



Consejo de Armonización de Normas Electrotécnicas de las Naciones de las Américas
Council for Harmonization of Electrotechnical Standards of the Nations of the Americas

**Address given by Sr. Rafael Yañez Hoyos, CANENA President
IEC Standards Management Board (SMB)**

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On behalf of the members of CANENA, thank you again for your invitation to take part in this meeting and the 72nd IEC General Meeting. I welcome the opportunity for the next few minutes, to update you on our most recent activities.

It is important to remind IEC members that CANENA is not an accredited standards development organization in any country. It is an industry driven process dedicated to enhancing free trade through the harmonization of standards and other technical requirements in the countries of our members. Membership in CANENA is individual and not by country. CANENA Technical Harmonization Committees have defined scopes and the documents they produce are taken into the separate national approval processes by the participating accredited Standards Development Organizations. Through separate agreements and procedures established between the participating SDOs, harmonized national standards are then published. CANENA's published Cooperation and Communication Strategy ensures transparency of the process and is our commitment to acting in a complementary manner with each official national, regional and international standardization entity, including IEC principally through the national committees in the countries of our members.

In 2007, CANENA conducted a survey of its members, which now number more than 280 individuals. The purpose of the survey was to assess member attitudes on the present value and importance of the process that has now resulted in harmonization of sixty-nine electro-technical standards, and the importance of regional cooperation in standardization now and in the future. The responses to the survey revealed many things. Most enlightening, the importance of regionally harmonized standards has grown significantly over the past five-years and is seen as "extremely important" by a large majority in the upcoming five-years. The recent trend toward more CANENA work programs based on IEC standards was reported as necessary for CANENA to continue to be successful in the future. CANENA's role with respect to IEC standards is at the technical level and can be identified in three categories: developing regionally harmonized deviations when adopting IEC standards; facilitating sector specific dialogue regarding regional requirements for consideration by the National Committees participating in IEC; and in accomplishing the first two, helping to define the controversial concept of "global relevance" in certain terms.

The survey also confirmed the hard work of our Technical Harmonization Committees (THC) and our participating Standards Development Organizations over the past three years. Improved procedures, improved THC leadership and member participation were all reported as key improvements during the period. Overall, the relevance of the CANENA process was seen as increasing.

The theme of the 2008 CANENA Annual Council Meeting in Cancun, Mexico, "Market Access- The Role of Harmonized Standards", focused on the value created by having harmonized standards in place. Keynote speakers included a representative from the U.S. Department of Commerce, CANAME-Mexico's electro-industry manufacturer's association, ICONTEC-Colombia's National Standardization Body, including the participation of the IEC Vice President Mr. Frank Kitzantides. Each provided different viewpoints on the expected value of harmonized standards and the ensuing discussion brought out a wide spectrum of actual value that has already been created.

A series of seminars will be conducted by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) through a U.S. government grant intended to promote the value of electro-technical standardization, and trade, in the region. CANENA has been invited to participate. The seminars will take place in nine countries including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Colombia and Peru over a period of three years. This activity is precisely what is needed to help deliver the full benefits of the harmonization that we have all worked so hard to achieve. The very purpose and vision of the CANENA process since the beginning has been to help unite our regional markets through harmonized standards that reflect our common infrastructure.

The CANENA process offers the unique opportunity for countries of all sizes to benefit from the experiences of those that have supplied reliable products to the markets for decades. No nation is asked, or required to just take the standards on faith, but to participate in the very economical regional process to the degree that will ensure each country its own national self-determination.

CANENA is not a body that directly markets the results of the work it facilitates. That is the work for trading partners in the markets. We do however believe strongly in the value of what our process accomplishes and we openly invite new members from more countries to explore our process and how it can be best employed to meet each member's standardization objectives.

Thank you once again for inviting CANENA to participate in this SMB meeting. CANENA continues to value the relationship we have with IEC and its national committees.