S. Joe Bhatia President and CEO American National Standards Institute	**National Consumer Day** New Delhi, India – December 21, 2007 Remarks from ANSI *1,474 words, approximately 11.8 minutes*

Good morning everyone. Thank you for that kind introduction.

I am honored to join Honorable Minister Shri Sharad Pawar as we come together to celebrate National Consumer Day.

(*pause*)

Ever since I emigrated to the U.S. in 1964, I've routinely traveled back to India to visit family and friends as well as for business purposes. In the 1990s, I launched UL's initial operation in Bangalore with a staff of two. This eventually evolved into offices in many locations in India serving hundreds of manufacturers in dozens of industry sectors.

Earlier this year, I traveled to India to represent ANSI and launch a dialogue that led to the development of a tripartite agreement with CII and BIS that will become official later today.

ANSI recognizes India as one of our key neighbors in the global village.

(pause)

For those of you who may not know about the Institute, we are the coordinator of the U.S. private-sector led and public sector-supported voluntary consensus standards and conformity assessment system. We speak as the U.S. voice in standards and compliance forums around the globe. And, through our network of members, we represent the interests of more than 125,000 companies and 3.5 million professionals worldwide.

Protecting the safety of consumers is of paramount importance to the Institute.   It is a key element of our mission – and we are committed to its implementation.

(*pause*)

Anyone who has picked up a newspaper in the past several months realizes that consumer safety issues are causing a global crisis of confidence. Some suppliers are not complying with the rigorous standards and regulations that have been established to keep the citizens of our global village safe.

You may have heard that toy safety has received great attention in the United States this year. The toy industry asked ANSI to work with them to develop a long term solution that will reinforce the consumer product safety system and bolster the integrity of the global supply chain.

Consumers have the right to expect that their children's toys are safe. The same expectation should hold true for any product they buy . . . from ladders to laptop batteries, from appliances in their kitchens to the latest audio and entertainment devices in their family rooms

For all of these products, consumers count on industry to work in partnership with government to uphold the highest possible level of safety.

(pause)

When the public and private sectors work together, we can develop standards and compliance-based solutions to address current and emerging priorities . . . . with a <u>minimum</u> of overlap and duplication.

In the United States, for example, our American National Standards address a broad spectrum of activities . . . . from our very first standard on pipe threads to work that is underway today to meet emerging needs in areas ranging from the safety of toys, to the service industry to aging populations and those with disabilities.

Standards are important for everyone because they influence the safety, design and manufacture of many products worldwide.

Standards are not only developed in response to injuries, hazards or other identified safety risks, but more often in a proactive manner to prevent injuries from known hazards.

Some areas that come to mind where voluntary standards have especially made a difference in enhancing consumer safety include:

– protective headgear for bicycles, inline skates, and other athletic gear for both children and adults;
– our National Electric Code and safety criteria for electrical appliances;
– safety for home appliances such as gas water heaters and corded window coverings;
– accessibility criteria for public buildings.

To create a safer consumer environment . . . .

- we need to make <u>more efficient use</u> of the standards and conformity assessment resources that are already in place . . . and we need to identify <u>every</u> gap that exists.

- we also need to bring to bear <u>new human and financial resources</u> that can strengthen existing systems and satisfy the identified needs.

(pause)

A partnership between industry, government and consumers must exist . . . . and openness, balance and consensus must serve as the pillars that give this partnership strength.

Everyone in the supply chain – from manufacturer to government regulator to retailer to consumer – will have a role to play.

What are the steps to get there?

Well, it's often said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

In our case, building consumer awareness of the importance of standards is that first step.

(pause)

Twenty one years ago, the Government of India launched the Consumer Protection Act to establish consumer councils and other authorities to help manage and settle concerns, complaints, and disputes. We gather today to recognize the success of this Act, and to acknowledge the importance of consumer education and empowerment.

Our own system in the United States is only a few years older. The Consumer Product Safety Act of 1972 created an independent federal agency – the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), to protect the public from unsafe goods by issuing recalls and monitoring potential safety and quality concerns.

The U.S. government relies heavily upon private-sector voluntary standards and conformity assessment programs to ensure the safety of its citizens. In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Act mandates that if a

voluntary standard exists, by law, CPSC may issue a mandatory standard only when the voluntary standard will not eliminate or adequately reduce the risk of injury or death.

Over the last fifteen years, the private sector and CPSC have worked in partnership to develop more than 300 voluntary standards, while issuing only 35 mandatory rules… almost a nine-to-one ratio. CPSC staffers have repeatedly told us that our voluntary efforts are more efficient and less costly to implement than mandatory efforts.

Consumer engagement is essential for the development of a voluntary standards safety system.

This system must include more than just standards . . . it must also draw from a toolbox of private-sector conformity assessment resources for both regulatory and non-regulatory purposes.

Testing and inspection . . . systems auditing . . . accredited certification programs . . . subcontractor and sub-subcontractor assessment . . . and – of course – education and training.

(*pause*)

ANSI has considerable experience with educating and engaging disparate groups for the development of standards and the related compliance programs.

In the past five years, we have launched a number of new activities to address topics ranging from homeland security to alternative energies. In each of these areas of work, the consumer voice has been – and will continue to be – a vitally important component.

The Homeland Security Standards Panel was created in 2003 in conjunction with our support of the 9-11 Commission following the terror attacks in New York City and Washington, DC.

This was followed one year later by the Nanotechnology Standards Panel and, subsequently, a U.S. coordination group to interface with the related ISO and IEC technical committees.

The Healthcare Information Technology Standards Panel, formed in late 2005, is bringing us closer and closer to realizing electronic health records for every American.

In the fall of 2006, ANSI launched a panel to address the need for standards in the area of identity theft prevention and ID management. According to Business Standard, as many as one out of 100 Indian people are victims of identity theft. As U.S. firms outsource critical services that entail the transfer of personal and

financial data, the identity theft problem crosses national borders. We must do what we can to stop identity theft on an international scale, not just within our respective countries.

This year, we added new activities to address the domestic and international trade discussions relating to biofuels, and the implications of chemical regulations.

Biotechnology, energy management and the global supply chain are new issues on our horizon.

Engagement is critical. Experience has shown us what can happen when a key stakeholder group – such as consumers – is not at the table when decisions regarding the standards and conformity assessment activities that impact them are being made.

A voluntary standardization system that engages consumers, industry and government empowers consumers by not only protecting their safety, but also providing them with a wider array of choices in the marketplace . . . and information that will support their purchase decisions.

(pause)

The discussions that we launch today can identify opportunities for us to recommend new standards and conformity assessment programs as solutions for consumer issues.

I challenge you – as representatives of industry and government – to not only identify the priority initiatives that must be addressed, but also the resources that are needed and the timelines that must be met.

Let's share and learn from our respective experiences in the U.S. and India.

And let's work together as neighbors in the global village.

ANSI – and the federation of members that we represent – is pleased to be engaged with you.

Thank you!