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| **S. Joe Bhatia**  President and CEO  American National Standards Institute | Opening Remarks  Standards Alliance Autos Workshop  9am Friday, April 22, 2016  Guayaquil, Ecuador COPANT GA |

Good morning, everyone. My name is Joe Bhatia, and I am president and CEO of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). It is my pleasure to be here today.

I’d like to welcome our distinguished guests here today, especially: Marcus Jadotte, assistant secretary for industry and analysis with the U.S. Department of Commerce; Governor Matt Blunt, president of the American Automotive Policy Council (AAPC); and César Eduardo Díaz Guevara, newly appointed executive director of the Ecuadorian Service for Standardization (INEN). We are honored to have you all join us here today.

For those of you who don’t know us, ANSI is a non-profit organization that coordinates the U.S. private sector standards and conformance system – a system that relies upon close cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors.

ANSI is the U.S. member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and via our U.S. National Committee, to the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). We also participate actively as a U.S. representative to the Pacific Area Standards Congress (PASC) and to the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), a union of 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere. By the way, I have the privilege of serving as COPANT’s first ever U.S. president. And for more than twenty years, ANSI has had a collaborative dialogue with the European Standards Organizations, or ESOs, including CEN, CENELEC, and ETSI… a dialogue which has evolved to include the European Commission in recent years.

We represent thousands of ANSI member companies, organizations, and individuals, who rely upon standards and conformance to increase efficiency, demonstrate quality, improve competitiveness, and foster international commerce.

For now, I’d like to provide you with some background on ANSI’s work in the area of international development, specifically as it relates to a project known as the Standards Alliance.

The Standards Alliance is a public-private partnership between ANSI and USAID. The project started in 2013, and will run for at least 5 years. Its overarching goal is to support developing countries as they implement their commitments under the WTO TBT Agreement. Key organizations involved in the program include not only ANSI as the implementing partner and USAID as the funding organization, but also the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) as a strategic partner, cooperating agencies and organizations within each participating country, and subject matter experts from both the public and private sector. The project currently focuses on 10 markets, including the Dominican Republic–Central America (CAFTA-DR) region, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

There is no question that standardization and trade are linked in today’s global market. Dozens of studies from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the World Trade Organization back up the statement with data. In total, 80% of global commodity trade is impacted by standards and conformity assessment programs – nearly $14 trillion in today’s numbers. If we are not all on the same page, the international community – particularly industry – experiences a lot of duplicative effort, and incurs a lot of unnecessary cost in reaching multiple markets.

That’s why Standards Alliance is such an important program, and why continued regional dialogues like today’s will really make a difference going forward. We need to help further understanding of the WTO TBT requirements, and of the nature of globally relevant standards that meet those requirements.

We’re focused on the automotive sector today, which is a huge concern for this region. Public safety and the environment are the big concerns, and the issues have ranged from local difficulties to high-profile global lapses that impact millions of people. In addition, advances in technology, such as crash avoidance technologies, electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles, as well as cybersecurity issues are bringing new opportunities and challenges to the automotive regulatory and standards arena. Today’s workshop will provide an opportunity to exchange information about automotive standards and regulations in the Americas. We want to come away with some ideas about how to reduce these negative concerns on one hand… and on the other hand ensure countries are able to meet their legitimate regulatory- and standards-related goals in the least trade restrictive way.

To help foster a cooperative and integrated discussion, the representatives from U.S., Mexico, and Colombia will present an overview on their regulatory processes. They will also outline some of the chief automotive safety and emissions challenges currently being faced, as well as the regulatory or standards options being considered to address them.

We’re hopeful that presentations will provide a platform for an open dialogue on the automobile sector, create a greater understanding of each other’s systems, and also highlight any next steps for cooperation on these issues under the Standards Alliance.

With that, I’d like to once again thank our hosts, INEN, as well as our co-organizers of the workshop, the Department of Commerce and AAPC, for helping us to shape today’s workshop.

It is my pleasure to introduce assistant secretary Marcus Jadotte, who will provide some additional opening remarks. Of course, Marcus plays a critical role at the U.S. Department of Commerce. But you may not know that he is really qualified to talk to us about cars, too! Before joining Commerce, he worked at NASCAR, the most prominent and exciting U.S. car racing association. Marcus, the floor is yours.

Thank you very much for your attention.