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QUALITY & STANDARDS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

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STANDARDS & TESTING IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

- Mr. Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, Director, Department of Trade, Investment and Innovation, UNIDO
- Mr. Sean MacCurtain, Director of Conformity Assessment and Consumer Affairs, ISO
- Ms. Merih Malmqvist Nilsson, Chair, INetQI
- Mr. Andy Henson, Director, International Liaison and Communication Department, BIPM
- Mr. Jianhua Xiao, Chair, IAF

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VIRTUAL PANEL

Transcription of the Webinar Standards & Testing in the fight against Covid-19

The webinar video can be found [here](#).



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Introduction

00:00:05 - DORINA NATI (UNIDO):

Hello, I would like to welcome everyone to the second event within our webinar series on quality and standards in the fight against Covid-19. My name is Dorina Nati. This series of webinars organized by the UNIDO Department of Trade, Investment & Innovation started earlier this week; we already had a webinar session on organizational resilience in times of Covid-19. The topic was presented by Mr Osama Elmeligy from Egypt.

This session will focus on testing and standards in the fight against the global pandemic. We have five panelists today and more than 300 attendees have registered following the discussion online. Thank you all for being here with us today. The session will start with a short keynote statement, followed by a panel discussion and a question and answer session for the attendees. You are encouraged to post your questions in the Q&A window at the bottom of your screen. We will then select the most relevant questions and post them to the panelists. Please due to time constraints, consider that we might not be able to answer all your questions. We want to apologize in advance if this is the case. Having said that, I would like to give the floor to my colleague, Miss Elsie Meintjies.

Elsie Meintjies is an expert in quality and standards. Throughout her professional career she has held senior and executive positions in quality infrastructure institutions in South Africa and Botswana. Since 2011 Elsie has been facilitating national and regional technical cooperation projects, mainly in the area of trade and trade capacity building. Currently, she is the Chief Technical Advisor for UNIDO's global quality and standards program in South Africa. We're very pleased that she will be moderating today's session! Elsie, the floor is yours.

00:02:07 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you very much to Dorina. Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to recognize each and every VIP to this webinar. These VIPs are all our panelists and all our participants, a hearty welcome to you on this Friday afternoon. Within the framework of the SDGs and against the backdrop of promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development, the global the continental and the country level quality infrastructure has and will continue to play a very significant role in the fight against the global pandemic that we are facing at the moment. Within the webinar series as Dorina has already indicated, and the series of quality and standards in the fight against Covid-19.



We assembled a prestigious international panel who has agreed to share with us. Firstly, during the first round of questions and discussions: The reactions of standards and testing quality infrastructure institutions in the fight against Covid- 19 and in the second round to share with us some views on how the quality infrastructure can adapt and evolve in the medium to long term given the experience of Covid-19 pandemic.

After the second round of discussions, I would just like to confirm again, there will be a question and answer session. And our participants to the webinar, we invite you to please log your questions electronically and send them through to us as the questions arise, and then we will deal with them during question and answer session. So to the participants: we invite you to participate via the question answer session.

I would now like to introduce the panelists in the order in which we will invite them to make the valuable contribution. The first is Mr. Bernardo Calzadilla-Sarmiento, who is the Director of Trade, Investment and Innovation at UNIDO; he's joining us from Vienna, Austria. I would then like to recognize Mr. Sean MacCurtain, who is the Director of Conformity Assessment, the International Organization for Standardization, ISO, and he is joining us from a little village, but I am just going to say it, Geneva, Switzerland. OK. And then I would like to recognize Mr. Andy Henson, who is the Director of International Liaison and Communication Department at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (the BIPM) and Andy is joining us from Paris, in France. Then I'm very happy to have a fellow lady with me this afternoon, Miss Mary Malmqvist Nielsen. She's currently the Chair of the International Network of Quality Infrastructure and she's joining us from Sweden. And last but not least, I would like to recognize Mr. Xiao who is the Chair of the International Accreditation Forum and he's joining us from China. And in China. It's very nearly... it's getting close to midnight. So thank you very much for staying up for this event.

And then a special welcome to the participants, I see that approximately 260 have currently logged in, although we did have registration of 311 And these participants come from all over at the moment. The last count, it was from 15 countries, and I think it's important that we recognize these countries, so please bear with me. It's Austria, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Peru, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Vietnam. Thank you very much to our participants for sharing this very important time with us.

So, let us go to round one. And in the order that the panelists were introduced and round one, we will be asking each of the panellists to make a contribution regarding the reaction of their specific quality infrastructure institution to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. But to set the scene, I would



like to invite and our director Mr Bernardo... Let me call him Bernardo, to set the scene for us. Now over to you.

UNIDO Setting the Scene

00:07:32 - BERNARDO CALZADILLA SARMIENTO (UNIDO):

Thank you. Thank you very much. Let me just see if I can turn on the screen. I lost the link for that. Here it goes... Can you see my screen? Yeah. Can you see it? Yeah, thank you very much. So good afternoon, everybody. Yes. We are so excited. I would say to be here in the in this moment of confinement and then in the middle of a crisis when we are together and I'm happy that the panelists and everybody has joined this dialogue in relation to what we're doing and to see how we can respond to what the crisis embodies.

In particular, we would like to see how quality and standards can help to respond to the crisis, I would like to specifically mention in UNIDO we are already one month at home. It has been quite a time I feel it's a long time, we're in our homes and a lot of studies have been done and I think there is a lot of analysis of action has continued to be taking place. We are happy that at UNIDO, because we immediately deployed a strategy so that we could continue with the business continuity plan. So we could continue working and we have then also started to shift some of our activities. But as I was invited to share a bit the context.

As you know UNIDO has been working in the document recently called "Rebooting Quality Infrastructure" for sustainability and this is the approach I would like to take to introduce the topic. This means that I would like to see the crisis in the framework of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) framework and we are all conscious that we are facing a very heavy health crisis. But what is important is also that the consequences of an economic nature. In the short term, we are witnessing a lot of people that are getting jobless. We know that many people live day by day. Coming from Bolivia, I'm very sensitive to that. And it's very difficult for people to spend one week, two weeks at home. So we think that the situation, the crisis is jeopardizing the achievement of the SDGs in a broader perspective.

And so we have tried to follow the framework of SDGs, I will try to call it three pillars- people planet and prosperity- and within that framework we make a brief analysis on how the different aspects are challenging our reality. As you know, we have first of all, we have a trade crisis. We have the crisis in relation to certain goods but also immediately, and this started in China, most probably, we had the disruption of the supply chain. And the disruption of the supply chain in China has brought about already before the health crisis started in the Western economies, it started to bring problems to



production to the supply chains to what was happening. So, the crisis in the supply chain is bringing problems of investment, I would say even divestment, and so forth. So looking at it from the angle of trade, People planet and prosperity, let me mention, eventually the SDGs. For example, for SDG 2 focusing on food security, trade along the value chain is important to have the sustainable supply of essential goods. A very important part of the problem is hygiene practices, food safety standards are very important. We have a number of standards in health, which is in the middle of the crisis, I think the name of the game is reliable results: we need results, we need testing, we need to know how competence is accredited, how is trust built, how confidence is built.

And from our business, we are quality experts: quality control is at the core of what we do, but it is more important when we're talking about medical equipment that needs to be fit for purpose, needs to be used by the overall population, but in particular by the health sector. And sure, we at UNIDO work with laboratories with accreditation, but we work also with laboratories dealing with this sector with new medical vaccines, but also with new medical laboratories.

