGENCIESI S OTRANSPORT (Continued)

Rail transport ECE: Inland Transport Committee

Air transport

ICAO: Aeronautical standardization

ISO/IEC/AC.9 Electric traction equipment  
ISO/TC 20 Aircraft

Inland water transport TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

ISO/TC 9 Shipbuilding details for inland navigation

Ocean transport TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

ISO/TC 8 Shipbuilding details for sea navigation

HOUSING AND BUILDING

Building construction ECON. & EMP. COMM.; SOCIAL COMM.; ECE; ECLA; Rationalization of construction methods

FAO & ILO: Rationalization of construction methods

ISO/TC 59 Building construction and  
ISO/TC 71 Concrete and reinforced concrete

Building materials ECON. & EMP. COMM.; SOCIAL COMM.; ECE; ECLA; Standardization of building materials

FAO & ILO: Standardization of building materials

(collaborate with UUA\* and the International Association for Bridges and Frameworks)

Building materials tests ECE: Testing of building materials

FAO: Testing of building materials

Timber ECATE: Standardization of terminology, grading, etc.

FAO: Standards for measurement and grading

ISO/TC 59 Building construction and  
ISO/TC 55 Timber

Building equipment ECON. & EMP. COMM.; SOCIAL COMM.; ECE: Standardization of building equipment

ILO: Standardization of building equipment

Building documentation ECE: Industry & Materials Committee, Housing Subcommittee

ISO/TC 59 Building construction and  
ISO/TC 46 Documentation

PUBLICATIONS

Documentation

ECE: (As above)

UNESCO: Reconstruction & development of libraries; science abstracting

ISO/TC 46 Documentation (collaborates with FID\*)

I S O

SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

COMMISSIONS

SUBJECTS

MISCELLANEOUS

Quantities, symbols, units and conversion tables  
ISO/TC 12 Quantities, symbols, units & conversion tables

Terminology and definitions

STAT. COMM.: Technical terms, symbols and notation

ECATE: Timber terminology  
ECIA: Technical "

FAO: Standardization of classification and terminology

UNESCO: Creation of uniform technical terminology

ICAO: Technical terminology

WHO: Definitions re water vapour in the atmosphere

Metrology

ISO/TC 3 Limits and fits

Acoustics

ISO/TC 43 Acoustics (collaborates with CCIF\* re standard pitch)

Cartography

SECRETARIAT: Standardization of symbols, etc.

Chemistry

ISO/TC 12 Quantities, symbols, etc.

Banking

UNESCO: Chemical abstracting

ISO/TC 47 Chemistry

Industrial safety

BANK: Standardization of banking statistics

ISO/TC 68 Standardization in the sphere of banking (collaborates with ICC\* Committee on Banking Tech.)

Statistics

STAT. COMM.: Industrial classification; statistical quality control

ISO/TC 5 Pipes and fittings (identifying colours)

Various ISO Member Bodies

\* ABBREVIATIONS: CCIF: International Consultative Committee of Telephony; CIGR: International Agricultural Engineering Commission; CISPR: International Special Committee on Radio Interference;  
FID: International Federation of Documentation; ICC: International Chamber of Commerce;  
ICWM: International Committee of Weights and Measures; UIA: International Union of Architects.

## ANNEX II

This Annex, consisting of concise statements by Member Bodies regarding the constitutional character of their respective organizations, was not included in the Report distributed to the United Nations.

## COMPARATIVE TABLE OF MEMBERSHIPS

of

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, STATISTICAL, AND SOCIAL COMMISSIONS  
 ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS FOR EUROPE, ASIA AND THE FAR EAST, AND LATIN AMERICA  
 ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, and WHO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

COUNTRY	E & E COM	T & C COM	STAT COM	SOC COM	ECE	ECAPF	ECLA	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	ISO
Afghanistan								X		X	X	X	*
Albania								X		X	X	X	*
Argentina			X				X	X		X	X	X	(1)
Australia	X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Austria								X	X	X	X	X	X
Belgium	X				X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Bolivia				X			X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Brazil	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bulgaria								X	X	X	X	X	*
Burma						X		X	X	X	X	X	*
Byelorussian S.S.R.	X				X							X	(USSR)
Canada	X			X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Ceylon								X	X	X	X	X	X
Chile		X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
China	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Colombia							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Costa Rica							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Cuba	X						X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Czechoslovakia	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Denmark				X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Dominican Republic							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Ecuador				X			X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Egypt							X	X	X	X	X	X	(IEC)
El Salvador		X					X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Ethiopia								X	X	X	X	X	*

COUNTRY	E & E COM	T & C COM	STAT COM	SOC COM	ECE	ECAFE	EGIA	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	ISO
Finland								X	X			X	X
France	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greece					X			X	X	X	X	X	
Guatemala							X	X	X				*
Haiti							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Honduras							X		X	X			*
Hungary								X	X	X		X	X
Iceland					X	X		X	X		X	X	*
India	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Iran								X	X	X		X	*
Iraq				X				X	X	X	X	X	*
Ireland								X	X			X	X
Israel								X	X		X	X	X
Italy								X	X		X	X	*
Lebanon								X	X		X	X	*
Liberia								X	X	X	X	X	*
Luxembourg					X			X	X	X	X	X	*
Mexico							X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monaco								X	X	X	X	X	*
Netherlands		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
New Zealand				X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Nicaragua							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Norway	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Pakistan		X				X		X	X	X	X	X	*
Panama							X	X	X		X	X	*
Paraguay							X	X	X		X	X	*
Peru							X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Philippines						X		X	X	X	X	X	*
Poland	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Portugal								X	X	X	X	X	X
Romania													(IEC)
Saudi Arabia								X	X	X	X	X	*
Siam						X		X	X	X	X	X	*
Sweden					X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Switzerland								X	X	X	X	X	X

COUNTRY	E & E COM	T & C COM	STAT COM	SOC COM	ECE	ECAFE	ECLA	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	ISO
Syria								X	X	X		X	*
Transjordan											X	X	*
Turkey			X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
Ukrainian S.S.R.			X		X							X	(USSR)
Union of S. Africa				X				X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S.S.R.	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X
United Kingdom	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
U.S.A.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Uruguay							X	X	X	X			(1)
Venezuela		X					X	X	X	X	X	X	*
Yugoslavia		X		X	X			X	X			X	X

## NOTES APPLICABLE TO ISO COLUMN:

\* These countries are not known to have national standardizing organizations

(1) The standards body of this country has applied for membership in ISO

(USSR) Represented in ISO by All-Union Standards Committee of U.S.S.R.

(IEC) Member of ISO Electrical Division only.