



PRESS RELEASE

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New Plan to Help Afghan Goods Reach International Markets

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | MARCH 30, 2011 – The Afghan National Standards Authority (ANSA) officially launched its Strategic Plan in Kabul today to unveil how the agency will build Afghanistan's quality infrastructure over the next five years. Second Vice President H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili and U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry attended the event with other Afghan and U.S. government officials.

Standards and technical regulations are an important part of international trade because they assure consumers in domestic and international markets that Afghan goods are of sufficient quality. A quality infrastructure allows buyers to trust that they are getting what they expect from a foreign trader without having to inspect the final product. Afghanistan's compliance with internationally recognized quality and safety standards is expected to make it much easier for Afghan producers to export their products. The Strategic Plan also provides guidance on how donors can assist ANSA's efforts.

VP Khalili applauded the proposal saying, "Adhering to quality standards helps Afghan products compete in international markets. Standards also protect Afghan people from serious dangers of low-quality goods imported from other countries."

USAID supports ANSA's efforts through its Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAF) project. Specific assistance includes building the capacity of ANSA staff, assisting in the development of the Strategic Plan, developing a reference handbook, and procuring scientific laboratory equipment. During the ceremony today, ANSA introduced the Strategic Plan and handbook and Ambassador Eikenberry formally presented ANSA with \$100,000 worth of laboratory equipment donated by the Fluke Corporation of Seattle, Washington.

"We pledge that USAID will continue to play an important role in developing and strengthening Afghanistan's export sector," said Ambassador Eikenberry. "We must continue to work together to make the Afghan private sector more competitive. While this country faces many challenges, I am confident that our efforts will be rewarded by the emergence of Afghan products in new markets."

Product standards build international confidence in Afghanistan's products and services. Well enforced standards provide a vital link to global trade, market access, and export competitiveness as they contribute to consumer confidence in product safety, product quality, and environmental protection.

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