If we look a bit broader around the planet, I would say that the implication in the very short term has been positive, because there was a lockdown in China, we started to see blue skies, we started to see that the environment has to breathe, but this is very short term. I think the important thing is to recall that this process is bringing a lot of hazardous waste medical waste and this is again where standards can play a role. Also laboratories can help us to identify pollution and we need a broader perspective and I will name here SDG 17, we need to have international cooperation in the health sector for PPE etc.

But the situation also needs that we address SDG 16, which is about governance, it's about peace in many countries, we will eventually be facing the risk of social unrest. So the framework of the SDGs, gives us the opportunity to really look a bit broader. From the UNIDO perspective, there is no doubt that at the core of our activity we are talking about economic consequences and trade is at the centre of it. I mentioned it already: trade is contracting. Yeah, there is a crisis. There was even a crisis in cross border trade. There was a crisis of limiting the authorization to trade in medical goods, with vital medicine, there is competition for that which is a very difficult to understand in a time where we need solidarity, but we are also seeing that a lot of these things need what I call the mechanism to build confidence, such as mutual recognition.

SDG 9, quality infrastructure ensures the identification and dissemination of standards, accurate measurement and provides attestation of results, we need reliable results and we have a number of standards to ensure the mitigation of the crisis and, at this moment, since I'm starting this discussion



I'm focusing on the crisis itself, not on the post- recovery because probably in the post recovery this will be also at the centre, where we have innovation, standards for new technologies, etc. And finally, also to mention that in the crisis itself, we have a lot of standards, such as business continuity. We had this first webinar on organizational resilience that can help us to prepare and cope with the crisis, but also that we need to have today the goods are still fit for purpose and they are good for the workers. It's also a time where we need standards like occupational health and safety as soon as we start thinking that we will have to go back to work.

I hope Elsie is not looking at the time, but I'm already there. This is the summary: we prepared a graph, trying to summarize these analyses. Here we have elaborated in a document which is a bit more extensive, but we wanted to show how it links together: Covid, the SDGs and our area. It is time for us. And thank you to the partners, the IT departments from the international organizations have quality infrastructure. We need to show the relevance of our services in the crisis and team response after the crisis.

I just wanted to mention also because we are in these times, I posted this on LinkedIn, it had already 5000 views. I have never had this situation this flyer had 5000 over 5000 views and over 150 people that replicated that back. So I think that this is this is the scenario in which we are and we need to do to further think how can we continue advocating the importance of standardization, quality infrastructure and metrology to cope with the crisis and also to cope with the post-Corona crisis and their re-emergence, because the process will bring us to a new era. I think that this is a disruptive moment where we have also a lot of opportunities in which we can see that we will change, and we will do for the better. And hopefully we can also work towards sustainability. Thank you very much. Elsie back to you.

Question 1: What is your institution doing in respect of Covid-19?

00:18:20 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you very much Bernardo for that intervention and I must say, I'm very heartened to hear that we've had such a good response to the link in that you have posted and thank you for setting the scene and I would now...When, when we talk about quality infrastructure, there's absolutely nothing we can do without a standard that's where it all starts and therefore we are going to give the floor to Sean MacCurtain, the director at ISO, to us to tell us how ISO has been making their contribution, regarding what ISO has been doing, what their reaction has been to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Sean, over to you.



Panelist 1: Sean MacCurtain (ISO)

00:19:07 - SEAN MACCURTAIN (ISO):

Hello and good morning, good afternoon and good evening to everyone. And first of all, I'd like to thank UNIDO for giving us the opportunity to to participate in this. We see it as a very valuable communication tool. And it's a pleasure to share with you what ISO and the ISO community have been doing.

I think in terms of just setting the background, we all recognize that standards are a means of sharing knowledge and best practices. And standards really reflect the consensus of experts at the global level and at the national level. So they all contain the most up to date information with regards to whatever subject they are dealing with. So it's really vital that we're in a position to share that information with the global community in times like this. So, in coordination with IEC we have made freely available, a number of a standards aimed at supporting the Covid-19 crisis. And these are although they're read only, they're available on the ISO website, but they're also available on the websites of the ISO member bodies at the national level.

In addition to those standards and I'll talk a little bit about them a little bit later, but in addition to those standards, the ISO member bodies in individual countries are also making available additional national standards that address specific issues in relation to the, the current situation, which are specific to the country and I would encourage everyone to go to their websites and to see what is available with regards to that. Basically, we've got two categories of standards that we are making freely available.

The first are system orientated, so they're looking at management systems that can be put in place that can allow you to mitigate the consequences arising from a situation like we're in. And probably the most well-known one of those is ISO 22301 which is a business continuity management system. And that is really there to ensure continuity of vital functions within an organization. So it will assist organizations at every level, whether they're SMEs or big multinationals in literally identifying the vital functions that they need to keep going to be able to come back online later, after the crisis has passed. It also offers a recovery plan on how to do that. With respect to the other one on the system side is risk management and that actually shares guidance on how to manage risk, how to identify risk and the things you need to consider to be able to mitigate it.

Then the second category is more focused on technical standards, standards related to medical devices. And when I talk about a medical device, I'm talking about anything from a mask, thermometers to gloves to ventilator to breathing apparatus, etc. And I think these standards are also vital and we've seen that they're even more vital when organizations want



to be able to switch their manufacturing, from manufacturing dresses or clothing to manufacturing masks. So the availability of these can actually look at helping the supply chain. And that goes, also from manufacturing vacuum cleaners to ventilators, so the availability of these type of standards is as crucial with respect to it.

The second aspect that I'd like to address is that, in line with the WHO Guidelines, you will know that ISO brings people together experts together in meetings. And right from the very beginning we operated within the WHO Guidelines; every governance and technical committee cannot be held face to face. They all have to be held virtually until the 31st of July, whether it will be reviewed or else postponed. Now, part of that is there are certain standards that need to continue to be developed and so technical committees had to prioritize their work programs in order to identify the ease and to decide to hold virtual meetings. This propelled us... ISO is probably in a slightly better position because we have allowed virtual participation for many years in our meetings, but the pandemic propelled us into a whole new scenario in that it was only going to be virtual meetings. So we had to look at that capacity. We had to extend our capacity. We had to look at the platforms we provided to ensure things like security, etc. So from an IT perspective, we managed quite well. But the next step was: how do you manage the meeting with 50 people in it? And so what we did was we quickly developed guidelines, updated our guidelines to convenors, chairs, how to run a meeting, how to allow participation, how to get consensus etc. in connection with that.

In addition to that, we looked at how can we accommodate the obstacles that are placed in terms of the timing. So the TMB, which is the Technical Management Board in ISO took a flexible approach to the rules. And they adapted the rules to give technical committees and working groups, the opportunity to have flexible timelines. And these are being made available. I'm not going to go into them because they're too detailed, but it does accommodate the extra time that sometimes committees might need to finish off their standards.

From the conformity assessment perspective, I think we are learning to cooperate with the other quality infrastructure institutions, we're looking at being able to handle queries and issues as they arise, so that we don't become a hindrance in terms of our process but also identifying things for later on.

From the capacity building perspective and helping developing countries, I think we've got to recognize that they are behind the rest of the world in terms of the impact. So one of the things that we have done within ISO, is we've set up a platform where members who have gone through the pandemic, have actually experienced it can put their best practice and share it with our other members. We are adapting the developing countries action



plan. So that we look at things and use and utilize e-learning where we can with respect to it and also to continuing our good standardization practice that we that we work with, together with UNIDO. In terms of it. So really the things that we're doing. Thank you. I hope I didn't go on too long.

00:26:34 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you very much, Sean. And I'm very pleased to hear that those who have been through the pandemic or have been hit hard by a pandemic are willing to share their experiences because I think we can all learn from it in the future. And that's the hard things side on the social side.

