

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON UNECE-WP.29

On behalf of the South African Government, the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) held a colloquium in Johannesburg on 19 March 2002, to address matters covering both the 1958 and the 1998 UNECE-WP.29 Agreements as well as implementation implications.

Over eighty guests attended the information sharing colloquium, which included various government departments (NDoT, DTI, Provincial Transport Departments), high level industry representation and other invited guests.

The SA Minister of the National Department of Transport and the Director General of the Department of Trade and Industry made the opening addresses, whilst presentations were also made by Mr. J Jerie of the UNECE and Mr. T Akiba, Executive Director of JASIC.

The purpose of the colloquium was:

1. Information sharing
2. Historic developments
3. Implications for Industry
4. Implementation imperatives and priorities
5. Overview of Agreements
6. Importance of harmonization and global trade.

During their addresses, both the Minister and the Director General confirmed that in the best interest of the nation, South Africa would move forward in the adoption of ECE Regulations and that the SABS would be the responsible agency on behalf of the Government.

Mr. Jan Jerie delivered a detailed presentation on the history and structure of WP.29, the requirements of the 1958 and 1998 Agreements and the role of the Industry in these developments. Mr. Jerie also spoke of the programme of priorities that had been accepted by all member countries for the development of global harmonized standards.

Mr. Akiba complimented the colloquium with an outstanding presentation on the role of JASIC in the Japanese regulatory process and of his countries support and work within the activities of WP.29.

Other presentations included the role of the SABS Regulatory Division in the administration of WP.29 activities in South Africa, whilst the support function of automotive testing was addressed by one of the independent test houses.

The colloquium was successful in that it presented the South African Government and Industry at large with a platform from which to publicly commit to the activities of WP.29 and the adoption into national legislation of ECE Regulations. The Government was also able to advise all of the main stakeholders on the role and responsibilities of the SBS in the administration of WP.29 and the homologation of motor vehicles. The colloquium also presented the opportunity for information exchange between South Africa and to international experts, of the growth and development of WP.29 and of the Japanese process for motor vehicle standards.

It is intended to hold a further colloquium to include all SADC member countries of the Southern African Development Community, who we believe should also be involved in the process on a regional basis.
