

**Communiqué
January 18-20,1995**

During its fifth meeting in Geneva, January 18-20, 1995, the IAF participants from eighteen countries and other interested parties took an important step towards achieving their aim of removing technical barriers to trade through the promotion of worldwide acceptance of quality systems certifications/registrations and product conformity certifications. The members acknowledged that their various stakeholders now expect tangible results from the considerable efforts expended to date and agreed to reorganize themselves on a more formal basis.

The IAF participants prepared a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for subsequent endorsement by each of their respective accreditation bodies. As a result, signatories to the MOU will become the formal members of the IAF, each committed to supporting its work and to making the forum a fully operational organization.

The draft MOU also provides terms of reference to guide the members towards multilateral agreement (MLA), which is the fundamental objective of the IAF.

The draft MOU also provides for a formal structure comprising an elected chairman, vice chairman and other executive members, so that work can proceed between plenary sessions of the IAF. Associate membership will be available to international organisations interested in, and willing to contribute to, the further development of IAF.

IAF welcomes the establishment of the first regional multilateral agreement, among a number of accreditation bodies in the European Accreditation for Certification (EAC). It also welcomes the establishment of the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) and looks forward to the finalization of its multilateral agreement. IAF encourages the establishment of other regional groups and their consequent multilateral agreements. IAF recognizes that such regional multilateral agreements are the most effective way of achieving its objective of worldwide acceptance of accredited certificates of conformity, and the IAF provides the means to link such regional organizations into one effective global multilateral agreement. Based on the newly established IAF procedures, the two existing regional groups are prepared to establish mutual recognition with other accreditation bodies from outside their regions, so that no interested body is prevented from joining the worldwide scheme being developed.

IAF prepared draft documents to be the basis for mutual recognition agreements covering the following needs:

to provide guidance to achieve uniform application of standards for quality system certification/registration bodies (to be followed by similar documents for product conformity certification bodies and environmental management system certification bodies); and

to provide principles and procedures to be used in peer assessments of accreditation bodies for entering into mutual recognition agreements.

IAF reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with ISO/IEC in formulating the documented basis leading to worldwide multilateral agreements, and expressed its willingness to use existing ISO documentation and cooperate with ISO/CASCO in developing and achieving worldwide acceptance of documents and guides required for worldwide recognition. IAF also looks for further discussion with ISO and EEC on how those bodies can assist IAF in achieving the aim of worldwide recognition of valid certificates of conformity.

IAF has initiated cooperation and harmonization with the activities of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). The members laid plans for:

- a. establishment of a third working group to:
 - take action on diverse subjects to include monitor of maturing proposals in the auto makers sector, Suppliers Audit Confirmation (SAC) a multiple sector effort, and other sector specific programs for certification/registration of quality systems; and
 - monitor activities in environmental, safety and health management system certification/registration, and make recommendations for appropriate EAF action;
- b. forward movement in accreditation of product and personnel certification;
- c. active involvement with the ISO/IEC Quality System Assessment Recognition proposal;
- d. establishing communication, education and awareness programs for IAF;
- e. cooperation with EAC Working Group 2 on ISO/CASCO Guide 61:
- f. monitoring developments in the accreditation of inspection bodies (n.b. EN45004);

The meeting agreed to next meet in Geneva in June 1995 to be coordinated with the ISO/CASCO meeting.