I think for the next panelist, I don't think I can think of a time where measurement has been more important than what it is right now so I would like to hand over to Andy Henson from the BIPM to give us the reaction to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Panelist 2: Andy Henson (BIPM)

00:27:21 - ANDY HENSON (BIPM):

Good afternoon and thank you. Thank you for the invite to be able to talk to everybody today. Well of course for us, there's a number of different aspects which have different impact on the operation of the BIPM: on the one hand we operate some laboratories, which require people to be present in them which is a real challenge at the moment. But crucially, what we are able to keep going right now is the operation of the databases that are critical around the world and the two real key ones here are the KCDB which underpins the measurements of the NMIs and through them all the accredited measurements around the world and also the JCTLM. That's the database of the Joint Committee for Traceability in Laboratory Medicine.

So we are able to operate quite well remotely. I am sat at home doing this, my team members, are sat at home working, we hope to restart laboratory activities in the not too distant future, albeit at a lower level. But the time isn't a wasted for the laboratory stuff because they're able to teach analysis and plan protocols and so on. So, so long as we're able to get back in in the near future we can keep that side going and but I'd like to talk a little bit more widely than just the Institute. Next week, for example, the working groups, the CCQM (that's the consultative committee that deals with chemistry and biology) will be meeting virtually. Very high on their agenda are things like looking at the reference materials that we need for the antibodies and antigens to be able to tackle this virus. The first one's already coming out now; we need international compatibility of those. It's too early to say what will come out of that. But one could imagine some sort of comparison exercise in the future.



It's far from trivial; it's more complicated than you might think. So in the antibodies, for example, you have the mono and the poly approaches which are really quite different. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. So it's it when you're doing something like a comparison exercise, you really need to have a some firm opinion of what it is you're trying to achieve before you're able to do that, to try and get the international compatibility. Indeed, the, the Secretary of Health in the UK said on the third of April, in the Prime Minister's briefing, and he said, his words were something like, "it's better to have not test at all than to test and get it wrong". And this is critical at two different levels: one for the individual. Of course, if you were tested and found to be okay, and you're not, it's disastrous. But also, because you're trying to understand how this epidemic is hitting your population as well. And for that you need to test results. And if you're getting them wrong, which is quite easy to do in the tests for the antibodies, for example, it can easily detect the wrong thing. The coronavirus is a broad church of different viruses. So you've got to make sure you're testing the right thing. So getting the measurements writers never been more important than it is today.

Separately from the actual testing the virus itself, of course, there's a whole bunch of other things that matter to the environments that we're talking about here, the performance of masks for example facemasks is really critical. It has to be tested, that involves measurements, ventilators, their performance and so on. And more widely. Things like the analysis of the data, understanding the aerosol effect. For example, the research topics as well. So all this activity, if you look around on the web pages on the national metrology institutes you will see them gearing up or already beginning to work on these types of aspects and there's a lot to do.

And for us as well, one of the things that is hit is our capacity building and knowledge transfer program. We've had to cancel their courses; people organize to go on those courses. You've had any urgency to postpone those. So we'd be looking in the short term, see if we can deliver them through these type of media. But with some adjustments, I think we can do that and we'll be looking to do that in the not too distant future. In longer term, but we'll come back to long term issues, but I certainly can see much more use of the e-learning tools for example.

So really they're the crucial points I wanted to say: the standards are important and testing is important, but behind them is the metrology. If you're not getting the right answer in this sort of a crisis, you have an absolute disaster beyond the obvious disaster.

00:32:18 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you Andy for that valuable contribution and yes, I don't think there's any test results is worth anything unless the metrology behind it is correct. So let's move on.



And we'll invite now Merih from INetQI. Merih, I'd like to ask you, given your experience as a previous Deputy Director of the Swedish accreditation body (Swedac) so today. Your chairing of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), for the period 2016 to 2018, which is actually quite recent. And then, as in there in your role as current Chair of the INetQI, could you, would you please share with us some insights as to the testing capacity of health services and the testing of goods.

Panelist 3: Merih Malmqvist Nilsson (INetQI)

00:33:25 - MERIH MALMQVIST NILSSON (INETQI):

Okay. You can all hear me. Yes. Okay. Well, I first have to say that because INetQI is a network. The hard work around the coronavirus is being done by all the institutions which are members of the INetQI. So as such as a network, we haven't actually done very much concerning what's going on with the coronavirus. But, and there's a big 'but', I'll elaborate on that both now and maybe if I get the chance later on in the webinar.

This pandemic has very clearly shown the importance of conformity assessment in general, and testing in particular. It has become very obvious that testing has a crucial role in the provision of reliable healthcare services. So we're talking about tested and certified personal protective equipment. We're talking about reliable tests, laboratory tests for detection of the disease. And we're talking about tested and certified medical instruments like ventilators, and the whole lot that's being used in emergency services.

Now, I do not have statistics from around the world. And that's why some of the things that we're talking about now are more philosophical: we do what we can now, but we don't know the result. But I'm sure we'll be able to collect information and look back and analyze how we could have done instead to have a better result. But to the best of my knowledge laboratories are still providing services to their communities, unless there's a total shutdown. And even when there is a total shutdown our governments and regulators realize the importance of laboratory testing and those facilities are being treated like essential services by many communities. And that's the status they should have in the long run.

We have also seen in particular in my vicinity here in Northern Europe. I've seen accredited laboratories and research institutes coming together with manufacturers to complete time for testing of new products essential for healthcare services. So that people are really exerting an extra effort to cut the time that is required. And this, of course, means a shift of priority for all these testing laboratories and testing services, whether their medical or mechanical or something else.

This crisis has many dimensions. And unfortunately, many of them are political. However, one thing is certain: that the availability of reliable



personal protective equipment medical devices and testing procedures have been a crucial factor in the efficiency of the medical services provided to patients.

So, I think this has the whole thing has made it very obvious for our political decision makers that conformity assessment is important; that it's a crucial service that the society needs; and that it should be treated as such. Let us hope they don't forget it once this is over.

And I would also like to say a little about the role of testing and conformity assessment in the global value chains. I believe I've recently read an article by an institution which calls itself the European Centre for International Political Economy. And they're claiming that there are no disruptions to global value chains; there are only disruptions or mainly disruptions to country national or economic within one economy global chain value chains, so looking at it from different angles, maybe we should decide that on that one, the jury is still out and we'll know first later on how this works. But sticking to the testing and the role of testing and the role of conformity assessment and global value chains. I don't think we have ever really thought in those terms in our community, in the quality infrastructure community. We haven't seen the services provided as an integral part of the value chain. And that is probably due to the fact that we are way down the service line and what the market sees is the final product.

And what we realize here is that unless we actively work to create global trust in every single conformity assessment from every part of the world in a time like this, we will revert to nationalism and protectionism. And we're seeing this in the speeches that are being made. I have recently watched a person from an authority convincing public procurement and other procurement services that medical devices that have been tested and approved by other countries outside our region are also reliable that they should rely on them. Now we shouldn't need to be to be saying this, so we need to actively to work to create global trust and in a time like this, as I said, it's easy to revert to nationalism and protectionism and it's very sad if we today cannot rely on testing to have been done properly when it is delivered from another part of the world. It is a huge failure for all the work we have done. The same problem arises with factories, we change the production lines to produce maybe personal protective equipment and chemicals which are needed for medical care.

