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International standards serve as specifications or guidelines established by international bodies to ensure the quality, safety, and efficiency of products, services, and systems. Conformity assessment systems determine whether a product, service, or process complies with specified standards. Standardization, as a broader concept, provides a common language and framework for all sectors, fostering interoperability, efficiency, safety, and overall quality.

International standards and conformity assessment systems form the foundational basis for the policies and regulations that unpin the SDGs. Aspirations to achieve a just energy transition, quality health and education for all, efforts to achieve net zero and addressing the complex, interconnected challenges embedded in the SDGs, cannot be realized without a structured and cohesive international standards framework.

International standards, representing a global consensus of state-of-the-art knowledge and expertise, play a crucial role in guiding policies, fostering innovation, and ensuring the coordination and effectiveness of global efforts. The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), alongside partner institutions like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), are the custodians of this system.

The IEC Global Impact Fund is a proactive initiative advancing the vision of a safer and more efficient world, showcasing the impact of standardization in addressing contemporary social, economic, and environmental challenges. This initiative underscores the importance of technology and quality infrastructure in positively impacting society.

Through a diverse portfolio of projects and collaborative partnerships, the IEC Global Impact Fund actively links and integrates the global standardization framework with the SDGs and the development finance architecture. A call to action is extended to UN Member States, Observers, representatives of UN entities, civil society, and other non-state actors to engage and partner with the international standards system through the Global Impact Fund. This will help to ensure that standards fulfill their ultimate purpose of being harmonious and inclusive in the pursuit of sustainable global development.