

For the first time, 32 Rwandan industries that meet continental quality standards will receive certificates allowing them to export 72 types of products across Africa without barriers or additional requirements.

The certificates will be issued on March 6, 2026, the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) announced on March 3, during a three-day meeting of the African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) held in Kigali.

The meeting focused on establishing 25 harmonized quality standards for non-woven textiles, textile products, and related materials across the continent. Sixteen African countries were represented.

The initial batch of certificates will go to industries primarily involved in agriculture and value addition, with future rounds covering sectors such as textile weaving, footwear, and other products.

Gatera Emmanuel, Director of Standards Development at RSB, said issuing the certificates would expand markets for Rwandan industries, accelerate collaboration with recipient countries, and promote the “Made in Rwanda” initiative.

He explained: *“This is a deliberate choice to align quality standards, so that if a product is tested and certified in Rwanda, it will not undergo additional testing in the importing country, which often causes delays.”*

ARSO Secretary-General Dr. Hermogene Nsengimana noted that harmonized standards reduce the cost and complexity of multiple laboratory tests, which can otherwise increase expenses for exporters.

Milagrosa Ntombikasiye, representing Eswatini’s National Standards Authority, said much of her country’s products were exported to the European Union due to trade barriers within Africa. She added that these new harmonized standards will facilitate intra-African trade and support the continent’s economic development.

At the close of the meeting, Rwanda announced plans to sign cooperation agreements with Zimbabwe and Congo-Brazzaville to further ease trade with these countries.