African Organisation for Standardisation

Organisation Africaine De Normalisation

ARSO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2012 - 2017

FOREWORD

The African Organisation for Standardisation, formerly the African Regional Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) traces its genesis to the 1970s at a Conference held at the historic and important city of Accra, Ghana. The idea of a continental standardisation body had received considerable impetus from the buoyant and optimistic mood that characterised the post-independence period in most of Africa.

The mood then, under the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was one of pan-African solidarity and collective self-reliance born of a shared destiny with standardisation viewed as a guidepost of the destiny and bedrock of African Economic Integration Agenda and a route to linking up of Africa's economy to the world and to fostering the African Common Market. It was under these circumstances that, on 10th – 17th January 1977 in Accra, Ghana, the African Governments under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the OAU convened the Founding Conference of ARSO and considered the first constitution of ARSO. ARSO was given a mandate of speeding African Economic Integration through standardisation, metrology and conformity assessment procedures.

The creation of the organization was also as a result of the inspiration and the vision of some great sons of Africa among who, when attending an ISO General Assembly in the Mid-70s as representatives of Africa had a common vision of having African Standardizers united and work together towards contributing to the building of the African economies through standardisation so that Africa as a continent should rise to the challenges of global economic order. Through this vision and with the assistance of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the blessing of the Heads of States and Governments in Africa through the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the foundations of the regional standards body, the African Regional Organization for Standardisation (ARSO) at the Founding Conference in Accra was laid. This Conference produced the Constitution of ARSO which was immediately signed by heads of delegations of seventeen African countries in the presence of the following seven organizations fully represented: the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (ARSM); the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), and the Union of African Railways (UARr).

Subsequently, nine (9) African Presidents ratified the ARSO's Constitution of 1977 thereafter and eight (8) designated Government officials and was deposited with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Since then, African Organization for Standardisation (ARSO) is an intergovernmental body with over 30 members to date with the principal mandate to harmonise African Standards and conformity assessment procedures in order to reduce Technical Barriers to Trade and therefore promote intra African and international Trade as well as enhance the industrialization of Africa. It is envisaged that, within the framework of the African Union and African Union Commission, the Department of Trade and Industry will establish a common policy for harmonization of standards in Africa as laid out in the AUC Strategic plan for 2009 – 2012. Part of ARSO mandate is to promote coordination of all standards work undertaken by African governmental and non-governmental organizations and align regulatory frameworks (standards, guidelines, codes of practice and other recommendations) to AU systems for the benefit of African economies and benchmark for global best practices.

This document sets out the Strategic Plan 2012–2017 for ARSO, stating strategic objectives of ARSO and incorporating a list of program areas and planned activities with a clearly defined timetable. The strategic vision and Strategic Objectives for ARSO underpin the high priority attached to Africa's intra-trade and industrialization by AUC as the parent organization. Further information may be obtained from the ARSO's Central secretariat.

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1   INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the strategic plan for the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO), stating Strategic Objectives of the organization and incorporating a list of programme areas and planned activities with a clearly defined timetable. The strategic vision and Strategic Objectives for ARSO underpin the high priority attached to standards for sustainable development by its parent organizations (AU/AUC and UNECA) and all the African national governments and their partner international organizations. *ARSO Strategic Framework 2012–2014* accords high priority to promoting cooperation in policy and harmonization of standards and the resultant regulatory frameworks at the continental, regional and national levels.

The 46th ARSO council Meeting Resolutions recognized the need to highlight intra and inter regional regulatory regime that takes harmonization as a tool to enhance trade and sharing of resources (electricity, gas, petroleum et cetera) for faster industrialization and improvement of the living standards of the citizens of Africa and the need to review the strategic plan of 2009-2014 in order to align it with the current global challenges faced by trade and economic growth. AUC and UNECA presentation and participation in the Council was an acknowledgement of the importance of ARSO's role for ensuring the highest levels of consumer health protection. These resolutions and related documents urged ARSO to work towards integrating product safety as one of its essential public health functions with the Strategic Objective of developing sustainable, integrated product safety systems for the reduction of health risks along the entire food chain. It is understood that ARSO, when elaborating standards, guidelines and recommendations, gives full consideration to those resolutions and decisions from ARSO organs that are relevant within the framework of ARSO's mandate. The fundamental mandate of the AUC is to develop policies, guidelines and other recommendations for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices both in the food trade and other product markets, which would then form the basis for development of harmonized standards and conformity assessment procedures by ARSO.

ARSO has always operated in a dynamic political environment of change and technological advancement amongst deteriorating economic prospects for the African citizenry and expanding market for foreign products and services. The growth in world trade, advances in modern communication and the opportunities therein call for a paradigm shift in management of the affairs of ARSO, AUC and that of the entire African nation in trade especially in standards for growth and sustainable development.

ARSO Strategic Framework 2012–2017 essentially addresses economic prospects of the continent with a perpetually increasing population and diminishing resources and moreover no basis for production of products for global market whereas there is a significant introduction of goods into the African market which range from counterfeits and substandard goods to reasonably value added products all contributing to elevating the profile and significance of the African market and the regulation of the market based on sound policies based on standards, best practices and codes of ethic(s) all working in unison to form a regulatory framework devoid of technical barriers to trade. There is growing international concern that despite massive aid and support to export industries in Africa (other than for energy and raw material (minerals et cetera)) Africa's chances for development based on self-sustenance and modeled around its own economic aspirations are pipe dreams without a properly structured regulatory regime for both internal systems for quality production and a guide on common international uptake on goods without destroying its own economy with a greater aptitude and assurance for consumer safety and environmental concerns.

