

## *Communiqué*

### **IAF Increases the Value of Accreditation**

#### **IAF Fourteenth Annual Meeting**

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the International Accreditation Forum, Inc. (IAF) was held in the Marriott Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, USA on 9 and 10 November, 2000, and was attended by 107 delegates from 35 economies, representing the 36 Accreditation Body Members, 9 Association Members, 2 Regional Groups of Accreditation Bodies, of IAF and eight government and private organisations interested in the work of IAF.

Members of IAF at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting approved a revised set of rules for the IAF Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MLA), which will require higher standards of performance by accreditation bodies which are admitted to the MLA. The revised rules also include provision for the IAF MLA to be extended to cover Environmental Management Systems, and Product certification in addition to the current Quality Management Systems.

IAF brings to world trade an internationally accepted program for reducing technical barriers to trade. The IAF MLA provides regulators, industry and their customers with a means to ensure that certificates of conformance issued in one country will be accepted in other countries, where the relevant Accreditation Bodies are members of the IAF MLA.

The IAF MLA program includes guidance to both accreditation bodies and certification / registration bodies on the operations of their programs to ensure international acceptance. It also includes regular peer assessments of the members of the MLA to assure the market that all members of the MLA, and the certification / registration bodies accredited by them, continue to comply with IAF rules. Suppliers and customers can be assured that a certificate issued by a body accredited by a member of the IAF MLA has international credibility.

Members directed the Board to take action on proposals to further enhance the integrity of the MLA, and to promote the value of the MLA to governments, regulators, industry and users. A specific set of words to be adopted by accredited bodies claiming the advantages of accreditation by a member of the MLA were agreed.

During the meeting two new members of the IAF MLA, KAN (Komite Akreditasi Nasional of Indonesia) and NAC (National Accreditation Council of Thailand), were admitted to the MLA for Quality Management Systems. The total number of accreditation bodies which are members of the MLA for QMS is now twenty-nine, covering all regions of the world.

Revised versions of the IAF Guidance on the Application of Guides 61 and 62 were approved during the meeting, and further proposed amendments to the IAF Guidance to Guide 62 is currently being considered by members. The revised guidance will come into force on 1 July 2001, and all accreditation body members are required to abide by the enhanced guidance.

The meeting adopted guidance on the transition of certifications from the ISO9000:1994 series of standards to the ISO9001:2000 series, and agreed that the transition of all accredited certificates to the new ISO9001:2000 standard should be completed no later than three years after the date of publication of ISO9001:2000.

IAF, after consultation with both ISO/TC176 and ISO/CASCO, issued guidance on the application of ISO9001:2000, particularly as it applies to the scope statements to be included on accredited certificates issued under the new standard. The IAF guidance is available for downloading from the IAF web site.

IAF adopted a policy on industry specific sector schemes of conformity assessment which will provide industries which see the need for requirements that go beyond the requirements in ISO standards to take advantage of the IAF international program for the benefit of the industry and its customers.

All the above changes in IAF Procedures and Guidance documents are intended to ensure that certificates of conformity issued by certification / registration bodies accredited by members of the IAF MLA will be accepted as having the highest credibility throughout the world, will facilitate trade and reduce costs.

Members agreed on a number of changes in the governance of IAF, all intended to increase the openness and transparency of IAF, and to facilitate its members' ability to meet the needs of stakeholders in the twenty first century. Members agreed to revise the Bylaws and the Memorandum of Understanding, and to a change in the organisational structure of IAF.

The new governance arrangements are aimed at streamlining the preparation and approval of technical documentation and ensuring transparency and the involvement of all stakeholders in IAF decision-making.

Members approved the budget for 2001, and approved an amendment to the rules for the levying of membership fees. They appointed a Financial Oversight Committee, which will report to members on IAF financial operations.

The members elected a Board of Directors to be responsible for the day-to-day management of IAF for the coming two years. The Directors elected were –

Chairman

Dr Takashi Ohtsubo, JAB

Vice-Chairman

Dr. Thomas Facklam, DAR

One Director representing Accreditation Body Members other than Developing Accreditation Body Members	Mr. Joseph Dunbeck, ANSI-RAB
One Director representing Developing Accreditation Body Members	Ms. Verónica Garcia de Solórzano, EMA
One Director representing Certification / Registration Body Association Members	Mr Sandy Sutherland, IIOC
One Director representing Industry / User Association Members	Mr Dale Mischynski, ITIC

The newly elected Board of Directors met for its first meeting, and Annual Meeting, on Friday 10 November.

Members agreed that the 2001 Annual Meeting would be held in association with the ILAC General Assembly, in Kyoto, Japan from November 3 to 10, 2001.

The 2002 Annual Meeting will be held in Berlin, Germany from September 16 to 21, 2002, again in association with the ILAC General Assembly, and the 2003 Annual Meeting will be held in Bratislava, Slovakia in Early September, 2003, also in association with the ILAC General Assembly. The 2004 meeting will be held in South Africa.

For further information contact –

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or see the IAF web site at <<http://www.iaf.nu>>