

## FOREWORD

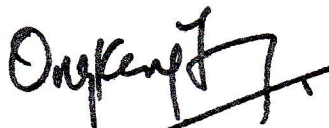
ASEAN Cooperation on Standards and Conformity Assessment is aimed at facilitating the removal of technical barriers to trade in order to the realization of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). Over the past years, the focus of this cooperation was on the alignment of national standards to relevant international standards and the implementation of mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs).

Since 1998, ASEAN cosmetic regulators and cosmetic industry have been working through the Cosmetic Product Working Group (CPWG) of the ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ) to address issues associated with barriers for this sector.

As a result of this collaboration, the Agreement on the ASEAN Harmonized Cosmetic Regulatory Scheme was signed by ASEAN Ministers during the 35<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting on 2 September 2003. This Agreement covers: (i) the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement of Product Registration Approvals for Cosmetic; and (ii) the ASEAN Cosmetic Directive.

To ensure the smooth implementation of the Agreement, seven technical documents were developed which include illustrative list of cosmetic products by category; product registration requirements and procedures; common labelling requirements; a handbook on ingredient listings; common claims guidelines; common import and export requirements; and good manufacturing practice.

The MRAs for conformity assessment as well as the harmonization of standards and technical regulations are an important contribution to the economic integration in ASEAN. The operation of the ASEAN Harmonized Cosmetic Regulatory Scheme will, no doubt, assist regulators in networking for best practices and ensuring safety for consumers. In turn, this will assist the cosmetic industry in reducing the cost of doing business and gaining market access for its products in ASEAN and international markets.



**ONG KENG YONG**  
**Secretary General of ASEAN**