ARSO will therefore and within the context of this framework, strive to respond to these new challenges and keep abreast of other recent developments in the global trading (including manufacturing for value and offsite manufacturing endeavours). The global trade (WTO endeavour) is now referenced on international standards mainly ISO/IEC/ITU and harmonized Standards. It is in these fora and around WTO additional requirements and EPAs that the African standardization forum needs to form a web designed to give Africa an impetus towards greater participation in the flow of global trade and boost its own internal trade while taking into consideration preferential systems on bilateral and multilateral basis.

The recognition and status that ARSO coordinated standardization and regulatory frameworks within the RECs and individual countries inclusive of guidelines, recommendations and protocols when applied in the African trade and industrialization context and arena becomes a responsibility for the member countries and RECs and wholesomely ensures progress and prosperity for the entire continent. Such a system shall be based on sound social and economic policies and have the support of member countries throughout the continent and within the envisaged mandate of ARSO as an arm of AU/AUC and meets the needs of the continents societal Strategic Objectives towards sustainable and fast tracked growth. There are other international agreements such as Lome convention, ACP and other EPAs and the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. The latter is of great relevance, given the significance of the provisions pertaining to product description, labelling, packaging and quality descriptors for consumer information and fair

practices in trade. ARSO being AU/AUC trade facilitation outfit has an important role in providing for essential composition and quality requirements that are not more trade-restrictive than necessary. ARSO needs to build and maintain its pre-eminent status as the Africa's recognized body for product and service standard-setting and to call for the use of its standards to the widest extent possible by all members as a basis for domestic regulation and international trade. This will help members to be more aware of the importance of the international harmonization of environmental, safety and quality standards for all products, as well as the enhancement of control systems for ensuring safety, quality and fair trade.

ARSO as an arm of AU/AUC and continental embodiment of NSBs and as standards and trade regulations management body, should rely on the opinions of National Standards Bodies and Regional Economic Communities and that of AU/AUC on specific issues. These vertically placed bodies and other ad hoc expert consultations (at the AUC and REC level) are functionally separate from ARSO and do not directly fall within the scope of the present Strategic Plan. Their national, regional and continental governments and system establish the mandates, functions, composition and agendas of these bodies. The independence of the expert bodies is critical to the objectivity of their opinions, and meetings of these bodies should interact with ARSO in accordance to the ARSO constitution.

There shall be considerable synergy between the AU/AUC directorates including the principal ones as relates trade and industry, the intergovernmental bodies of the AU/AUC, UNECA, RECs and other regional and specialized bodies such as IGAD in order to take decisions based on common interest for Africa and Africa's growth.

2 STRATEGIC VISION, MISSION

To enable the overall achievement of the strategic vision, ARSO must take action jointly with its parent organizations and its members. ARSO urges AU/AUC and UNECA to mobilize sufficient resources to allow ARSO to fulfil its mandate. The other key roles are to provide advice requested by AU/AUC, RECs and member countries and to offer technical assistance to members so that they can effectively participate in the standard-setting and harmonization process and build capacity for the development of sound control and regulatory systems. The ARSO membership (NSBs) fully recognizes the efforts of the members of the AUC, and other continental bodies such as NEPAD and especially those, which provide significant financial and other support to the work of the AUC or as contributors to extra-budgetary programmes of AU and AUC or as host governments of subsidiary bodies.

2.1 VISION STATEMENT

To be an excellent standardisation centre that promotes trade and industry.

2.2 MISSION STATEMENT

To facilitate intra-African and global trade through providing harmonised standards and facilitating their implementation.

2.3 CORE VALUES

1. Integrity
2. Value for Employees
3. Team Work
4. Passion for Creativity and Innovation
5. Customer Focus.

3   STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In close cooperation with the partners mentioned above, ARSO will focus on the following Strategic Objectives to achieve its strategic vision.

In particular, ARSO will give specific attention to product safety, environment and climate change, and global trade issues that have continued to be given high priority among countries and among the international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with these matters. Nevertheless, focus on participation of members still a key and a challenge toward fulfilling ARSO mandate and mission.

3.1   *Strategic Objective 1:* Establish a standards harmonization system that supports a sound regulatory framework

An effective control and regulatory system is critical in enabling all member countries to ensure their products entering international trade are competitive in terms of quality and to ensure that imported products conform to national requirements. Harmonization of National standards should be based on REC, ARSO/AUC, ISO/IEC, ITU, harmonized standards, guidelines and recommendations is essential to promoting access to continent wide internal and global trade, consumer health protection, reduction of product hazards and risks, and minimizing the negative effects of technical regulations on inter and intra-trade in the continent RECs and member countries

For this purpose, ARSO will apply different strategies:

3.1.1   Establish the African Standardization System on the basis of stakeholder needs in close cooperation with AU, UNECA, AFRAC, AFSEC, AFRIMETS, RECs and NSBs.

In many African countries, effective control is undermined by the existence of fragmented legislation, multiple jurisdictions and weaknesses in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement. Sound national control and regulatory systems are essential to ensuring the health and safety of the domestic population as well as ensuring the safety and quality of products entering international trade. ARSO and the RECs have to make significant advances in promoting sound regulatory frameworks at the national level.

ARSO, while encouraging members to use relevant Harmonized standards and tools, strongly encourages AU/AUC to continue to promote national regulatory systems that are based on

benchmarked and best international principles and guidelines and address all components of the standards. The development of sound control and regulatory infrastructure including human resources is particularly important for African countries as they seek to achieve higher levels technological development and sufficiency in national systems and will require high-level political and policy commitment. Successful negotiation of bilateral mutual recognition and equivalence of control systems also depends on the abilities of countries to assure each other of the integrity and regional and/or international conformity of their regulatory systems.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Developing a general Quality policy for African Countries
2. Establish cooperation frameworks with all Pan African Quality Infrastructure bodies and other similar organisations.
3. Develop a general technical regulations framework for African countries
4. Develop African capacity in standardisation
5. Promote the use of the tools from the African Advisory Committee on Competitive Tools AACCTs and the African Standardisation Harmonisation Model (ASHAM) in the development of harmonized standards at national and regional, and engage private sector standards developers to use these tools.

