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### **BETTER QUALITY TO EMPOWER MSME EXPORTS**

MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian economy and therefore ensuring their competitiveness is critical. As the MSMEs are the strongest drivers of economic development, it becomes imperative to strengthen their ecosystem. The Zero Defect Zero Effect (ZED) initiative is envisioned to enhance MSME competitiveness and transform them as national and international manufacturing champions through better quality management as well as care for the environment. Mr. Khonde Vijay an Eminent Faculty in ZED Certification, during his presentation explained that ZED Certification has three levels: i) Bronze, ii) Silver and iii) Gold. MSMEs can apply for certification at any of the three Levels. The Bronze Certification has 5 parameters, the Silver has 14 parameters and the Gold Certification has 20 parameters respectively that have to be met by MSME units in order to obtain the desired level of certification. He elaborated on all of these parameters that included leadership, occupational safety, quality management, human resource management, energy management among others. Mr. Khonde also explained the different levels of subsidy that the Government of India is offering to the MSME Units in order to be suitably certified. Mr M. K. Meena, Joint Director, MSME DFO Goa, said that apart from quality certification a good infrastructure is also required for the development of the MSME units situated in an industrial estate. He said that in this regard all efforts will be made to provide better infrastructure where ever possible. Mr. D. R. Johari, Assistant Director, MSME DFO, mentioned that ZED Certification will be very important for those MSME units that are looking forward to be vendors to the public sector units (PSU) situated across the country, as this certification would empower the PSUs to choose the right vendor depending on the level of quality that they are enforcing in their units. Mr. P. P. Kulkarni, Assistant Director, MSME DFO Goa, said that ZED certification will be a torch bearer for one to understand the level of quality in an MSME Unit. He elaborated that this certification will be important especially for those MSME Units that are looking forward to sell their products through the Government e Marketplace (GeM) website. Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Goa, commented that ZED Certification would be a certificate of quality issued in India and therefore international trade could also benefit in a great way, as the importing country will be able to gauge the quality standard that each MSME unit has established. Thereby making the process of selecting a suitable supplier easier.

The programme was held on November 16, 2022 at Hotel Laxmi Empire, Margao Goa.