



IAF.19. Communiqué

The IAF 19th Annual Meetings were held at the Langham Hotel, Auckland, New Zealand with the General Assembly meeting taking place on the 17th and 19th of September 2005. The Annual Meetings, which were hosted by International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ), were attended by over 110 participants from 43 economies. Other meetings held in association with the IAF 19th General Assembly included the Joint IAF-ILAC General Assembly, the ILAC General Assembly, the IAF Technical Committee, the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) Committee and the Development Support Committee. The opportunity was also taken by the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) to hold meetings of its Executive Committee and the MLA Management Committee immediately prior to the IAF Annual Meetings.

The General Assembly was pleased to elect Mr Guenther Beer as Director representing the Industry and User Association Members and Mr Pierre Sallé as Director representing the Certification/Registration/Inspection Body Association Members. The General Assembly also thanked the former Director representing Certification/Registration Inspection Body Association Members, Mr Sandy Sutherland, who was stepping down after completing two three year terms in that role.

IAF Members were able to welcome two new members with the admission of OLAS, the Luxembourg Office of Accreditation and Surveillance as an Accreditation Body Member and IPC, the International Personnel Certification Association as an Association Body Member. In addition the General Assembly was pleased to note the transfer of INN, the National Institute for Standardization of Chile, from Association member to Accreditation Body Member. Two new Observer Members, WFSO, the World Food Safety Organisation and EASC, the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology and Certification were also admitted. Observer membership is offered to specific organisations where the Board of Directors believes it is in the interests of Members of IAF to develop closer relationships with another body.

This now brings the number of IAF members to a total of 69 Members, these being 46 Accreditation Body Members, 14 Association Members (9 Certification/Registration Body Associations & 5 Industry/User Associations), 4 Regional Groups with Special Recognition, 2 Partner Members and 3 Observer Members.

A major highlight at the Joint General Assembly was the signing of an Agreement for Closer Cooperation between IAF and ILAC, the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation. This formalizes the relationship between the two organisations and reflects the increasing number of joint activities which are now taking place. In this respect it was significant that the General Assembly Meeting agreed to endorse the recommendation to initiate steps towards the joint management of the IAF MLA (Multilateral Recognition Agreement) and the ILAC MRA (Mutual Recognition Arrangement). This will entail holding joint sessions of the IAF MLA Management Committee (MLA MC) and the ILAC Arrangement Management Committee (AMC).

Approval was also given to proceed with a global Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MLMRA) for inspection jointly with ILAC. Once this is operational the joint meetings of the IAF MLA MC and ILAC AMC will consider results of joint evaluations with regard to regional MLA/MRA groups and non-affiliated Accreditation Bodies for the joint MLMRA on Inspection Body accreditation.

The Organismo Argentino de Acreditacion (OAA) of Argentina and the Polish Centre for Accreditation (PCA) were both admitted to membership of the IAF MLAs for QMS, EMS and Product at a ceremony during the IAF-ILAC Gala Dinner. A list of signatories to the IAF MLAs can be found on the IAF web site at www.iaf.nu.

In a step which should result in greater awareness of IAF, improve its profile and enhance interaction with industry and the public, the General Assembly agreed to disband the current Chairman's Advisory Group on Promotions and to establish a new Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC). This Committee will be of equivalent standing to the existing IAF main committees, i.e. the Technical Committee, the MLA Committee and the Development Support Committee. Upon its formation the CMC will establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) with ILAC for the communications and marketing of issues of common interest. This JWG will include membership of the respective Chairs of the IAF and ILAC Communications and Marketing Committees, together with those from the Regional Accreditation Groups.

Formalization of other IAF-ILAC joint activities included the approval of the terms of reference of three new Joint Working Groups, these being the JWG for Guidance to ISO/IEC 17011, the JWG for the Training of Peer Evaluators and the JWG for the Maintenance of the A-Series Documents. The A-Series Documents are harmonized evaluation requirements and procedures published jointly by IAF and ILAC.

During the week of the Annual Meetings the IAF Technical Committee resolved that the principles of the IAF Cross Frontier Accreditation Policy apply to all fields of accredited certification offered under IAF membership. The General Assembly accepted the recommendation of the MLA Committee regarding the report of the Cross Frontier Practices Task Group (CFP) on the implementation of the Cross Frontier Accreditation Policy and urged that action be taken to confirm a date by which all foreign critical locations are assessed on-site. Results will be reported by the MLA Committee at the 2006 General Assembly.

IAF will next meet in Cancun, Mexico, for its 20th Annual Meetings, between the 6th and 14th of November, 2006. Members accepted an invitation to hold the 2007 meetings in Australia. Each of these meetings will be held in association with ILAC.

Further information about IAF may be obtained from the IAF web site at <<http://www.iaf.nu>>, or by contacting the IAF Secretary at email <secretary@iaf.nu>.