

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**BETWEEN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION**  
**AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION**  
**IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Acknowledging that it is the role of governments and inter-governmental organizations, together with representative organizations of employers and workers, to set and supervise obligations and commitments, including those relating to rights at work, employment promotion, social protection, and social dialogue, which inform the field of social responsibility (“SR”);

Recognizing that the International Labour Organization (“ILO”) is the internationally-recognized, representative body competent to establish and supervise international labour standards, relating notably to rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue (“international labour standards”), and has also developed instruments for the voluntary use of, *inter alia*, enterprises and other organizations, such as the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems;

Considering that the International Organization for Standardization (“ISO”) as a non-governmental organization with a network of national standards institutes from 148 countries, has decided to develop an International Standard in the field of social responsibility;

and

Noting that it is in the interest of ILO and ISO to establish an agreement to assist in governing their consultations and cooperation in the area of social responsibility;

The ILO and the ISO (the “Parties”) *hereby agree* as follows:

Article 1  
Purpose and scope

- 1.1 **Purpose:** The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish between the Parties cooperation with a view to ensuring that any ISO International Standard in the field of SR, and any ISO activities relating thereto, are consistent with and complement the application of international labour standards world-wide, including fundamental rights at work;
- 1.2 **Proviso:** As provided below, ILO cooperation is subject to ISO decisions respecting all the provisions of Article 2, including that, in the ISO SR standards development process, any committee or enquiry draft or final draft International Standard (CD, DIS, FDIS) will not be circulated for vote and/or comment before seeking prior full and formal backing by the ILO as to all elements relating to issues involving ILO’s mandate, including but not

limited to the field of international labour standards and practices (“ILO issues”) and, in the event ILO does not provide such backing, communicating ILO’s comments to all statutory ISO members, to the D-liaison organisations in the ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility (“SR Working Group” or “WG”) and to the Technical Management Board.

- 1.3 **Scope:** The areas of cooperation between the Parties will include the development of any ISO International Standard in the field of SR; any activities and publications for the promotion, support, evaluation and approval of any published ISO International Standard on SR, and any periodic review of such ISO International Standard for confirmation, revision, or withdrawal. This cooperation will encompass any issues involving ILO’s mandate, including but not limited to international labour standards and the interpretation and application of ILO instruments.

## Article 2 Understandings

The Parties agree:

- 2.1 That any guidance or other ISO International Standard to be developed in the area of social responsibility, which implicates ILO issues will be fully consistent with the object and purpose of the provisions of international labour standards incorporated in ILO instruments, and their interpretation by the competent bodies of the ILO and in no way detract from the provisions of those standards, and the ISO procedures relating to development of any such Standard will provide for the following:
  - 2.1.1 Prior to circulation for review within the SR Working Group or any of its Task Groups, any elements of any proposed text which implicate ILO issues will be identified in consultation between the Parties, and shall be the subject of ILO review and/or comment, to be provided in a timely fashion, and, at ILO’s request, ILO comments will be circulated together with such elements within the WG or Task Group concerned;
  - 2.1.2 Any committee or enquiry draft or final draft International Standard (CD, DIS, FDIS) will be the subject of a pre-circulation process seeking the full and formal backing of the ILO relating to any of the elements in such draft Standard that implicate ILO issues prior to circulation for vote and/or comment of any such draft Standard (CD, DIS, FDIS); and
  - 2.1.3 In the event ILO does not provide the backing referred to in paragraph 2.1.2, ILO’s comments on such draft Standard will be circulated, together with the draft Standard (CD, DIS, FDIS), to all statutory ISO members, to the D-liaison organisations in the SR Working Group and to the Technical Management Board prior to submission to a vote by any ISO body;
- 2.2 That any ISO activities and/or publications for the promotion, support, evaluation and approval of any published ISO International Standard on SR, insofar as they implicate ILO issues, will:

- 2.2.1 Facilitate greater awareness and wider observance of international labour standards in accordance with their object and purpose, and their interpretation by the competent bodies of the ILO;
- 2.2.2 Complement the role of governments in ensuring compliance with international labour standards; and
- 2.2.3 Permit application without discrimination as to type and size of all concerned;
- 2.3 That international labour standards adopted by the ILO will take priority in any case of conflict in the context of development, and of any promotion, support, evaluation and approval, or periodic review of any ISO International Standard in the field of SR, as well as in any case of conflict involving ILO issues with any private initiative with which ISO may collaborate in the context of that Standard;
- 2.4 That any ISO activities in the field of social responsibility will avoid addressing ILO issues that should only be resolved through representative political or legal processes, and which the Parties agree to identify in consultation.