The route to the market is a long and winding road and it goes through testing it goes through regulatory approval. But we have also seen this, that there's a shift that the testing laboratories have quickened their pace, they have become more flexible. But regulators are still rather slow and afraid of making the wrong decision. So this just shows the vulnerability of our system. And I'm being very critical here, but I do want to be that because we need to change. It's bureaucratic it's time consuming and it's costly and it



shouldn't be. So if our systems were fully sustainable as such, it would mean that all conformity assessment bodies and accreditation bodies had plans for unusual times such as these and that they would be just as efficient in these times, if not more than in times of so-called normality. So quickly read re-prioritizing and becoming flexible should be part of the business.

Now, this is from me so far. I don't think I really answered your question, but I think the answer to that one will come later. We don't have data on that right now. Thank you, Elsie.

00:40:58 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you Merih. I think you set the scene for our next speaker absolutely perfectly when you said the words, creating global trust. So with that let me put give the floor to Mr. Xiao to tell us what the International Accreditation Forum, what they have been doing.

Panelist 4: Jianhua Xiao (IAF)

00:41:27 - JIANHUA XIAO (IAF):

Thank you, Elsie. Hello, everyone. I'm very pleased to join this e-panel. As the chair of IAF. Thank you to UNIDO for organizing this event and it gives me the opportunity to share relevant information from IAF.

In response to the impacts of Covid-19 IAF, of course, is taking a number of actions. As a general response IAF released a statement on Covid-19 with the general message regarding how IAF member accreditation bodies and their certification bodies are to respond to this situation. The general mechanism established by IAF in IAF ID3 to respond to extraordinary circumstances affecting accreditation bodies, certification bodies and certified organizations was therefore activated.

And this IAF statement also instructed the accreditation bodies and certification bodies to follow the requirements on how to use information and communication technologies to support and maintain the integrity of the audit and assessment process, as defined in IAF MD4 that is a mandatory document for the use of information and communication technologies for auditing and assessment purposes.

There was a specific response, a joint IAF-ILAC statement on possible delayed peer evaluations and impact on transition to ISO/IEC 17011 which actually includes guidelines, how to manage peer evaluations and then transitioning to the new version of ISO/IEC 17011, the requirement for accreditation bodies.

Going further, IAF created the Rapid Response Mechanism at the IAF Executive Committee level. An IAF Covid-19 FAQ Task Force was established to develop IAF Frequently Asked Questions in a fast process to



provide further guidance for IAF member accreditation bodies and their certification bodies to manage relevant accreditation and the certification activities in a harmonized way under the situation of a Covid-19. As a result of this, a series of FAQs has been published on the IAF website. I'm not going to go to details for the FAQs even if they are important regarding how to handle specific issues related to accredited certifications in current situation.

Additionally, IAF has also reacted to assist the specific areas, for example, for the food Working Group Task Force, preparing information on remote auditing activities for accredited food safety certification. The remote auditing and assessment as provided by MD4 and also other IAF documents have been greatly implemented in accreditation and certification activities comparing with the normal situation, prior to this Covid-19 pandemic. The IAF Covid-19 FAQs actually contributed to the use of the remote auditing and assessment methodologies.

So the IAF's main priority during this challenging time is supporting IAF member accreditation bodies, their certification bodies and certified organizations to maintain robust accredited certification and ensure certified organizations are served in the best way possible, so that the accredited certifications continue its role to facilitate trade, support regulators and protect consumers and the environment during this period of time in the fight against Covid-19 and the support to the resumption of industry.

So in short, I would like to highlight two points for IAF's response to Covid-19: One is good preparedness. Through IAF documents such as ID3 and MD4, IAF and its members are in a good place to be able to continue their accreditation work, and to allow accredited conformity assessment bodies to continue their work where they can because of the existence of these IAF documents.

Another point is rapid reaction. Backing up these documents, IAF responded to that very promptly and sensibly, releasing statements and the setting up of the IAF Covid-19 FAQ Task Force. And in particular, this task force's tight schedule of 48 hours turnaround of questions, which has enabled questions to be raised and addressed in a robust and timely manner. So that means that if a question was raised, within 48 hours we have answer, then we post to the FAQ. So these are the major actions taken by IAF in our response to the impact of our Covid-19. So back to you Elsie! Thank you.

00:47:53 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you Xiao. Well, I think this ends the first round of questions. And I think what is very clear is that the international quality infrastructure institutions, the organizations have been very proactive in dealing with this



issue and that they've also been very supportive of their members in dealing with the pandemic.

What is also clear from what has been discussed so far is that the need for the quality infrastructure organizations to change is very clear. The writing is on the wall. We have to start being nimble, we have to be proactive. This has been mentioned several times by virtually all of the speakers.

And so with that, having set the scene that there is a need for change. I'd like us to proceed to round two. But before I proceed to round two, I'd just to please invite our participants once again to submit questions and that we can deal with. If we do not get to your particular question, we will afterwards, see how we can deal with it and then disseminate the information and if it becomes available at a later date.

Question 2: What is your institution doing in respect of Covid-19?

00:49:23 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

So for the round two questions we will take the speakers in the same order. Starting with so and so here in round two, we're going to discuss how the quality infrastructure institutions can adapt and evolve in the medium to long term given the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, so that we can address the various economic and social impacts of the pandemic. And not just of the pandemic, but because there's bound to be another crisis at some stage and we need to make sure that our business response, business continuity risk assessments, etc., etc., all in place. I think that's very clear, given this latest pandemic. So Sean, let's start with you: "How are ISO adapting and evolving?"

Panelist 1: Sean MacCurtain (ISO)

00:50:17 - SEAN MACCURTAIN (ISO)

So I think in connection with looking at all the quality infrastructure institutions, I think we've really got to recognize what the new reality is and that's vital if we're going to move forward. The new reality is that we are looking at virtual health, we're looking at telemedicine, we're looking at a wider use of e commerce, wider use of e- learning, we're looking at how do we mobilize the workforce or re-mobilize the workforce into different areas and the impact of automation on jobs.

So I think as institutions, we've got to reflect on these and understand that that we have to go forward and be able to provide to governments to industry to professions like the health, the health care profession to science and



technology a really effective basis upon which they can take advantage and move forward in terms of how they handle pandemics. I think a very interesting thing as an aside is that we've talked about the importance of testing from a testing perspective. So we said, how critical it is from a testing perspective, what we're also recognizing is for economies to recover industry is asking us to have a testing infrastructure that can accommodate the demands that these kind of pandemics put on. So it's not just the technical correctness, it's a whole infrastructure and around that and I think that is also very crucial. So from a quality infrastructure institution side I think that we've got to be able to cooperate together, synchronize what we do and identify where we can cooperate.

I think there is a tendency after a situation like this, a pandemic and people want to get into the recovery. They want to recover as fast, as quickly as possible. And I think that we need to take a little breath and we need to reflect on the lessons learned and so we need to spend time and trying to identify what we did well, what we didn't do so well, in actual fact, and what we did badly because that's crucial to this whole idea we have to communicate in terms of the context of the pandemic that can damage and that really requires us to be truthful.

So we need to know what we did badly, what we can improve on and what we need to change. So I think all the organizations need to spend time looking at what we do with respect to those kinds of issue. We need to reflect on the standards that worked in the real world, out there under the stress and where they didn't work under the stress, but even more important we have to identify the standards that were missing! Are the standards that we could have developed, that could have helped us, that weren't there. A very good example is China has submitted a new work item proposal on temporary hospitals. Two months ago, how many members or how many people would think that this is a crucial, crucial thing. Today, the whole world would think in terms of that.

