



Consejo de Armonización de Normas Electrotecnicas de las Naciones en las Americas  
Council for Harmonization of Electrotechnical Standards of the Nations in the Americas

## **83<sup>nd</sup> IEC General Meeting Shanghai, 21-25 October 2019**

On behalf of the members of CANENA, serving the needs of residential, commercial and industrial customers consuming over 4,735 terawatt-hours of electricity, thank you for your kind invitation to attend the IEC Council and SMB meeting and to be held in Shanghai, China, to provide a written update on our member activities this past year.

The 2019 CANENA Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on February 27-28 in Mexico City. With NAFTA 2.0 negotiations ending and the Presidential election of Andrés Manuel López Obrado, presented a unique opportunity to educate the incoming administration of the value CANENA provides as a forum for electrotechnical safety standard harmonization discussions. Major topics throughout the AGM were focus on the emerging challenges facing CANENA members regarding the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA).

### **Key Takeaways:**

- 1. CHALLENGES REGARDING THE USA, MEXICO AND CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA).** CANENA President Julian Yarza provided the keynote address which focused on the new challenges soon to confront the electrical industry as well as the region's Standards Developing Organizations (SDO). The new approach taken in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement Technical to Barriers to Trade Chapter, with Mexico being the first country to ratify the new trade deal, more closely aligns with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). President Yarza recognizes that the USMCA offers more detailed guidance on identifying and applying international standards, guides, or recommendations, than its predecessor by requiring each party to apply the WTO TBT Committee Decision on International Standards. The significance of this reference is that US-Mexico-Canada domiciled standards development organizations are considered by the governments of each of the trading partners as international standards developers. This new approach for overcoming technical barriers in regional commerce is extended to US-Mexico-Canada conformity assessment systems.

The 2019 CANENA AGM program held several sessions to discuss the challenges posed by the USMCA. The "CANENA's APPROACH IN REGARDS OF A NEW FRAMEWORK – USMCA's Discussion Panel, moderated by - Edgar UBBELOHDE (Treasurer, World Energy Council), Craig UPDYKE (Director, Trade and Commercial Affairs – NEMA), Gurvinder CHOPRA (Vice President, Standards and Regulation – EFC) and Juan ROSALES (Head of Regulatory Intelligence of Mabe and Council

Member of CANAME). In this panel, members of the industry proclaimed that the North American Electrical Industry has found a place in CANENA to discuss strategies and positions related with Technical Standardization and their social and economic impact in Mexico, Canada and the United States. During USMCA's negotiations, the North American Industry reached consensus on 3 strategic actions: (1) Promote and facilitate market access for electrotechnical products, (2) Reduce business costs and (3) Improve global competitiveness of the electro industry and their workers. Regarding the three strategic actions, it's clear that keys to their success depends on maintaining an international approach regarding electrotechnical harmonization activities using international standards and implementing mutual recognition agreements or acceptance of conformity assessment results from nationally accredited conformity assessment bodies.

- CANENA'S ROLE IN THE NEW REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE:** A break out session was facilitated by Svetlana ULEMEK (CANENA's Member-at-Large, USA), Guy BENJAMIN (CANENA's CANADA Vice President) and Juan ROSALES (CANENA's Mexico Vice President), focusing on relevant aspects for the electrotechnical industry, such as: accelerated product innovations, electrotechnical safety convergences, evolving regional and global trade patterns and the increase interdependence among countries. The session confirmed the critical role of standardization as the vehicle to bring certainty, safety, efficiency and bolster trade facilitation. Having as one of its main questions, the facilitators asked: "Where CANENA Should focus?" Participants asked CANENA to embrace the concept of a more collaborative process, one capable of adapting and improving its procedures to match member's expectations. The session proved to be an excellent venue to listen to the industry and its stakeholders, hearing firsthand solutions for addressing emerging technologies. Another key concept posed by participants to ensure the sustainability of CANENA's role is quantifying a value proposition to attract interested parties to invest time, money and knowledge in the CANENA's process. A point underlined by participants is the fostering of electrotechnical discussion with governmental authorities and agencies to add value to CANENA's standards efforts.

## **Goals and Strategic Objectives for the Coming Year**

**Future Direction of CANENA Looking Bright:** As a result of its first 25 years of operation, CANENA's portfolio consists of ninety-eight (98) harmonized, electrotechnical standards. Regional harmonization of electrotechnical safety standards, undertaken in support of the North American Free Trade Agreement has now been accomplished. Manufacturer, product standard developer, certification and testing organization and end-users alike are realizing long-term economic benefits of harmonized standards and now wish to advance CANENA as a premier player in the highly competitive standards arena. However, to keep a regional relevance, it's important than CANENA keep improving its processes to bring not only faster, but valuable benefits to its members and work as a vehicle to resolve regional policy needs of its members when appropriate.

### Issues, Barriers, Concerns or Opportunities

**28<sup>th</sup> CANENA Meeting:** CANENA's Council has decided to hold its conference on a bi-annual basis to make more efficient use of its limited resources. CANENA welcomes the IEC to participate at its 28th CANENA Biannual Meeting, to be held in February 2021 in Mexico City. The reasoning for selecting Mexico City as the meeting venue is its proximity to regulatory agencies and world class meeting facilities. We greatly value the close relationship our Council enjoys with IEC and are always open to exploring greater areas of cooperation.

CANENA is a volunteer-based non-profit organization focused on electrotechnical standards harmonization activities within the Americas, helping to facilitate market entry in support of trade. 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, installation codes and other technical requirements in the countries of our members. Membership in CANENA is individual, by company or industry association 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 SDOs. 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 towards acting in a complementary manner with each official national, regional and international standardization entity. To obtain more information about CANENA, go to [www.CANENA.org](http://www.CANENA.org). To view CANENA's technical programs, request for new harmonization project request and published standards list, go to <https://www.canena.org/standards-development/published-standards/>.

Thank you once again for inviting CANENA to participate in the IEC 2019 General Assembly. To obtain a copy of CANENA's most recent newsletter, click on the following link: <https://www.canena.org/canena-connects/>

Sincerely,



Joel Solis  
**Secretary General**