



TABLE DISCUSSION TRANSCRIPTS – ISO/COPOLCO WORKSHOP, TOWARDS INCLUSIVE COMMERCE – WHAT CAN STANDARDS DO?

23 May 2019 – Rainbow Towers Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe

Discussion questions:

Question 1) What key principles are important in the marketplace?

Question 2) How can standards address these principles?

Question 3) What issues still need to be addressed?

Discussion results:

Table 1)

1. Key principles in the marketplace:
 - Access – Consumers should have access to quality goods & services
 - Choice – Consumers can choose from quality goods & services
 - Information – Goods and services should enable consumers to access/choose quality goods & services
 - Redress – Once consumers have chosen and bought a good or service they discover it has an anomaly or problem and get redress
 - Representation – If you ask for redress and get no response, you should then be represented
 - Safety – The marketplace should provide a legal policy – regularly framework that provides safe quality products for consumers to access choice and their needs
 - Sustainability – Whatever is produced and put in the market should be sustainably consumed?
2. All these principles can be addressed by standards, by partnering, engaging and involving stakeholders in developing standards to address these respective principles
3. Consumer empowerment – all stakeholders present here to try and empower the workers, civil Society and the grassroots community

Table 2)

Question 1

Principles

1. Choice (No monopoly)
2. Universally accepted and implemented measurement, especially in the local markets
3. Clarity of information on products
4. Warranties – Clarity, Implementation
5. Trust & certification on both the part of producers/suppliers and consumers
6. Value for Money/Pricing/Quality

Table 3)

Question 1

- Labels – Language, information (clear, accurate weight)
- Pricing
- Packaging to match the quality of product

Question 2

- Legislation is placed to address the issue of standards e.g. product liability
- Standards to be used by manufacturers and service providers to be formulated

Question 3

- Language that can be understood by all consumers
- Removal of small print/font on labels
- Unclear guarantees or warranties should be standardized

Table 4)

Fairness

- Fair treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination
- No differential pricing based on prejudice
- Redress
 - Complaints and dispute resolution
 - Product recall

How can standard address these principles?

- Balanced representation during the development of standards of all the affected parties

Quality assurance

- What issues needs to be addressed
- Buy in of national governments which will make standards enforceable

Table 5)

1. Principles

- Complaints handling
- Clarity
- Transparency
- Reliability especially of information

2. How to address?

- Developing relevant standards (when not already existing)

but how?



- Only principle type standards

3. What issues

Practical?



- “How to achieve the principles”
Should be written in the standard
- Strengths of ISO standards has to be cross border → How to encourage the use of relevant standards? e.g. unit pricing

Easy to do so? No. lots of objectives from industries; consumer redress will be expected



What if? If it succeeds, the next concern is

How to promote the use of standards

Table 6)

What issues still need to be addressed?

- All products should have the SAZ label
- To raise awareness to the public about the standards
- The manufacturers also need to be educated about the product standards
- SAZ should do inspection and testing of producers before they hit the market

Table 7)

What key principles are important in the marketplace?

- 1) Product: Physical item / service intangible
 - The factors include name of the product, packaging, different types of uses and safety when used
 - How the product appeals to the specific market segment
 - Availability and visibility of the products
- 2) Price
 - The product should be affordable
 - The price should not be too high, the consumers will not afford; if it is too low, the manufacturer will not receive profits
- 3) Place
 - The product should go through the proper distribution channels before it hits the market
- 4) Promotion
 - Raising awareness among potential customers about its existence
 - Good to use advertising as a form of promotion using TV, radios, newspapers of magazines, social media

Table 8)

Issues which need to be addressed

1. Sanitary products. We want affordable prices for pads as woman: e.g. condoms are given for free while pads we get for \$ 6 and we can't run away from nature (menstruation)
2. The issue of products on the shelves. They must be certified and as consumers we want to see clear expiry dates
3. Online business is good but here in Zimbabwe we have a problem with these foreign currency office (FCO) cash dollars. They charge us 20% for cash out and ECOMAT gets its percentage. ECOMAT agents are robbing us in open day light robbery. If you can address this issue urgently, please.

Table 9)

- A. Key principles important for the market place
 - 1) Product safety
 - 2) Right to product information
 - 3) Complaints and procedures availability
 - 4) Price labelling for comparison purposes
- B. How standards address these principles?
 - Consumer awareness of the standards
 - Through regulation of standards
- C. What issues standards need to address
 - Issue of awareness and education
 - Through workshops and inclusion of other stakeholder in consumer awareness
 - Inclusion of consumer issues in academic curricula

Table 10)

Issues that need to be addressed

Information:

- Retailers do not have enough information to disseminate to consumers
- Consumers do not exercise their rights to information
- Language used in labelling should be easily understood

Redress:

- Systems are long and laborious
- Businesses claim they do not have cash

Table 11)

ISO/COPOLCO

- 1) More visibility of consumer rights education through unconventional channels
- 2) Mass violation of consumer rights:
 - Medical Aid - you contribute as religious but get told you have shortfalls when you get sick
 - Warranty violations
- 3) Serious government intervention and policing to protect the consumer
 - Quality of products – companies adhere to their quality promise
 - Expiry dates – expired goods not sold
 - Safety of products

We appeal to our government officials to have more direct contact with consumers to hear about the issues they face. Zimbabwe will open 24 hours for business when consumers are treated plainly and have open avenues for recourse when their rights are violated. If only the minister could have stayed to hear and perhaps address these issues which have a direct impact on the industrialization of Zimbabwe.

What issues still need to be addressed?