3.1.2 Establishing a harmonisation system that support sustainable economic development in Africa and accelerate infrastructure development with emphasis on interconnectivity, reliability and cost effectiveness

ARSO has developed and will optimize models for harmonization of both regional and international standards, guidelines, and recommendations based on common good principles for the reduction of product hazards and economic risks within our territories and jurisdictions. In strengthening the strategic focus of the ARSO and the objectives of AU/AUC in the development of standards and related regulatory framework based on risk and performance for broad applications across a range of regimes in regulation and economic propulsion, systems of production and support such as power grids and gas pipelines, other infrastructural amenities and commodities, ARSO must give priority to establishing a coherent and integrated set of Harmonized standards covering the entire Continent and its shores. Such an approach will serve as a model for the members of the AU/AUC to pursue regulatory systems that provide Africa with safeguarded economic systems free of loopholes for substandard and counterfeit product damping and ensure fair practices in all aspects of trade.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Establishing Standards Harmonisation Project Committee and technical harmonisation committees (THC)
2. Develop Annual THC meeting Calendar and hold regular THC meetings for harmonization of Standards
3. Harmonising and Developing sustainability standards, referential and guidelines in:
   a. Agriculture
   b. Fisheries
   c. Tourism
   d. Forestry
   e. Mining
   f. Textiles and Leather
   g. Food Security, Safety and nutrition
   h. Environment and climate change
4. Harmonizing standards in infrastructure development for:
   a. Energy and Renewable Energy
   b. Building and construction
   c. Transportation systems

3.1.3 Establish a TBT identification, monitoring and resolution system

Harmonized standards and related texts for safety and quality of products and services, including all aspects, should be carefully prepared to reflect national, regional and continental requirements as well as global variations. Harmonized standards should focus on essential characteristics of products to ensure that they are not overly prescriptive and that the standards are not more trade restrictive than necessary; and ARSO, when elaborating and deciding upon harmonized standards and related texts, should take into consideration the technical and economic implications for all members as well as the special needs of countries including infrastructure, resources and technical and legal capabilities. Harmonized standards and related texts should not have the effect of creating unnecessary, unjustified or discriminatory obstacles to the exports of member countries and become trade barriers to trade. There are currently many privet standards on the market, ARSO will embrace any private standards that fall under ARSO principles mainly focusing on the standards that will improve the SMEs business.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Developing a criteria for classification and identification of TBTs at REC level
2. Establish a framework for cooperation with the REC NTB mechanisms
3. Streamline private sector standards into African harmonised standards to promote the development of the African private sector and SMEs
   a. Harmonise standards for value addition in SMEs products
   b. Develop a toolkit for dissemination of Technologies to SMEs
   c. Promoting the use of standards and conformity systems in SMEs

3.2 Strategic Objective 2: Disseminate harmonized standards and guidelines to support intra, inter African and international trade and industrialization

The common good objective in decision-making process by ARSO is spelled out in the Statements of Principle on the Role of Member Countries in the Implementation of Harmonized Standards and Regulatory Systems and the Extent to Which Other Factors are Taken into Account and in the Working Principles for Wholesome Developmental Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Harmonized Standards. ARSO and AUC will jointly ensure their consistent application by relevant governmental and intergovernmental bodies, in order to maintain its focus on this Strategic Objective. Wholesome developmental risk analysis as it applies to safety across the product range is an internationally accepted discipline and will require on-going and sustained inputs from ARSO, its parent organizations and national governments to promote its understanding and application at the regional and national levels.

In order to achieve this objective, different strategies will be applied:

3.2.1 Effective Communication Strategy

There is a need of ensuring an effective and diverse communication strategy to all level of stakeholders (AU/AUC, UNECA, RECs, ISO, EU, Private Sectors, NSBs, AACCTs, AFRAC, AFSEC, AFRIMETS, RNF, Development Partners (UNEP, UNIDO, PTB, AFNOR, Sida, BSI, KATS …..).

ARSO has the main strategic objective of elaborating and harmonizing standards that cover the needs of its entire membership to ensure these standards are applicable across the continent. A constraint to this strategic objective is the persistent lack of relevant data from all major players in

Africa and lack of understanding that RECs and other regional bodies can cluster groups of standards or standards for common harmonization and implementation in the particular region and/or fields. ARSO will continue to encourage countries from the whole of Africa to submit relevant data to the ARSO and AU/AUC and other stakeholder organizations in order to create viable options in harmonization and implementation of standards and avoid duplicating of effort and wastage of resources. ARSO recommends that members build on the achievements already accomplished, share their data and take meaningful steps to ensure that governance, management and scientific advice is provided more quickly, with even higher quality, that more requests are addressed, and that the process is conducted with enhanced transparency.

Once all the panafrican quality infrastructure organs and stakeholders share their achievement and resources where applicable; work in synergy; the public and private sector will acquire easily advisory services in governance, management and scientific matters which will explore the prerequisite conditions, resource mobilization mechanisms, forms and format for the advisories, timeliness and sustainability for efficiency and effectiveness in their respective mandate without leaving out the acquisition of new technology.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Develop target group specific communication / outreach materials
2. Organise seminars and Workshops on standards utilization with major focus on SMEs, Civil societies, consumer organisations
3. Participation in Trade fairs
4. Participate in Open Days and World Standards, Metrology, Accreditation, Quality days
5. Publishing articles in newsletters of NSBs and Stakeholders
6. Update the ARSO website and create vice versa links to stakeholders websites

3.2.2 Establish an effective knowledge management system

In order to create a winning formula for standardization in Africa, there is need to explore ways and means of establishing an effective knowledge management system at all levels in standardisation sector. There is a need to fund for consultation services and expertise in scientific fields and management (including governance) such that the decisions taken bear the relevant weight and acceptability universally. This is truer for areas in food and nutrition, genetically modified organisms and antimicrobial resistance which generally and specifically require

wholesome developmental risk analysis. With a clear and transparent policy in this endeavour the standards setting, harmonization and implementation of standards within viable and sound regulatory processes can be realized quickly and a leap forward in the African national economy can become a reality.

