

## Gorbachev opens ISO forum on standards for vehicle of the future

Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet statesman and winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace, was among the distinguished guests speaking at a high-level forum of automobile industry leaders organized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on 2 December in 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland, at the invitation of the ISO President for 2011-2012, Dr. Boris Aleshin.

With more than a billion estimated road vehicles in use worldwide, if the automotive sector uses state-of-the-art standards for aspects such as safety, performance, impact on the environment, and requirements for supply chain partners, this can have an enormous impact on all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, environmental and economic.

The ISO President's Forum provided a unique opportunity for the automotive industry to engage with ISO and other standards developing organizations, and discuss the needs and priorities for International Standards in the sector in the coming years.

Some 35 automobile industry leaders from companies such as Audi, Daimler, Renault, Volkswagen, and Volvo provided direct input on what standards are needed to meet the challenges of the industry and those of its customers and stakeholders. At least eight standards developing organizations were represented at the Forum.

As the event's sponsor and host, ISO President Dr. Boris Aleshin highlighted the objectives of the Forum: "Past and current successes should not allow us to fall into the trap of complacency. We can always do better and this is why ISO has invited you here for this rather unique event."

In his opening remarks, Mr. Gorbachev said that "Leaders in the automotive industry are now demonstrating greater understanding than simply developing the sector in a linear manner, i.e. increasing productivity and developing new markets that may lead to a dead end."

He pointed out that 95 % of cars today run on oil. Mr. Gorbachev said that the car industry must continue their search for technical solutions to make cars lighter, more aerodynamic, and environmentally friendly, and to make the factories producing them more compact and cleaner.

The former President of the Soviet Union pointed out that the automobile industry has always been an innovative sector and was among the first to demonstrate social accountability through measures such as collective agreements with unions, medical and social programmes, etc, adding, "Now, it is time to demonstrate environmental responsibility. Ultimately, everyone will benefit."

In conclusion, Mr. Gorbachev said: "We must all embrace the notion that we are only nature's guests, rather than its managers or masters. If we understand this, then we will find our way toward a new development model that will take shape in conjunction with nature, not in a race of consumerism. I am certain that although it is difficult, it can be done. I am an optimist."

Driving the main focus of the discussions was how International Standards can support the development of "the car of the future". The workshop was facilitated by the highly-respected industry leader Richard Parry-Jones, former Vice President (Global Product Development), and Chief Technical Officer at Ford Motor Company until his retirement in 2007. Through a series of discussions and roundtable panels, the workshop explored a number of related topics, including trends in urban mobility; congestion and intelligent transport; safety as a strategic issue; and environment and sustainability issues.

Among the recommendations to emerge from the debate were standardization priorities which included:

- International Standards supporting electrification of the vehicle
- Connectivity and communications, including applications-based data and communications; and
- Key performance measures that are important to customers and regulators, such as indicators of environmental, energy and active safety performance.

In addition, there was overall agreement on key areas of improvement for the standards-setting process, including:

1. Global standards are needed (not regional ones) – a new approach and new methods of cooperation and fora are required, both for standards bodies and industry. Past approaches will not work.
2. A holistic, systems-wide approach is needed with all key stakeholders engaged to capture optimal system performance

3. Speed to shape regulation rather than follow it, to reassure customers and drive scale. Mapping of key processes and elimination of time wastage in the current process is essential.
4. Achieve better balance between standards that can promote efficiency and those that can stifle innovation. Consider partitioning standards according to appropriate areas of focus, such as:
  - Performance
  - Interfaces
  - Architecture.

In concluding the Forum, Rob Steele, ISO Secretary-General, remarked: "Industry has to tell standardizers what it needs and I appreciate the feedback provided today. I would also welcome the opportunity for even greater dialogue. Let's take today's output as a starting point. A forum for further exchanges would be useful between standardizers and industry experts to reach agreement on broader issues – and, most importantly, on how best to take action!"