So we've got to look at standards and what we need and how they will work in future, and with respect to that. So the crucial lessons is on the supply chain and the value chain. We did have problems. At the National and the international level, in terms of supply of masks of gloves, and it wasn't unique to just the national level: countries were competing for these products. Issues on the food chain, and this debate safety of the food chain. There was, there is supply, but the reaction of humans can actually impact that supply and we need to be able to accommodate that going forward.

Migration of people: we're now entering into a stage where in Europe, they need to harvest. They do not have sufficient people to harvest. And in addition to that, we've got to ensure that trade functions operate. There has been a tendency for us all to close our borders or to limit the borders in terms of customs and trade, we've got to look at how can standards and how can



we as institutions, ensure that trade can flow through borders, that customs officials can allow the flow of goods.

I think generally if we look at what has happened, we have two scenarios going forward. We have difficulties and crises arising from climate change or extreme weather and I think we're learning how to handle those because we have had experiences and we built up our plans. And now we have got pandemics. We now have a blueprint, there is a responsibility on every organization every company to make sure that we don't get lazy, that we look at these blueprints, we dust them off every now and then and we make sure that they can respond and continue to respond, covering all of the activities of the institutions. Thank you.

00:56:34 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Sean. We have a blueprint. Andy, let's hear your response.

Panelist 2: Andy Henson (BIPM)

00:56:42 - ANDY HENSON (BIPM)

Okay. I think the question is a really interesting one. And it comes for us in the metrology community, at a very interesting time because back in 2018 we took the decision, the world community took the decision to redefine the international system of units, with those new definitions coming into force in May 2019. So already that opened up possibilities. Now, I think one thing we're going to see out after the pandemic is it's forced us to open our minds and change the way we think. Exactly as Sean said, who thought you could build a hospital in a week or 10 days before? It was just an inconceivable thing. So ideas that were before... we were very conservative. We moved very small. If it was can be a quarter of a percent on the GDP, you couldn't do anything... that rulebook is gone. And I don't think it's coming back; I really think it's going to be gone for good.

Now in our world, what does that mean for metrology? Well we're seeing a number of trends that I think will have an impact going forward. One of those is with redefinition I think we're going to see an increase in the availability of intrinsic standards. So these are local realizations that can be done off the SI without coming back always to just the really big leading laboratories. We have seen this in the work of some of the leading labs, NIST and PTB and MPL and so on, going in this direction. So this can be considered perhaps as the democratization of measurement. I've heard those words used in the US to describe this. But this brings into the points made earlier on trade, it only works if you really can rely on the standards.

So this issue which be BIPM deals with is the comparability of those results. And so there's clearly going to be a significant task ahead of us to work out



what that means. And there's other pressures in the same direction; a different origin but the same direction. And that's the advent of large numbers of low-cost sensors. You can pick up your mobile phone now and take an app and it will measure the air pressure, for example. Now you can add that into the weather forecasting and get your local climate in your field or your valley. But that brings big challenges. If you take that up and go up a 10 story building the sensor will detect what it thinks is a change in the air pressure and it's actually a change in the air pressure, but it's because you've got up 10 stories, not because the weather is changing.

So, will traditional metrological traceability chains in the future, where we're calibrating individual item data chain to the end user, are they going to be the models that will survive? And we don't know the answers to those questions, but we're certainly going to see the advent of low-cost sensors deployed in large numbers. The combination of data to have solutions that are not direct outputs of a single measurement anymore, they're coming. Large numbers of measurements, perhaps a large number of parameters, maybe with some artificial intelligence in there as well, to give us some sort of prediction.

So I think we're going to see a world that is prepared to accept change more readily than was the case before we were exactly on a particular track with small deviations considered very major. We've thrown that model away. We have to be able to think differently. And so I think it really will have an impact. Coming back more specifically to the crisis we're facing, clearly, the availability of appropriate reference material are really going to be very necessary for these tests that we were talking about earlier. And then the comparability because you want to be able to take, not just move equipment around and test gets around, but you also want to be able to combine data generated all around the world into your models and know that you're looking at the same data. This data is telling you the same thing when its measured or trying to measure the same thing.

I think one thing that we might see is a greater use of the SI, the International System of Units in biological and chemical measurements. For reasons that we couldn't do good metrology 20 years or 30 years ago in some of these areas, the practice is built up a necessary practice, that was to take a sample and make that standards and then you run out of that batch and you made another batch as close as you could. We're nibbling up the molecule size with our metrology and so you can do SI traceability, in quite large molecules nowadays. And that brings the possibility of different techniques and different approaches and still have confidence in the measurement. So I think we, I hope it will see a greater use of the International System of Units in the areas that are very critical for this work.



01:02:02 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you Andy, are you done?

01:02:04 - ANDY HENSON (BIPM):

Yep, that's a high-speed run through!

01:02:09 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Okay, thank you very much for that for giving us insights into some possible future scenarios and with that I would like to ask Merih to give us her response to the second question, please. Merih?

Panelist 3: Merih Malmqvist Nilsson (INetQI)

01:02:27 - MERIH MALMQVIST NILSSON (INETQI):

Elsie, thank you. Thank you very much. Well I, I tend to get philosophical about the future, so please bear with me. Now the present pandemic makes it very obvious that if we rely on direct human physical interaction, in all our essential services, and essential services that we have seen include the QI and the conformity assessment and so on. So all of the QI fusions included. Then we are bound to remain vulnerable in the face of a global crisis.

I have personally talked about the fact that QI has to reinvent itself and embrace new technology to remain relevant and now it seems it has to do that, also, in order to remain sustainable. So new technology can be the key to the sustainability of our services. I have also talked about how new technology can, in the Industrial Revolution 4.0, can be used to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the promise of Agenda 2030 and there are many examples to that today, and I'll bore you with some of those because they are important to remember.

We're using drones to pollinate and monitor crops. We have online healthcare services. And in fact, in my vicinity here in Northern Europe we've had them for some years now, and some of them have even been accepted by the National Health Service. We have intelligent textiles for monitoring patients, so they don't need to be monitored directly with machines which are more expensive or human beings and so on. So the clothing monitors the patients. 3D printing will substantially decrease the environmental footprint of production. Technology inventions have been shown in studies to make a meaningful contribution to food security. Blockchain technology has been cited as having a great significance in the development of environmental sustainability and we have seen data analytics being used for disaster relief efforts.



All these solutions! And there are many, the list can be made very long. They are being used in different parts of the world, but how much of this new technology is being used to harness a crisis. And it seems, at the time of crisis, we still seem to back away from new technology because none of these technologies have been used on a wider scale. So we need to quickly embrace new technology and test it out so that when we do have the next crisis and it might not at all, be a pandemic, it might be something totally different than we have tested them, then we have an answer to any problems that might come up.

Also, when we talk about quality, we have generally focused on functionality and safety and we have talked about using IR 4.0 technologies to as a leverage to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and that we need to take a more holistic approach. It may in fact be the right time to redefine quality as a concept to also include sustainability, which means that the QI institutions will be working to a triple bottom line: functionality, safety and sustainability; and this needs to be done in relation to each individual product and service.

And we cannot only focus on the product or service and in the QI sense, it's usually the service we're talking about. Not only that, being sustainably produced and not contributing to an increase in misuse of our resources, but also think about how it can during its lifetime contribute to increased sustainability.

I would also like to come to the aspect of global value chains which I've talked about earlier as well. As I said, there are some think tanks who believe global value chains are not being destructed to the extent we expected. And we can still buy whatever we want to buy and they're available for us. Maybe there's some delay, but they're still being produced and transported. And they claim that single country value chains are the ones that are mostly being disrupted. That may be true that may not be true. I don't know, because there are so many different views on this topic. I am more of the type that believes that global value chains are being disrupted, but that that remains to be seen, what the result of that with will be.