ARSO particularly encourages members to explore new approaches to enhance participation of experts and the use of data from all member countries in the elaboration and harmonization of standards; and construct database on their expertise and existing information.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Organise targeted trainings on standardization and conformity assessment systems independently or with cooperating partners (NSBs, BSI, EU, KATS, PTB, UNEP, UNIDO, Sida, NORAD…)
2. Develop a criteria to assist NSBs to leverage on legislation to generate sustainable resources
3. Establish linkages with Consumer Bodies and CABs
4. Development of Databases on African Standards Experts, African Register of Certified Auditors, Accreditation Experts, Environmental Experts, Conformity Assessment Experts
5. Developing a database on African Standards and related tools
6. Develop and update web-based database of harmonized Standards

3.3 Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening ARSO work-management capabilities for the sustainability of the Organisation

More expeditious and efficient work by the ARSO is necessary to provide AU/AUC members and intergovernmental and national organizations with the standards, guidelines, and recommendations that they need. For this purpose, ARSO will apply the following strategies.

3.3.1 Establish an effective Sabbatical Programme

ARSO has already made several important advances towards achieving more efficient work-management procedures, such as strengthening the role of the National Standards Bodies through the sabbatical and secondment program of officers as a strategic and standards-management body, holding biannual ARSO Council sessions, and instituting more effective use of information technology in exchange of documents. This will be further enhanced with participation of RECs

and industry and mentorship programs from more developed countries in the realm of standardization such as South Africa and Egypt to mention just a few of many others. ARSO must take additional steps to keep pace with international developments by better managing its work so that it addresses high priority issues in a timely manner and that standards harmonization work is completed within specified time frames.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Develop work plan, program and specific Term of Reference with linkage to the strategic plan activities to secure support from developing partners to develop tools (standards, conformity assessment procedures, referential guidelines) within their mandates using sabbatical staff

2. Develop joint programmes with NSBs and other stakeholders for enhancing their staff knowledge in standardisation and conformity assessment system

3.3.2 Establish an Effective Linkage with NSBs-and RECs Experts and private standards developers

The implementation of new harmonized work-management procedures must make the ARSO more effective and efficient, while maintaining the valuable reputation as an open, fair, transparent, and rules-based body. The current trend in private standards require international and regional standardisation bodies to adapt fast and work closely with the private standards developers in order to provide to standards users updated and relevant tools responding to their immediate needs.

ARSO will ensure that decisions about work prioritization are made using criteria that enable effective decision-making, taking into consideration the need to initiate new work and to revise existing standards and harmonize them; harmonization work is completed within defined time frames. Work progress is monitored by the Executive Committee, or other Council Committees and in the event that work exceeds specified time frames, the Executive Committee recommends to the secretariat that corrective actions be taken as necessary; exploring mechanisms for progressing the work in between sessions, while maintaining transparency and inclusiveness; and promoting consensus-based decision-making.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Establish the Standard Project Committee that include NSBs Experts, RECs and/or Sector Specific Experts
2. Establish an effective web based communication with the THCs
3. Establish an interactive forum
4. Develop joint mechanism to mainstream the private standards into the consensus process for standards harmonisation based on private standards

3.3.3 Implementation of Quality Management System

ARSO has taken a decision to adopt of a quality management system designed by the central secretariat. The implementation of any organization's quality management system is influenced by the change in its environment and the risks associated with that environment; its needs, objectives, mandate, size, business model and structure.

The quality management system once in place will enhance inclusiveness and transparency in all level of ARSO activities that mainly focus on standardization and harmonization. ARSO will continue to be on top of the current changing environment by providing updated tools for trade and industrialisation, environment sustainability and climate change by furthering its efforts to encourage the participation of governments, industry, consumers and public interest groups in its processes at all levels and encourage governments to take action at the national level. ARSO will take advantage of any information technological developments for advancement of inclusiveness and transparency in the process.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Develop Quality Management System
2. Develop human resource competencies at ARSO.
3. Build institutional capacity with respect to office infrastructure such as upgrading ICT equipment and acquisition of Software

3.3.4 Establishment of permanent offices for ARSO Headquarters

Strengthening the Secretariat of ARSO to ensure effective operation and work management, to maintain effective communication with the ARSO Liaison Offices and moreover coordinate the technical and harmonization work requires a permanent office.

ARSO is currently hosted by the Kenyan Government through Kenya Bureau of Standards and pays annual fee. This is subjected to approval by the Board of Directors of KEBS who from time to time has to defend the approval given the need for accountability in funds utilisation and Government policy.

The hosting is based on the Agreement of Establishing ARSO Headquarters in Nairobi signed between ARSO and the Kenyan Government under Article II page 2 in 1981.

Article II, Paragraph 1 (a) of the Agreement, states that "There shall be established in Nairobi, Kenya, the Headquarters of the African Regional Organisation for Standardisation" (b) The Permanent Headquarters of ARSO shall be in the headquarters seat and shall not be removed therefrom unless ARSO should so decide. Any Transfer of the Headquarters temporarily to another place shall not constitute a removal of the permanent headquarters unless there is an express decision by ARSO to that effect.