### Article 3 Exchange of information

The ILO and the ISO shall arrange for the exchange of information, publications and documents and shall inform each other of forthcoming meetings as necessary to achieve the objectives of this Agreement.

### Article 4 Mutual consultation

The ILO and the ISO will maintain regular consultations as necessary on activities of common interest for the purpose of furthering the mutual achievement of this Agreement.

### Article 5 Participation

The Parties agree that ISO will provide, within the Working Group on SR including all of its subgroups, and all other ISO bodies concerned with any ISO International Standard in the field of SR, for full participation by the ILO and, through the appropriate ISO mechanisms, by its tri-partite constituency, at ILO's request.

### Article 6 Specific areas of cooperation in the development of any ISO International Standard in the field of social responsibility

The Parties agree:

- 6.1 That ISO will ensure, in the development of any ISO Standard in the field of SR, that the provisions of ILO instruments serve as the authoritative and definitive source of reference, and minimum base line for any elements which relate to international labour standards;

- 6.2 That ILO, by and through its tri-partite constituents (workers, employers, Governments), inform and guide the development of any elements of an ISO standard which implicate ILO issues, including international labour standards, by the sharing of expertise in relation to ILO instruments, including through the tripartite process by which they have been developed and are applied;
- 6.3 That working procedures and mechanisms be definitively established prior to commencement of development of any International Standard in the field of SR to ensure the effective implementation of this Article and the provisions of Articles 1.2 and 2.1.

#### Article 7

##### Specific areas of cooperation in the event of development of any International Standard in the field of social responsibility

In the event of development of any ISO International Standard or any other deliverable in the field of SR involving ILO issues, including international labour standards and practices, the Parties agree:

- 7.1 That they will conduct ongoing consultation and cooperation and adopt the necessary measures to implement the understandings of Article 2 in the context of any ISO activities and/or publications related to the promotion, support, evaluation and approval of any published ISO International Standard on SR, insofar as they implicate ILO issues; and
- 7.2 That they will apply the provisions of this Agreement, in particular Articles 2, 5 and 6, *mutatis mutandis* in the context of any periodic review of any International Standard in the field of SR, including in any related processes of confirmation, revision or withdrawal of any such Standard.

#### Article 8

##### Working arrangements

The Director-General of the ILO and the Secretary-General of the ISO, or their duly-mandated representatives, may make appropriate working arrangements for the implementation of the provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding.

#### Article 9

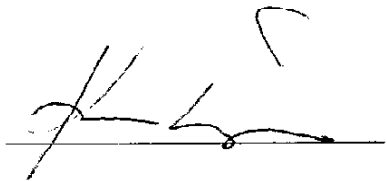
##### Other provisions

The Parties agree that:

- 9.1 ILO assistance or participation provided in this Agreement in any ISO process or activity relating to development, promotion, support, evaluation and approval, or review of any International Standard in the field of SR does not imply the specific endorsement by ILO of that ISO International Standard or any other ISO product or activity.
- 9.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to permit either party to use or permit to use the logo of the other party without obtaining the other's prior written consent.

Article 10

- 10.1 This Agreement shall enter into force upon the date of signature by duly-authorized representatives of the Parties.
- 10.2 The Parties shall make every effort to resolve amicably by direct informal consultations any disagreement or dispute which may arise concerning the commitments made under this Agreement.
- 10.3 In the event the Parties define other mechanisms of cooperation under Articles 6 and 7 of this Agreement, or other areas of cooperation, they shall be specified in a separate document to be annexed as an integral part of this MOU.
- 10.4 Termination of this Memorandum of Understanding may occur at any time subject to 90 days advance written notification.
- 10.5 The relevant constituent bodies of each of the Parties shall be informed of this Memorandum of Understanding.



Kari Tapiola  
Executive Director  
on behalf of the Director-General



Kevin McKinley  
Deputy Secretary-General  
on behalf of the ISO Secretary-General

Date 4/3/05

Date

09 March, 2005