And conformity assessment as I also said before, is a part of the global value chain. If we cannot create the global trust that a test that has been done on another continent is as reliable as the one that we do at home, we have failed hugely, we can just close down the shop and go home. And the same applies to new products being or new production lines where there's a big need. Some factories have been changing their production to produce personal protective equipment and so on, as I said.

And the system for getting these on the market should not be bureaucratic and time consuming and costly. It should be quick and easy so whatever we do in normality, because we can afford to have a slow pace. Maybe we should not be doing it at that pace in normality, either.



In the short term, I believe, countries may look into becoming self-contained, however consumer preferences and economy will always be a major factor in political decisions. And in the long-term globalization will not die; global value chains will not die; they will just take a new form. And I think one of the important parameters will be resilience when choosing a partner. You will choose a partner who has resilience, a partner who has contingency plans and so it goes for testing. It goes for conformity assessment, for I believe metrology standards, the whole lot, but also for production lines, hardware products.

What countries and businesses, including QI institutions have to do in the long term, is to have sustainability, as I said before, and to have rigorous contingency plans, not only for pandemics. But for any risks with catastrophic effects. And I think the global organizations have a big role to play in this. And I'm looking at organizations like ILAC and IAF, we have to really be supportive and find guidance that they can give to their to the member national accreditation bodies or accreditation bodies and to the conformance assessment bodies who are dependent on the accreditation.

Contingency plans have also to be drafted in cooperation with stakeholders. So when the testing and certification and inspection community, and the metrology community as well, are looking into contingency plans for the future, they have to speak to their stakeholders, just like governments have to speak to their citizens. They have to speak to their stakeholders. This has to be a joint effort.

And finally, I'd like to come to the soft part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of those like no poverty, good health and wellbeing, zero hunger, gender equality, those will become very important if we are to survive a future similar crisis. If we look at the world as such, and I'm not pointing fingers, I'm on purpose, giving you examples from Northern Europe and, in particular, sometimes from Sweden. Even in a country like Sweden which is supposed to be very non-discriminatory and gender equal, our doctors talk about healthcare discriminating against women or healthcare discriminating against other specific ethnic groups: that shouldn't even be on the table for discussion. It should be sold long ago.

And I would like to stick out my chin and head and the rest of it to say, maybe if we will have been quicker in reaching the what we promised in Agenda 2030, then we might have had better tools to approach the crisis we are in today. There will also be some of the humanitarian so-called "hard" Sustainable Development Goals will have to look into. And then we're talking about clean water and sanitation, safe food and so on.

And I'll tell you the disruption to value chains, one of our ministers in Sweden, the other day said we have a risk of not being able to provide clean water, unless we can get more drivers who are not sick in the transport sector. Now that is our local value chain. The chemicals are being produced



in a factory in Sweden. And the cleaning parts installations are in Sweden, but we don't have enough drivers to drive them from one point to another so clean water and sanitation and safe food will be very important to look at.

So the new normal we create has to be sustainable and contribute to increased sustainability. So my key message is a key messages, they are four: embrace new technology to achieve sustainable and value adding services; work to a triple bottom line- functionality, safety, sustainability- with every step you take; ask yourself, how does this contribute to achieving the promise of Agenda 2030; let the SDGs lead you, let values lead you. You will still earn money so that won't be a problem and have contingency plans for risks with disruptive effects. Thank you.

01:13:08 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you Merih, gosh you given us quite a lot of food for thought there but I'd like to hand over to Xiao. Xiao, your views? On how to adapt and evolve?

Panelist 4: Jianhua Xiao (IAF)

01:13:23 - JIANHUA XIAO (IAF):

Thank you, Elsie. The pandemic can cause a great change in businesses and how they operate. Talking about accreditation, the role of accredited certifications. I believe that supporting trade regulators organizations, consumers and the environment, will be further enhanced as a result of this pandemic.

Some examples. For example, in the current situation, the accredited quality management system certification helps certified organizations to prepare for managing crisis situations better. The accredited occupational health and safety management system certification helps those certified organizations to prevent the spread of Covid-19 within the certified organizations and the accredited environmental management system certification helps those certified health organizations to manage medical waste to prevent the spread of infection.

These are just some examples. So more accredited certification can be used, the global economy is supported to return to growth. Remote auditing and assessment tools will help certified organizations to be ready to spring back to support the economic and social impacts of this pandemic.

The Covid-19 situation has greatly speeded-up the use of new technology to conduct remote auditing and assessment. The IAF Executive Committee discussed the experiences in this period, and also the implementation of new IAF strategic plan. And we will further share experience among IAF Members from this situation and we will further push forward the use of



digital tools in accreditation and for the accredited certification activities in line with the development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

For specifics, the key document of IAF ID3, we have this important document to deal with the current crisis. The name is management of extraordinary events or circumstances affecting accreditation bodies, conformity assessment bodies and certified organizations. And another important document is MD4, which is remote assessments and auditing. So these documents have been given an unprecedented test during this crisis. And we see that they have stood up for us very strongly.

But in the meantime, given the intense use they have had, IAF will use this opportunity to review those documents to see if this situation provides any lessons learned for these documents' enhancement. We don't expect to have a similar crisis to occur in the future. However, we should be always prepared and the relevant IAF documents demonstrated the importance of preparedness. We will continue to enhance our work in this way, to maintain the confidence of the global system for accreditation, to help and support accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies and in the end, the market. Thank you.

01:17:42 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO):

Thank you very much. And for your interesting insights. Before we go to the question and answer session. I'd like to give the floor back to UNIDO. Bernardo, over to you.

Summary & Feedback

01:17:57 - BERNARDO CALZADILLA SARMIENTO (UNIDO)

Thank you. Thank you very much, and I will try to be very brief, but I learned from our perspective, certainly more on a personal note what I asked myself: Are we going to get back on track or will it be a coming back or we are just not going to see the same situation again. The change will be so profound that we are moving in new situation. The change has been very deep, I think, and following a bit what Merih was elaborating, we were in the process of trying to understand the technological revolution. We have never seen an acceleration of technological change ever in a context where we were trying to understand, we're saying yes, we need to sustainability, we have the mega trend of migration, we have climate change.

But the big question is how we as UNIDO are helping developing countries to do that. How do they get prepared for the New Industrial Revolution? For these new technologies but Covid-19 and the crisis has precipitated this process. For me, this is changing completely the game because digitalization is here now to stay with us. While I fully see a strong role for



standards and quality, I think we, in the post-recovery, it will be the time for innovation and new technological development and certainly QI plays a very important role in relation to that as well. And the big concepts trying to retain a bit at the high level are readiness, being prepared, being flexible being adaptive.

But also it is a time for coherence, for more coordination. This crisis shows us how important it is that we cooperate but if I'm still impressed. We are here, panelists from so many different places we have participants from all over the world. And this is happening. Can we get back to our desk and forget this experience we're having today and saying, no, we will do another conference again. No, we will have learned that we have to adapt in visitation, we will we have to adapt to remote working in institutions like ISO they probably are more forward on that. But in the UN, we're still working eight hours a day in our offices and there is no room for flexibility. We need to embrace this. We need to embrace this digital revolution, just on what we can do in relation to quality and standards: it was elaborated by their respective institutions, but at the policy level I think that it shows that quality policy helps to be prepared. And I think that we are working. We are finalizing your work on laboratory policy and this will be very helpful because countries need to have a systematic instructor response to how the laboratory system evolves and this crisis is showing that many countries, this is not the case. So I think this will give another input to that stream of work.