Due to the increasing ARSO Programmes and activities and the human resources requirements as envisaged in the role of ARSO in a Pan African Quality Infrastructure arrangement and given the unreliability of the current arrangement ARSO deserves a permanent premises allocated to its Headquarters Seat by the Kenyan Government. The following are the key decision, resolutions and recommendation that shall not be compromised:

1. ***OAU Lagos Plan of Action 1980" :*** CHAPTER VII, Trade and finance, Trade, Intra-African trade expansion, paragraph 250 (k and I)*.* In so far as intra-African trade expansion-which is meant to constitute the mainstay for the present strategy-is concerned, the following measures are recommended:
    a. (k) membership of the African Regional Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO), which presently comprises only 19 countries, should be expanded to include all Member States by the end of 1982. ARSO should be entrusted with the task of establishing African regional standards for all products of interest to intra-African trade. If need be, ECA should be requested to offer the necessary advice and assistance;
    b. (l) trade fairs and publicity campaigns should be held at least annually at the national sub-regional and regional levels, with particular emphasis on publicising the quality of African products. In this respect, ARSO should operate a regional certification marking scheme with a view to certifying the quality of and promoting

African products. A permanent "Buy African Goods" campaign should also be vigorously launched under the aegis of OAU and ECA within the framework of the all-Africa trade fairs, starting with the next fair to be held in 1980. Participation in these fairs should be confined solely to African countries with a view to promoting African products

2. **Abuja Treaty of 1991 Establishing the African Economic Community, Chapter XI - Standardization and Measurement Systems Article 67,** Common Policy on Standardization and Measurement Systems Member States agree to:

    a. (a) Adopt a common policy on standardization and quality assurance of goods and services among Member States;

    b. (b) Undertake such other related activities in standardization and measurement systems that are likely to promote trade, economic development and integration within the Community;

    c. (c) Strengthen African national, regional and continental organizations operating in this field.

3. **AU Ministers of Trade, Customs and Immigration, Rwanda 2004** Resolution 79: While noting the effort so far deployed by ARSO to re-engineer itself, accordingly agreed to, among others:

    a. encourage country membership and participation in ARSO and its activities and urge AU Member States to commit adequate resources to Standardisation, Conformity Assessment and related matters, promote the development of a quality culture in their respective Member Countries, apply the principles of harmonisation of standards as laid down in the WTO/TBT and SPS Agreements.

4. **17th Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI 17), Egypt, 2006**: The CAMI 17 adopted paragraph 45, item c of the Conclusion of its Intergovernmental Expert Group Report which states

    a. "We reiterate the commitments of our governments and call on our development partners to urgently strengthen African Standardisation and Conformity Assessment infrastructure and increase standards harmonisation in Africa, both at the national, regional and continental levels, based on UNIDO recognised experience in Africa (i.e. UEMOA quality programme). This should be done in cooperation with regional and international technical agencies, such as ARSO, ISO, ILAC, IAF and OIML".

5. **Decision of the AU Summit in Kampala on the Integration of the African Regional Organization for Standardization. Doc. Assembly/Au/17(Xv) Add.7, Kampala, Uganda, July 2010,** Assembly/AU/Dec.326(XV)**.** The Assembly,

    a. TAKES NOTE of the proposal by the Republic of Kenya to integrate the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO) into the African Union Structures;

    b. WELCOMES the critical role ARSO has played in promoting Africa's contribution to global trade;

    c. REQUESTS the Commission to work in collaboration with the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and its relevant Sub-Committees, and the Republic of Kenya in compiling a report on ARSO including the structural and financial implications of ARSO's integration into the AU structures for consideration by the Assembly through the Executive Council;

    d. ALSO REQUESTS the Commission to report on the implementation of this Decision to the next Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in January/February 2011.

6. **AU DECISION ON FOOD SAFETY, January 2010,** EX.CL/Dec.620 (XVIII) of January 2010, DECISION ON FOOD SAFETY**,** Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII), The Executive Council,

    a. ENDORSES the referential and Guide developed under the Africa-EU BTSF Africa program and the program for a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) at the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) and REQUESTS the Commission to step up efforts towards ensuring that food safety is treated as an integral component of food and nutrition security in Africa;

    b. FURTHER REQUESTS the Commission to report regularly on the implementation of this Decision.

This referential is one of the guides and instruments that lends itself to internalization towards regional and continental integration programmes and projects in our Planning processes, which reflect our commitment to accelerated Africa's market Integration. It has been circulated in all RECs.

7. **Development of the African Ecolabelling Mechanism (AEM):** this program is hosted in ARSO and ARSO shall provide technical support. As a regional labelling programme, the AEM has to ensure

that it has a very strong and efficient partnership with all key players and stakeholders in the region. The Partnership with standard bodies in Africa is one of the key determinants for the success of AEM activities at the national level.

8. **Pan-African quality infrastructure:** From the foregoing, the establishment of Pan-African quality infrastructure is envisaged in which ARSO will play a pivotal role in collaboration with the African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission (AFSEC), the Intra-Africa Metrology System (AFRIMETS), and the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) to ensure that the economic integration of Africa fully utilizes the potentials that quality brings in improving the competitiveness of African goods and services and buttress Africa's market access in order to alleviate the global market share of trade in Africa.

These developments lays greater expectations on ARSO and therefore demands proper, reliable and stable hosting of the ARSO Headquarters Seat to position ARSO in the right environment to play its role effectively.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following direction:

1. Engage the Government of the Republic of Kenya to offer permanent office for ARSO Headquarters

3.4 Strategic Objective 4: Promoting maximum and effective participation of Members and other stakeholders

Full participation by all members and other interested parties in the work of ARSO is now more important than ever. The participation of all members and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations is critical to sound decision making and ensuring that harmonized standards and related texts take account of the full range of interests and viewpoints.

