

Communique

During its sixth meeting, held in Geneva, June 7-9, 1995, the IAF, with participants representing twenty nine organizations from twenty one countries or economies, took several important steps toward its goal of achieving and maintaining confidence in the accreditation programs operated by its members. Such confidence will provide the basis for product certifications and quality system certifications/registrations performed once, in one place and accepted worldwide.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted at the previous IAF meeting was completed and has now been signed by 11 accreditation bodies and by 2 certification/ registration organizations (See attachment). More organizations are expected to sign the MOU in the near future.

The objectives of the IAF, summarized from the MOU, are:

- to achieve and maintain confidence in the accreditation programs operated by IAF members and in the activities of the bodies accredited by them,
- to support the development and implementation of relevant ISO/IEC standards and guides,
- to open and maintain channels to exchange information,
- to establish and maintain a multilateral agreement (MLA) on the equivalence of accreditation programs operated by its members as verified by peer review,
- where possible, to encourage the establishment of agreements between accreditation bodies and regional multilateral agreement (RMLA) groups.

The IAF established a chairman's group in order that work on key documents and essential activities may proceed without delay between IAF meetings. The chairman's group includes representatives from accreditation bodies, certification/registration bodies and industry.

During the course of the LAY meeting discussions were held with the Council of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) concerning establishment of a working relationship for implementation of the planned ISO/EEC Quality Systems Assessment Recognition (QSAR) program. IAF volunteered to provide the operational role for QSAR under a joint steering committee. The next step is for the IAF to develop a specific proposal for the peer assessment activities which will form the basis for QSAR.

The members agreed to meet again in January 1996.