And certainly this is part of the reflection that we as UNIDO need, we think that we have to go with this convening power we have and we need to dedicate more for joint advocacy and these are the types of events that we can do together with the technical institutions partnering with other UN organizations, but we need to work also in countries a bit broader thinking on the business environment, on technological foresight and all these elements that I think very nicely Merih has disaggregated in particular in the supply chain, how we help them to adopt these new technologies, but also internally.

Also I saw in some questions, we have to think how we can support more this population that is really unprotected because one thing. This crisis has shown is that we have a societal divide and that is a segment of society that is completely unprotected, and we need to think also, from our perspective, much more for these groups of people for these groups of countries. I would like to leave it at that. Thank you very much.



Questions & Answers

01:22:46 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you. Bernardo. And yes, I agree, after this webinar, there's no way we can just go and say, "oh, well, we had... somebody says, 'how was the webinar?', with us going, 'fine...'", we're going to have to really distil what has been discussed and put together some good proposals.

And now before we do that, I would like to indicate that we've had over 100 questions submitted, now we have about 15-20 minutes to attend to questions. And for those we've the two people in the background, Juan Pablo and Dora have been aggregating the most common questions you've asked and at the moment, let me just quickly look here. We've aggregated them into about questions that I'm not even sure we will get through all that because 14 questions and 20 minutes it's just about one and a bit minutes per question. But for the questions that that you think we haven't addressed. We do know where the questions have come from. And as I promised, before we will make sure that that we give you some kind of response. And so I hope that that's going to be acceptable to everybody.

So what I would like to suggest now and Bernardo, I think that you've already pre-empted, I think you must have seen these questions. I think you've already pre-empted. Because the first question is going to go to you: "What should change in quality policy in the future in relation to Covid-19?" If you could give us a quick response.

Q&A 1: What should change in quality policy in the future in relation to Covid-19?

01:24:37 - BERNARDO CALZADILLA SARMIENTO (UNIDO)

I didn't have a chance to see that question, I browse through the questions, but I think it's about this resilience. It's about readiness. We have eventually to go back to the guiding principles and see how countries and institutions and companies and laboratories are better prepared and how after a crisis they come back to fit again. I believe that this part in general is there. But when we look at the standards, also the standards on risk management are not so updated, the standards on resilience are not so updated, so we have elements of that there, but I think that they are updating them and making them more introduced in the elements that we have to deal with. And certainly in relation most specific to the crisis, I think lab policy and what we can do there is very relevant. Thank you.



01:25:47 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Bernardo. So laboratory policy, we can expect to see something developed there.

And the second question we have here is “how do we get the political leadership of developing countries with weak governance systems to engage in developing a national quality infrastructure?”

Now ideally I would have liked to say Bernardo you answer this, but I think I would like to ask the panelists, which one or the other panelists. Which one are you happy to put up your hand and say I will make a team to answer this. Merih.

01:26:36 - MERIH MALMQVIST NILSSON (INETQI)

Yes, I'm being brave again. I remember it was at the I think WTO side event, if I'm not mistaken. It was a similar question, a question where someone said, when we don't have roads and bridges, how can we convince our government that quality infrastructure is important? And I responded saying, “what we keep forgetting, when we talk about QI is the fact that it's not just something for trade and business”. Quality infrastructure is there for the safety and security of our citizens, you can build as many roads and bridges as you like; if they collapse in the next storm, how are you going to tell your citizens that “Oops, we forgot to test this concrete” or “we didn't quite use the right steel or the right iron products”, so testing, measurement certification. The full quality info and standards, let's not forget them. I keep forgetting. They are all part of how we do everything correctly, we build bridges, but they should not collapse when we have flooding. We have roads, they should not collapse when we have flooding. People have to rely on the fact that they can drink the water, they can, they should be able to feel safe, they should take it for granted. And if they are to be able to take it for granted; you have to have a quality infrastructure. It's as simple as that.

And that message has to go through to the politicians, to the decision makers: quality infrastructure is sexy actually in a political way. Because it helps you do the things you want to do. You can do them in the right way, if you use all the institutions of the quality infrastructure and you protect your citizens. If they're protected, they feel safe and they vote for you. Thank you.

01:28:47 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you Merih. Let's move on to another question. And this one has to do with supply chains. The question is: “We have already seen that Covid- 19 has disrupted international supply chains and changed demand patterns for food. It is foreseeable that this may compromise, food safety and quality. What modifications to our current tools are required to ensure that such risks are effectively managed during the crisis, especially for populations



vulnerable to food insecurity”. I think this question has multiple facets and Xiao, would you like to attend to this one?

Q&A 2: [...] What modifications to our current tools are required to ensure that supply-chain related risks are effectively managed during the crisis, especially for populations vulnerable to food insecurity?

01:29:51 - JIANHUA XIAO (IAF)

Thank you. It's clear accreditation and, in particular, accredited and definitely also the testing, inspection have an important role to support the global supply chain, including the supply chain of the food industry. So in this regard, from my point of view, we need to allow accreditation bodies and certification bodies to continue their certification activity to support the supply chain of our food industry.

So again, this in this regard, IAF provides the tools for certification bodies to utilize new technology to conduct relevant certification and accreditation activities. So in this we contribute to supporting the stability of the supply chain for industry. So actually we just for IAF we have a Food Working Group, we created a specific task force then developed a paper regarding remote auditing activities for food safety certification. So we try to actually get the views from different parties, from accreditation bodies, and from certification bodies and also from food safety, scheme owners, so we put together a paper to try to explain how new technology can be utilized in certification and accreditation, in the food certification sector. Thank you.

01:32:13 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Xiao. Sean, I was going to invite you to also do an intervention and Andy, I think if you can also briefly touch on this. I think this is a really important question.

01:32:29 - SEAN MACCURTAIN (ISO)

Sorry, and I think I'm going to talk about it from a conformity assessment perspective and I think we've got to be in the back of our minds that no matter what we've, we've got to maintain the confidence that people have a whatever gets delivered to their door during a pandemic. But we've also got to explore the flexibility, or the range of flexibility that we can allow within our standards and I don't think we've done that with regards to the conformity assessment activities.

We've tended to be very conservative in terms of specifying conformity assessment activities and taking a conservative approach and that's part of



what we do because we like to build confidence. And I think now after this pandemic, we need to sit back and we need to explore further how flexible our standards need to be to be able to accommodate these kinds of issues without giving up or deteriorating the confidence that people can maintain in the result of that conformity assessment activity. And I think the remote assessment is one aspect of that. So I think that's a crucial that we need to re-examine our standards and see where we go forward from there.

01:33:59 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Sean, Andy.

01:34:01 - ANDY HENSON (BIPM)

Yeah, what I would like to reflect on is not that we have to do all the work when a pandemic, or a crisis comes along. What we need to do is get greater recognition of the investments and what lies behind and is already doing a really fantastic job from the quality infrastructure and is there beforehand. We can measure pressure and temperature and so on reliably in different countries and know the results will be good. We do have methods to ensure competence through the accreditation system and so on.

So part of what we have to do is a better advocacy to make sure that this confidence can be recognized and as Sean said that we don't necessarily need to have the bureaucratic processes that narrow things down, we can say yes to the underpinnings of that. In this particular crisis, this particular moment we need to open the gates, a little bit more and have a wider interpretation and we can do it in the knowledge that there was the sound foundation underneath it.

01:35:07 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you very much. Andy. Merih, if it's okay with you, I think previously you've given us quite a few inputs as to how testing the laboratories will be involved in supply chains. I don't know if you want to add anything more.