3.4.1 Develop a framework for members' participation in ARSO Activities

ARSO has undertaken so far to mitigate the financial and human resource constraints hitherto hampering the effective participation of member countries by establishing the Sabbatical Program, creating technical harmonization committee secretariats within NSBs and downsizing the Central Secretariat and initiating policy brief and recommendation from AUC. ARSO strongly urges AU/AUC and beneficiary members to take these opportunities offered and create sustainability towards more effective participation, by making firm commitments to adequate allocation of national resources towards harmonization of Standards and Technical Regulations.

There is a continuing need for ARSO and AU/AUC to implement capacity building programs in a coherent manner, especially at the REC level, aimed at strengthening national administrative and consultative structures on harmonized standards (e.g. ARSO Liaison Offices within RECs, ARSO Desk Officers at NSBs) and enhancing technical expertise required for effective participation in ARSO standards harmonization and implementation as well as international standards development. The AU/AUC will play an advisory role in facilitating the efforts made by ARSO so that those efforts address the needs of AU/AUC and its members.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Conduct a gaps and capacity analysis and needs assessment within NSBs
2. Develop and conduct joint training material targeting NSBs specific stakeholders
3. Establish a forum on standards and conformity assessment harmonisation with the RECs
4. Engage NSBs in harmonisation activities
5. Establish framework for coordination of ARSO activities at NSBs and REC
6. Organise jointly targeted promotional workshops and forums
7. Develop targeted white paper, policy briefs within member countries

3.4.2 Increase membership

The membership of ARSO has remained steady despite the increase in the relevance of standards and the effect of standards in trade and industrialization. The membership needs to heed the clarion call to make ARSO the ideal focal point for provision of harmonized standards and related services in order to achieve its stated mandate. This Strategic Framework proposes also that ARSO might get subsequent financial arrangements from AU/AUC and UNECA as there its parents organisations which can bring in significant reconstituting of the work programs and increased uptake of harmonized standards for the benefit of African trade and industrialization. The financial support would also allow ARSO to initiate bureau of standards in countries where they do not exist thus increasing its membership.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Develop guidelines on setting up and optimizing NSB operations
2. Strengthen the implementation of the Constitution and rules of Procedures

3.4.3 Develop a clear engagement framework for regular interaction and effective support system

ARSO/AUC must work closely on matters of common interest with other relevant international organizations, including those whose work has indirect but significant implications for standard issues. Monitoring by ARSO/AUC of the activities of other organizations that are relevant to standards, and coordination with them, where appropriate and consistent with harmonized standards and procedures, is necessary to achieve complementarity, avoid duplication and prevent development of contradictory standards or guidelines. Such collaboration is also critical to the development of standards covering products, environment, health and safety and measures that address trade in a coherent and seamless manner.

ISO, IEC, ITU (WSC) and Codex Alimentarius are recognized as reference systems for global trade by WTO. On the other level, ARSO is recognized by the WSC as the AUC pre-eminent continental body for establishing harmonized standards. ARSO must therefore, play a leadership role in establishing continental and hence international standards for protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in trade, protecting Africa's economies while taking due account of international regulatory initiatives affecting African governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. ARSO also has a responsibility to provide its technical input and expertise towards the building of international consensus on standards and regulatory policy matters either through NSBs, RECs or individual Africans. Establishment or promotion of cooperation, between ARSO and other relevant international intergovernmental organizations should be considered, where appropriate, to ensure effective collaboration and coordination, and that such cooperation should be in line with the Guidelines on Cooperation between ARSO and International Intergovernmental Organizations in the elaboration and harmonization of Standards and Technical Regulations.

This will require sustained commitment and effort in the following key activities:

1. Engage into the process of amalgamation of ARSO into AUC Structures and Collaboration with NEPAD
2. Establish an effective communication system with stakeholders to enable ARSO participation in policy programme and planning activities

3. Develop joint programmes and proposals to secure support from developing partners to develop tools (standards, conformity assessment procedures, referential guidelines) within their mandates using out sourced experts

4. Establish linkages with Research Institutions to foster cooperation between standardization, research and innovation and indigenous know-how; with standardization embedded as a renowned tool to facilitate market access in African innovative fields

4   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan will be implemented through the Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix contained in Table 1 in Appendix 1.

Each of the Strategic Objectives has been divided into specific activities with measureable indicators and outputs. The measureable indicators will be used to monitor the outputs realized against the set timeframes. The responsibilities for their implementation are also indicated in the implementation Matrix. The targets for attaining the strategies set out in this Strategic Plan will be set annually over the five years implementation period. The monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be done quarterly to assess whether ARSO is moving in the right direction towards meeting annual targets and the overall intent of the Strategic Plan.

