

Communique
International Accreditation Forum (IAF)
May 1, 1993
Geneva

Representatives from organizations that operate or intend to operate regional or national programs/systems for the accreditation of bodies dealing with conformity assessment, met in Geneva for two days commencing April 30, 1993. The participants are listed overleaf. A number of new participants were welcomed and it was noted that the IAF is open to all regional or national accreditation organizations and additional participants would be welcome. Several expressions of interest from other organizations wishing to be involved with the work of the IAF were also identified.

The participants reaffirmed their desire to continue the process of cooperation, started at the first meeting held in Houston, Texas in January 1993, by engaging in discussions to achieve equivalence of their accreditation programs in order to build confidence in the certificates and registrations issued under accredited programs.

The IAF participants confirmed their commitment to removing barriers to international trade. They recognized the market need for, and the critical role of, mutual recognition amongst bodies accrediting organizations or programs for the conformity assessment of products, quality systems and personnel. In support of this position, the participants confirmed their commitment to cooperate with ISO and EEC and to support their activities, in particular those of the ISO committee on conformity assessment, (ISO/CASCO).

IAF's objective is global acceptance of accredited certifications and registrations, recognizing the role of mutual recognition in achieving that objective, significant advances were made in identifying how harmonization of conformity assessment practices may be accomplished based on relevant ISO/IEC guidelines. Steps to be taken to achieve this objective were also identified.

The meeting was concluded by the participants recognizing the urgent need of all IAF stakeholders (e.g. purchasers, suppliers, conformity assessment bodies and regulatory agencies) to achieve global acceptance of certifications and registrations. The IAF recognizes that stakeholders' expectations will be met by the harmonization of conformity assessment and the achievement of mutual recognition objectives. The IAF participants committed themselves to giving priority to achieving this objective, as a contribution to the freeing up of international trade through the global acceptance of certifications and registrations.