01:35:23 - MERIH MALMQVIST NILSSON (INETQI)

Um, no, not, not really, but I could again repeat the fact that we need to have trust, we need to have common standards and we need to have trust. I'll give you a very... This is not about food safety, but it still influences the way, for example, developing countries do trade. The standards for organic food are so varying from country to country. There are huge differences, where new pressures are being put on on incoming goods to be labelled organic compared to the homegrown. This is just an example. And I'm sure similar



examples can be given for other aspects of the food we consume and the food we import and export.

So there is need for... I think there is a lot to do for the standardization bodies like ISO to make sure that standards are the same throughout the world. And then there is a great need to build trust that if the food or if the products I'm importing which will result in a in a certain type of food, the processed food product that they are tested in their origin, and I trust them because I trust that testing, I trust that microbiological analysis. And I think all the time, it goes back to trust: unless we can build the global trust will have problems in the global value chains.

01:37:05 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you. I spend quite a bit of time on that because I think the answer pertains to not just the food industry, but could be a lot wider than that as well. I would like to... we will come back to this issue about remote auditing, there seems to be some concern about how that will work.

But the next question I'd like to pose is a talks, it's the question to you, Sean, to ISO. "The fragmented landscape of global standards for PPE undermines ability of national governments to mobilize adequate PPE to protect medical personnel and citizens. Is there any initiative by asset to harmonize your living standards at global level?" Over to you, Sean.

01:37:57 - SEAN MACCURTAIN (ISO)

Yeah, I mean in terms of harmonization of standards that comes back to what Merih Malmqvist Nilsson just discussed now, the best position to be in is if we've got a set of harmonized standards at the global level that address the core needs of whatever it is. And so either way is always working towards that. And in terms of creating a set of standards at the global level that are harmonized with the world's best experts.

I think in direct relation to PPE, I can't speak now at the moment because I'm unaware of any activity to draw a standard together that addresses PPE. But I will say is that we have got global standards related to different aspects of PPE so if you look at medical devices, if you look at ventilators, if you look at gloves and you look at masks, there are international standards and its really as opposed promoting a better knowledge that these standards already exist in terms of PPE.

01:39:18 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Sean. Another question for you, Sean. Which I think you may have touched on during your intervention, but maybe you want to elaborate a little bit more.



It says: “What can ISO do to speed up the development of international standards for items needed to fight against the virus, where international standards do not currently exist?”

Q&A 3: What can ISO do to speed up the development of international standards for items needed to fight against the virus, where international standards do not currently exist??

01:39:46 - SEAN MACCURTAIN (ISO)

So I think there are mechanisms already in existence in ISO that that can be used. So within either in terms of the standards development process. There are different choices that technical committees can make in terms of the timelines that they use to develop these standards, and these range from 24 months after 48 months. And I think there is a bit of a tendency in many industries are many technical committees to pick a longer development time because they are balancing the contribution and the availability of the experts in terms of developing these standards.

But Technical Committees have the opportunity to look at developing them within a reasonable time limit, I think, in addition to that, the Technical Management Board will properly look at the lessons that we need to learn from this in terms of what we need to change in terms of our process, what we need to add, etc. With regards to that. And but I think it's also a case of educating technical committees to actually bite the bullet and to take the fast development time. And if we look at what has happened, it's very often persuading people to take that step change, instead of picking the 24-month development process to pick the 12 months to set themselves the challenge, etc. And I think this pandemic has told everyone that people once they're forced to interact on e-commerce or telemedicine that they do enjoy it. They do like it. They do get familiar with it, and it's persuading them to take that step change.

01:41:39 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Sean. An interesting question here says: “Should quality infrastructure institutions be flexible in meeting standards and conformity assessment in times of Covid-19?” Xiao, I think I'm going to give this one to you again.



Q&A 4: Should quality infrastructure institutions be flexible in meeting standards and conformity assessment in times of Covid-19?

01:42:15 - JIANHUA XIAO (IAF)

Oh, sorry. Okay, can you hear me? Okay. Yes, the answer is yes. Yes. So as I mentioned that IAF provide the tools for the accreditation bodies and their certification bodies to conduct remote auditing and assessment by using new technologies. So before pandemic, very few accreditation bodies and certification bodies utilized this approach and as this approach, it really has to continue accredited certification activity in response to the current situation. And this is, I mean, the remote auditing and assessment by using new technology, the digital tool is helpful and acceptable.

And also on the other hand, for example, IAF, we published some, we call FAQs. For example, if it's not possible for certification bodies to perform auditing activities either physically at the location of the organization or even remotely by using new technology, and also if the conditions recommended by IAF specific documents are satisfied, then all the conformity assessment activities, including surveillance, recertification, may be postponed up to six months and also the validity of respective certificates maybe also then extended for corresponding period of up to six months.

Actually, if we look at the current respective standard, so ISO/IEC 17021 different to that one, and also ISO/IEC 17065 for the management system certification, for product certification, so there is no this kind of provisions, requirements. There's an approach, but then during this situation we do have a specific document, to manage that extra ordinary events. So we do have an arrangement that allows that certification bodies postpone their relevant activities based on some conditions. So, yes.

Again, the answer, yes, we need to consider some flexibility. Of course, then we also need to consider to ensure the confidence of the certification activities. Thank you.

Conclusion & Final wrap-up

01:45:21 - ELSIE MEINTJIES (UNIDO)

Thank you, Xiao. You know, I should have had somebody flagging a red card at me. I've just noticed that we are 20 minutes over time. And I sincerely apologize for that. I was so intrigued by it, but nobody's sort of rang a bell to say "Oh, I got a red card now!" Thank you. Thank you. Okay. So I think as important as all these things are. I'm going to have to be wrapping up with your good permission.



But as I did promise that we will attend to two questions afterwards we have your email addresses and we will see what we can do. We're not promising it for today, but I think we will soon attend to them and the panelists I count on your cooperation to assist us in answering the questions. That's a deal is all of you? It's a deal. Thank you so much.

Right, so let me go to the wrap up, and I would like to say thank you to the panelists for your contribution to the discussion and the insights that you have provided during both rounds of questions. And also the responses that you've given to the questions from the panellists, from the participants. What is clear to me is that we are facing many, many, many challenges, but at the same time we also facing some very good opportunities in our new world of work.

It is also a unique opportunity for us. I believe as quality infrastructure institutions to really position ourselves uniquely in the world as to the service that we provide for the protection of the health and safety of our consumers, citizens, the fauna and flora of our countries. And as somebody said we need to do more advocacy on the role of quality infrastructure that would be absolutely critical going forward.

I would like to say a special word of thanks also to the 307 participants for joining and listening to the discussions. We are confident that the insights that you have gained as to how to support the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and the adjustments that we will need to make going into the future and the medium and long term that you have found this worthwhile has been in the afternoon on

We would also like to thank you for the questions that you have posed in fact we've been overwhelmed with the questions and time constraints did not allow that we could answer them all. However, we would like to encourage you to continue dialogue amongst each other in your various institutions and so on.

And then last but not least, I would like to thank the two behind the scene workers, Juan Pablo Davila and Nora Dei-Anang for the logistics and for making this event happening, if it was not for the two of them. And I don't think we probably would have pulled this off because we had many objections as to the short notice, etc, etc. But I think it was worth pushing through and getting this done, because of the criticalness of the situation. Let me also indicate that we have made a video recording of the proceedings, we will make it available on the UNIDO website and we will let you know when that becomes available.

So as we head into the weekend, I would like to encourage everyone to enjoy the weekend. And see you back at work on Monday, those who are back at work on Monday, and above all stay safe. Greetings from Pretoria, South Africa; thank you for your time.