APPENDIX 1 - TABLE 1: STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Strategic objective	Activities	Responsible party	Time frame	KPI	Target/overall objective	Budget (USD)
Strategic Objective 1: Establish a standards harmonization system that supports a sound regulatory framework	1. Developing a general Quality policy for African Countries	ACS	2 years	A Regional Quality Policy developed	5 countries applying the Regional Quality Policy developed	30000
	2. Establish cooperation frameworks with all Pan African Quality Infrastructure bodies and other similar organisations.	ACS, ARSO-Council	3 years	Cooperation Framework with AU ; 5 RECs MoUs (AMU, CEN-SAD, SADC, ECCAS and IGAD); initiated cooperation with ISO, CEN, RNF, Latin and South America Standards Organisation, ASEAN, BIS	70% of MoU put into application	30000
	3. Develop a general technical regulations framework for African countries	ACS	2 years	A Regional Technical Regulations Framework developed	5 countries applying the Regional technical regulation framework	30000
	4. Develop African capacity in standardisation	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Standardisation courses adopted in African education system	4 Education institution running standardisation courses	30000
	5. Promote the use of AACCTs and ASHAM in the development of harmonized standards.	ACS, AU/AUC, NSB	5 Years	Feedback from Users; 10 seminars/ meetings	1 seminars per year and 3 harmonized standard using ASHAM	27000
	6. Establishing Standards Harmonisation Project Committee	ACS, NSBs	9 months	Committee operationalized	12 THC in place	Admin.
	7. Develop Annual THC meeting Calendar and hold regular THC meetings for harmonization of Standards	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Number of meeting and standards considered and approved)	63 standards considered and approved; 10 meetings per THC plus 2 meetings of Standards Leaders Forum	6,142,000
	8. Developing sustainability standards, referential and guidelines in: Agriculture; Fisheries; Tourism; Forestry; Mining; Textiles and Leather; Food Security, Safety and nutrition; Environment and climate change	ACS, NSBs, AU	5 years	Number of harmonised standards and number of standards put into use ((Cluster of standards driven by SMEs; Database created for new products, improved products and reverse engineering system)	60 harmonised standards and 20 harmonised standards put into use	
	9. Harmonize standards in infrastructure development for: Energy and Renewable Energy; Building and construction; Transportation systems	ACS, NSBs, AU	5 years	Number of harmonised standards	3 harmonised standards and put into use	
	10. Developing a criteria for classification and identification of TBTs at REC level	ACS	2 years	criteria document developed and disseminated	5 RECs using the criteria documents	30000
	11. Establish a framework for cooperation with the REC		2 years	1. 80% of activities implemented within the framework		

Strategic objective	Activities	Responsible party	Time frame	KPI	Target/overall objective	Budget (USD)
	NTB mechanisms					
	12. Streamline private sector standards into African Harmonised standards to promote the development of the African private sector and SMEs	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Number of harmonised standards, toolkit for technology dissemination and operationalised and number of mobilisation seminars	10 Harmonised standards for value addition in SMEs products; 20% of all harmonised standards put into use, 1 toolkit for dissemination of technology developed and disseminated, 5 promotional seminars	48000
Strategic Objective 2: Disseminate harmonized standards and guidelines to support intra, inter African and international trade and industrialization	1. Develop target group specific communication / outreach materials	ACS, NSB Desk Offices, Liaisons	5 years	Database developed; Outreach materials developed and disseminated for 4 sectors per year ; Documents on the benefits of standardisation and harmonisation of standards, developed and disseminated	Database established, 20 materials developed	60000
	2. Organise seminars and Workshops on standards utilization with major focus on SMEs, Civil societies, consumer organisations	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Number of seminars/ workshops organised	10 seminars conducted	100000
	3. Participation in Trade fairs	ACS, NSBs, Desk officer and liaison	5 years	Number of dissemination material developed and number of trade fairs	4 specific type material (SMES, Civil society, Consumers, education), and 5 trade fair attended	540000
	4. Participate in Open Days and World Standards, Metrology, Accreditation, Quality days	ACS, NSBs,	5 years	Number of attended event and communication delivered	8 attendances, 4 communication delivered	6000
	5. Publishing articles in newsletters of NSBs and Stakeholders	ACS, NSBs	5 years	4 per year per stakeholder	20 Articles communicated	Admin.
	6. Update the ARSO website and create vice versa links to stakeholders websites	ACS	1 year	Website available in different languages as per the rules and regulations of ARSO; Informative and interactive website developed	Number of counter hits	35000
	7. Organise targeted trainings on standardization and conformity assessment systems independently or with cooperating partners (NSBs, BSI, EU, KATS, PTB, UNEP, UNIDO, Sida, NORAD…)	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Number of Trainings organised in the following sectors: Agriculture, tourism, fisheries, textile and leather, mining, forestry, transport, energy, environment and climate change.	8 Training organised	80000
	8. Develop a criteria to assist NSBs to leverage on	ACS	2 years	The criteria disseminated to all NSBs	5 NSBs using Criteria developed	24000

Strategic objective	Activities	Responsible party	Time frame	KPI	Target/overall objective	Budget (USD)
	legislation to generate sustainable resources					
	9. Establish linkages with Consumer Bodies	ACS, ARSO desk officers	5 years	Established linkages (MoUs) and implementation within the cooperation	5 Consumers using standards and other tools in their activities; ARSO Consumer committee created	12000
	10. Development of Databases on African Standards Experts, African Register of Certified Auditors, Accreditation Experts, Environmental Experts, Conformity Assessment Experts, Educators in standardisation	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Databases available and disseminated, Number of expert involved in the standardisation activities	10 experts involved in standardisation activities	Stated above
	11. Developing a database on African Standards and related tools	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Database available; Interactive online catalogue of African standards, Number of standards consulted	70% of African standards in the database and consulted	Stated above
	12. Develop and update web-based database of harmonized Standards	ACS	5 years	Database available; Interactive online catalogue of African standards	100% harmonized standards accessible online and consulted	Stated above
Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening ARSO work-management capabilities for the sustainability of the Organisation	1. Develop work plan, program and specific Term of Reference with linkage to the strategic plan activities to secure support from developing partners to develop tools (standards, conformity assessment procedures, referential guidelines) within their mandates using sabbatical staff	ACS	5 years	Performance contract, Developed joint programmes and proposals	25% of ARSO activities accomplished by the Sabbatical staff	120000
	2. Develop joint programmes with NSBs and other stakeholders for enhancing their staff knowledge in standardisation and conformity assessment system	ACS, NSBs	5 years	2 NSBs/stakeholders staff supported	2 Sabbatical staff supported and improved their performance in their NSBs	87000
	3. Establish the Standard Project Committee that include NSBs Experts, RECs and/or Sector Specific Experts	ACS, NSBs, RECs,	6 months	Standard Project Committee established	Operationalized Standard Project Committee	54000
	4. Develop joint mechanism to mainstream the private standards into the consensus for standards harmonisation based on private standards	ACS, NSBs	5 years	Signed MoUs with private standards developers, Number of standards from private sector harmonized	2 Private standards sector specific harmonised	300000
	5. Develop Quality Management System	ACS	2 year	ARSOs QMS developed	operationalized QMS	5000
	6. Develop human resource competencies at ARSO.	ACS, ARSO council	5 years	2 trainings offered per year	15% cut on ARSO outsourced work	60000

