Message from the Director General, Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA)

In the past consumers have indicated need for businesses to offer them goods and services which are fairly priced and performed as intended. In the past people expect their governments to grow the country in terms of economy and welfare. In the past there were limited numbers of non-government organisations (NGOs) with specific target group and limited funds.

All above has changed when we were rudely awaken by reports about the changing climate regime, inaccessibility to nutritious food, poor or least developed countries lagging in economic growth and children in these countries being forced into labour and degradation of our natural resources. All these in the name of progress. Businesses, governments, labours, consumers and NGOs have assumed or forced to take up additional and different roles.

We have begun to demand or at least expect the businesses, governments and NGOs to act proactively so that the growth of the country does not take place at the expense of our values, society and the environment.

In order to control and regulate (causes of environmental destruction / degradation, unfair business practices and causes of social harm), governments have developed and enacted laws and regulations. Nevertheless, there are still unscrupulous organisations adamant not to change their unethical, inconsiderate and irresponsible ways.

Then, the roles of consumer / general public to drive the changes in organisations to fulfil their responsibilities towards society and the environment where they operate, becomes crucial. But how will organisations operate in a socially responsible manner? What are the guidelines?

The Department of Standards Malaysia or STANDARDS MALAYSIA is an agency under the ambit of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) representing Malaysia in the development of a guidance standard on social responsibility or SR. The SR guidance standard is an ISO standard and Malaysia (through STANDARDS MALAYSIA) is represented by the representatives from the consumers, government, civil society and the industry. The standard which will be known as ISO 26000 is intended for use by organizations of all types, in both public and private sectors, in developed and developing countries. The standard will emphasis core issues like environment, human rights, consumer issues and organisational governance. The guidance standards (ISO 26000) is scheduled to be published in 2008 and along with other relevant standards already available in Malaysia (Malaysian Standards), STANDARDS MALAYSIA hopes that this will really contribute in enhancing the quality of life of Malaysians and ensure that ethics and social responsibility as the underlying principles of economic growth in Malaysia and the world.

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