



APEC Business Advisory Council
Australia



PASC – ABAC DIALOGUE

Presentation to PASC

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APEC Business Council...

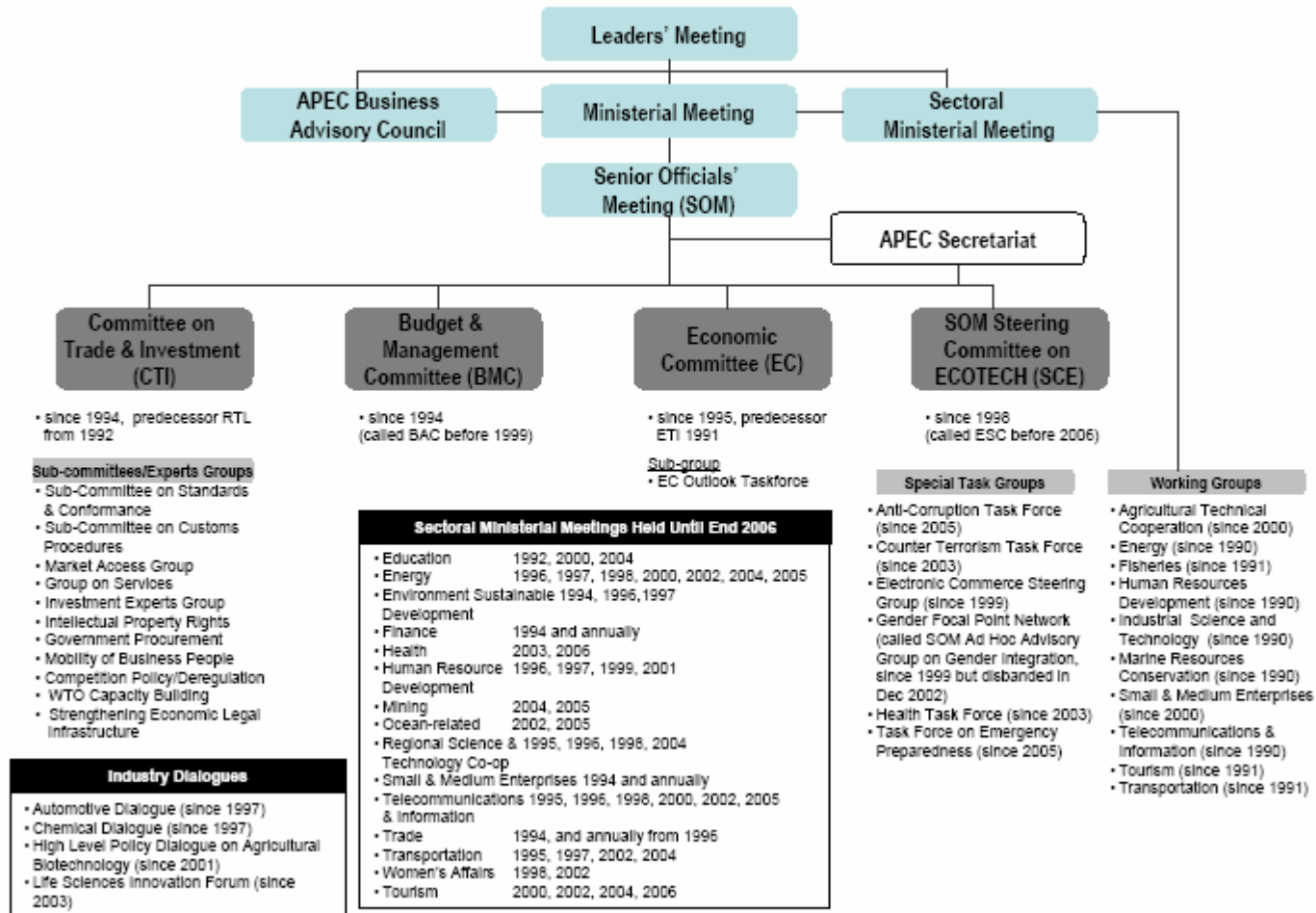
- APEC and its goals
free trade by 2010 for developed economies & 2020 for developing economies
- ABAC and how it operates

APEC Business Council

- Established by APEC Leaders in November 1995
- Permanent body to provide an independent business perspective within the APEC process
- Sole non-government entity that has an official role and formal dialogue with the leaders of APEC economies each year
- Comprises three business representatives from each APEC economy
- Representatives are appointed by Leaders of each economy
- Meet four times per year and once with the Leaders

ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION

April 2007



Recommendations to APEC Leaders 2006...

13 recommendations one of which is –

**Strengthen Standards Organisations and Regulatory
Dialogue**

Standards in the APEC Region...

- WTO and Regional and Free Trade Agreements provide frameworks to encourage trade, but without effective standardisation in the APEC Region, trade will always be restricted and economies and business cannot prosper to their greatest potential.
 - Free Trade Agreements are the political reality
 - Standards harmonisation/alignment/compatibility are the commercial reality

Benefits of standardisation for business...

- ABAC has long recognised the fundamental importance of effective uniformity in standards regulation to:
 - Lower design and other trade costs
 - Make tendering and trade easier
 - Allow business transactions to take place using a common language
 - Ensure regulations and conformance requirements are transparent
 - Encourage technology transfer
 - Protect intellectual property

Standards are critical in all sectors...

- Standards increasingly affect all areas of economies:
 - Manufacturing and technological development
 - Management
 - Services such as financial, educational and health
 - Government
 - Security
 - Agriculture and food production
 - The environment

The Goal...

- The goal is effective :
 - Development and adoption of compatible international standards
 - Conformity assessment
 - Certification and market surveillance
- in all APEC economies.

Standardisation across the Region is inhibited by...

- Varying stages of economic development and consequent resource constraints
- Varying participation in international standards processes
- Varying degrees of awareness of the contribution of standards by governments, industry and the public
- The need for capacity building

ABAC...

- In 2005 ABAC commissioned a report to provide ideas for a forward agenda for standardisation in the Region.
- In November 2006 ABAC sent a survey to National Standards Bodies throughout the Region.
- Responses were due 25 January 2007.
- 18 responses have been received and results have been compiled.
- The aim of the survey was to identify difficulties confronting APEC economies in aligning standards.

Survey Results...

- **The results of the survey responses are briefly summarised in the circulated paper and will be addressed in greater detail later in this session.**
- It is clear that significant differences exist between levels of standardisation.
 - **Staffing** of National Standards Bodies ranges from 2 to 250
 - The **number of standards** ranges from 41 to 25 654.
- It is also clear that there is a desire to move toward
 - **greater regional collaboration,**
 - All economies answered yes when asked if they would like to see more opportunities for collaboration.
 - **greater international harmonisation.**
 - All but 2 economies advised that they have a target to align national standards to international standards.
 - The period of time anticipated for this target ranged between 2 and 5 years.

The Messages...

Some clear messages emerge:

- There is interest in potential benefits of alignment with international standards as a concept
- However on a case by case basis, each economy must explore –
 - relevance
 - usefulness
 - capacity to participate and influence
- Advantages are seen in working cooperatively in international fora and in regional exchanges for training and information.

Areas for Discussion...

- The survey results highlight the need for:
 - Developing a **program of capacity building** to strengthen standards structures where necessary
 - Developing a **program to raise awareness** of the role and importance of standardisation to regional prosperity
 - **Greater regional collaboration**
 - **Greater harmonisation** with international standards
 - **Identification of key areas** that may be suitable for regional agreement for adoption of international standards.

Thank you

on behalf of ABAC, we look forward to
progressing these issues with you