Strategic objective	Activities	Responsible party	Time frame	KPI	Target/overall objective	Budget (USD)
	7. Build institutional capacity with respect to office infrastructure such as upgrading ICT equipment and acquisition of Software	ACS, ARSO council	2 years	operationalized ICT equipment	15% cut on ARSO outsourced work	120000
	8. Engage the Government of the Republic of Kenya to offer permanent office for ARSO Headquarters	ACS, ARSO Council, KEBS	2 years	Agreement on establishing permanent offices	Increased membership and recognition	Admin
Strategic Objective 4: Promoting maximum and effective participation of Members and other stakeholders	1. Conduct a gaps and capacity analysis and needs assessment within NSBs	ACS, NSB	1 year	Programmes developed that respond to Gaps, utilise the existing Capacity put in place	3 Programs implemented by development partners in 3 NSBs for capacity building; 30% increase in participation in ARSO activities	30000
	2. Develop and conduct joint training material targeting NSBs specific stakeholders	ACS, NSBS	1 year	number of modules developed and operationalised	5 training conducted,5% of ARSO activities completed by the income generated from trainings	30000
	3. Establish a forum on standards and conformity assessment harmonisation with the RECs and PAQI organisation	ACS, ARSO council	3 years	Unified harmonisation strategies	20% Increase in application of African standards and competitive tools	42000
	4. Engage NSBs in harmonisation activities	ACS	5 years	Increased participation in ARSO harmonisation activity	70% of NSBs participating in THCs activities	mentioned above
	5. Establish framework for coordination of ARSO activities at NSBs and REC	ACS	1 year	Desk/Liaison offices established in NSBs ad RECs	Desk officer and liaison functioning in 75% NSBs and RECs	60000
	6. Organise jointly targeted promotional workshops and forums with NSBs and RECs	ACS, ARSO council	5 years	1 per year	2 New members	60000
	7. Develop guidelines on setting up and optimizing NSB operations	ACS	4 years	Number of NSB established or upgraded and improved their operations/	2 NSB established; 2 NSBs improved their operations/	60000
	8. Strengthen the implementation of the Constitution and rules of Procedures	ACS, NSB	5 years	Compliance to the Constitution	100% compliance to the constitution	admin
	9. Develop targeted white paper, policy briefs within member countries	ACS	5 years	Number of policy brief operationalised	5 white paper, policy briefs within published and operationalised	25000
	10. Engage into the process of amalgamation of ARSO into AUC Structures and Collaboration with NEPAD	ACS, ARSO Council, AUC	2 year	Operationalized framework	60% of ARSO activities are related to the programmes of AU structures; 25% of ARSO activities supported by AUC	30000

Strategic objective	Activities	Responsible party	Time frame	KPI	Target/overall objective	Budget (USD)
	11. Establish an effective communication system with stakeholders to enable ARSO participation in policy programme and planning activities	ACS	2 years	Operationalised MoU	75% informational on relevant issue of interest are shared	30000
	12. Develop joint programmes and proposals to secure support from developing partners to develop tools (standards, conformity assessment procedures, referential guidelines) within their mandates using out sourced experts	ACS	5 years	Number of program implemented with partners Operationalised MoU	5 program implemented jointly with partners	30000
	13. Establish linkages with Research Institutions to foster cooperation between standardization, research and innovation and indigenous know-how; with standardization embedded as a renowned tool to facilitate market access in African innovative fields	ACS, ARSO council	5 years	Number of research institution actively involved in ARSO activities	2 research institution actively involved in harmonisation activities	12000

Strategic Objective 1	Establish a standards harmonization system that supports a sound regulatory framework	6,367,000
Strategic Objective 2	Disseminate harmonized standards and guidelines to support intra, inter African and international trade and industrialization	868,000
Strategic Objective 3	Strengthening ARSO work-management capabilities for the sustainability of the Organisation	770,000
Strategic Objective 4	Promoting maximum and effective participation of Members and other stakeholders	409000
Total		8,414,000

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACCTs	-	African Advisory Committee on Competitive Tools
ACS	-	ARSO Central Secretariat
AMCEN	-	African Ministerial Conference on Environment
AMU	-	Arab Mahgreb Union
ARS	-	African Standards
ARSECo	-	ARSO Executive Committee
ARSO	-	African Organisation for Standardisation.
ASHAM	-	African Standards Harmonisation Model
ACP	-	African Caribbean and Pacific
AU	-	African Union
AUC	-	African Union Commission
CAMI	-	Conference of African Ministers of Industrialization
CAMT	-	Conference of African Ministers of Trade
CEN-SAD	-	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	-	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	-	East African Community
ECCAS	-	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EPA	-	Economic Partnership Agreements
HSPM	-	Harmonized Standards Procedural Manual
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
ITU	-	International Telecommunications Union
IEC	-	International Electro-technical Commission
IGAD	-	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
ISO	-	International Organisation for Standardisation
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPAD	-	New Partnership African Development
NSBs	-	National Standards Bodies
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity

QMS	-	Quality Management Systems
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community
SG	-	Secretary General
THC	-	Technical Harmonization Committee
TBT	-	Technical Barriers to Trade
UNECA	-	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN	-	United Nations
WSC	-	World Standards Cooperation
WTO	-	World Trade Organisation.