

Forum: Metrology – Trade Facilitator

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Welcome and opening address

Dr Michael Hofmann

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Dear Prof. Kochsiek, dear Mr. Magaña, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the “Forum: Metrology – Trade Facilitator” on behalf of the German Government and the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ.

Welcome to Berlin, too. I hope you will have time during these days to see something more of this beautiful and interesting city.

This **Forum** organised by the OIML provides an interesting platform for all of us - Developing Countries and Donors - to **exchange experience and identify needs** to implement and strengthen quality infrastructure in Developing Countries, particularly metrology infrastructure. I am very glad to see participants and representatives from about 100 countries. Your participation will bring together knowledge and experience on the subject of metrology from all over the world. This is the best precondition for a fruitful and exciting discussion during this Forum.

“Metrology – trade facilitator” is the title of the forum you are attending today. Why is this subject an important one in development co-operation?

Today the framework for development co-operation is set by **the Millennium Development Goals**. These goals were defined by the UN at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. The most well-known goal is to “halve poverty in the world by 2015”. One element of the Millennium Development Goals refers to the development of an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial system.

The Doha Ministerial Conference in November 2001 started the ongoing negotiating round in the World Trade Organisation. The needs and interests of developing countries were placed at the centre of the negotiations, because Ministers saw the necessity for a rebalancing of the international trading system. As you know, the negotiations have been slow and difficult so far. The international trading system can only make its contribution to reaching the Millennium Development Goals if the negotiations come to results which **fulfil what is promised** by the name “**Doha development round**”.

When we focus on the link between trade and poverty reduction, we recognise that the **integration** in the **international economic system** bears **risks and challenges** for developing countries. It is of utmost importance to structure the international system in a way to ensure that countries can take advantage of their integration in this system and minimise risks.

Development co-operation has to take up the challenge of helping to shape and strengthen structures. Partner countries are to be enabled to fully benefit from the advantages of globalisation on the one hand and to be enabled to respond to globalisation risks effectively on the other hand. Trade liberalisation is not an end in itself, but it shall contribute to social and economic development and poverty reduction.

The importance of tariffs has been diminishing dramatically during the last decades. But **non-tariff-barriers** have made it more and more difficult for developing countries to enter the markets of industrialised countries. Especially those non-tariff-barriers related to standards and regulations.

This shows the increasing importance of **metrology and quality infrastructure**. Because this systems are needed to comply with standard and regulation requirements. Functioning metrology and quality infrastructure systems are a **precondition** for developing countries to be **able to cope with the demands** not only of developed countries **regulations**. They are also a precondition to be able to satisfy the **demands of consumers** which are more and more aware of and interested in issues of quality, but also of productions methods and their implications on the environment and on workers.

The availability of quality infrastructure - and metrology is a main pillar of the quality infrastructure - is therefore also a necessary precondition for the integration of developing countries in the international trading system. Metrology does therefore not just facilitate trade - as the title of the workshop says. Functioning metrology systems are therefore also important to achieve the goal of poverty reduction.

Development co-operation has to **support** developing **countries' integration in the international trading system**. This can be made at different levels:

- to strengthen developing countries' **capacity to negotiate** multilateral trade agreements,
- to strengthen developing countries' **capacity to implement** existing international trade rules, and
- to strengthen developing countries' **capacity to trade**.

It is in this last area which deals with the problems of countries to deliver products which are demanded on the world market, the issue of "supply capacity". This does also comprise the support to the necessary institutions dealing with trade infrastructure.

In the field of the **German bilateral co-operation** more than 100 M€ a year are destined to trade related assistance in a wider sense. Today about 30 bilateral and regional projects are under implementation, with the objective to strengthen quality infrastructures in Developing Countries - including metrology. This projects have an estimated average implementation period of five to six years and signifies a total amount of 40 M€.

This is part of the fulfilment of our commitments, but we are aware, that still much more work has to be done. We will continue our support to developing countries in the field of quality infrastructure.

The idea of this forum is that we can learn from each other sharing experiences. You will discuss how to confront in an effective and efficient way the existing needs with regard to the objective of facilitating access to competent, internationally accepted and demand oriented metrology and quality infrastructure and services.

I wish you good success for these discussions and a productive day as well as a pleasant week in Berlin. Thank you!