

ILAC Update

CIML Meeting – Shanghai October 2007

1977 - 2007:ILAC celebrates its 30th Anniversary

ILAC held its first plenary meeting in Copenhagen in 1977 and proceeded to meet, initially every year and then every two years, until 1996 when it was agreed during the meeting in Amsterdam to move from being a Conference to a Cooperation. In 1997 the first ILAC General Assembly was held in Gaithersburg in the United States and this year ILAC will be holding its 11th General Assembly, during the ILAC/IAF Annual Meetings in Sydney, Australia.

A general update on ILAC activities from November 2006 to September 2007 follows:

ILAC Meetings

The 2006 Annual Meetings for ILAC and IAF were hosted by the entidad mexicana de acreditación a.c. (ema) in Cancun, Mexico, from 6-14 November 2006. Representatives of several international liaison organizations attended and the meetings were both productive and informative. Delegates participated in a very full meeting schedule but were also fortunate to experience some very enjoyable cultural events arranged by our Mexican colleagues.

The first ILAC Executive Committee and Arrangement Committee (ARC) meetings for 2007 were hosted by COFRAC in Paris, France during the first week of March. As is usual for the first Executive meeting of the year, planning of the work program for 2007 was high on the agenda, with the updated work programs of the Committees also being reviewed. Another standard activity for the first meeting of the year is the review of the General Assembly Resolutions and the status of those requiring action.

The Paris meetings also provided the opportunity for representatives from the Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) and the European Commission (EC) to participate in the Executive Committee meeting for the relevant agenda items. Régine Gaucher, Mutual Acceptance Arrangement Project Leader, attended from OIML and provided an update on the progress being made with the joint ILAC and OIML activities. Jacques McMillan, the Head of Unit - Regulatory Policy, attended from the EC and provided an update on the draft regulation, relating to the requirements for accreditation in the marketing of products that is currently under consideration.

The June meetings in 2007 were hosted by CNAS in Beijing, China. Meetings of the ILAC and IAF Executive Committees, the ILAC/IAF Joint Committee for Closer Cooperation (JCCC), the ILAC Arrangement Management Committee (AMC), the IAF MLA Management Committee (MC) and a joint session of the ILAC AMC and IAF MLA MC were held during this period. Terms of Reference for the operation of the joint sessions of the ILAC AMC and IAF MLA MC were approved by each organization, at the ILAC-IAF Joint General Assembly in Cancun in November 2006.

The 2007 Annual Meetings (ILAC and IAF) will be co-hosted by NATA and JAS-ANZ in Sydney, Australia, from 19–31 October. ILAC's 30th Anniversary will be highlighted during these annual meetings and also by a special edition of ILAC news due out in October.

The ILAC Arrangement

As at 19 June 2007, there were **58 Signatories** (Full Members) to the Arrangement, representing **46 economies**.

As noted in the March issue of ILAC News the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), received formal recognition of their Multilateral Arrangement (MLA) during the meetings in Cancun in November 2006. This recognition was granted following an extensive peer evaluation process, that culminated in a ballot amongst ILAC Arrangement Council members. The IAAC recognition is for Testing & Calibration and signatories to the IAAC MLA, who are also members of ILAC, are now eligible to also become ILAC Full Members, ie. Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement.

ILAC now has three Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies – Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC), European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and Inter American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC).

ILAC continues to focus on enhancing a more widespread understanding of the benefits of the Arrangement amongst the international community, particularly governments and regulators.

Joint ILAC/IAF Activities

The joint activities between ILAC and IAF continue to be managed through the Joint Committee for Closer Cooperation (JCCC). Currently operating under the stewardship of this committee are the following:

- Joint Working Group for inspection (JWGI);
- Joint Development Support Committee (JDSC);
- Joint Working Group on Maintenance of A-Series Documents;
- Joint Working Group on Training of Peer Evaluators;
- Joint Working Group on Guidance for ISO/IEC 17011:2004;
- Joint Meetings of the ILAC Arrangement Management Committee (AMC) and the IAF Multilateral Arrangement Management Committee (MLA MC);
- Joint Working Group on Communications.

Each of these Joint Working Groups reports on their work programs and progress at the Joint Committee for Closer Cooperation (JCCC) meetings and also at the annual Joint General Assembly (JGA).

A proposal to change the name of the JWGI to Joint Inspection Group (JIG) was presented to the JCCC in Beijing to reflect the permanent nature of this group. This proposal was supported and will be presented to the memberships of ILAC and IAF during the JGA in Sydney for endorsement.

ILAC Liaisons

The review of liaison activities continues to be a major focus of the ILAC Executive Committee, who seeks to ensure that ILAC interests are represented in areas which have an impact on the activities of ILAC and its members. The Liaison Database, located in the Members area of the ILAC website, continues to serve as the main repository for the ever increasing number of reports and documents that are produced as part of ILAC's rapidly expanding liaison activity. It can be accessed via the Members area of the ILAC website. (ILAC Members who have not as yet sought access to the Members Area of the website, can do so on-line, via the 'Home' page of the website).

ILAC liaison activities since March this year include being represented at a meeting of the CCQM (Consultative Committee on Amount of Substance – Metrology in Chemistry) in April 07, through to a meeting of the Joint Committee on Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (JCTLM) in December 2007. In November, ILAC representatives will attend the 23rd meeting of the Conférence Générale des Poids et Mesures, (CGPM), which meets every four years in Paris. The delegates to this meeting are representatives of the governments of the Member States to the Meter Convention and observers from the Associates to the General Conference.

ILAC's continuing close cooperation with EURACHEM and CITAC supports the important metrological initiatives in chemical and biological measurement also being undertaken in conjunction with BIPM. Liaison activity with EURACHEM and CITAC also includes work on method validation, measurement uncertainty and compliance with limits, the use of "good quality" reference materials and proficiency testing.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ILAC and OIML in November 2006, has been expanded to include IAF in a Tripartite MoU. Final preparations are underway for the signing of this MoU during the Sydney meetings in October. Progress is also continuing on the ILAC and OIML Joint Work Programme, with related items scheduled for consideration and progression during the ILAC/IAF annual meetings in October 2007.

ILAC continues its very active role in many ISO Technical Committees and CASCO Working Groups. This year ILAC liaison officers (sometimes more than one) have participated, and are scheduled to participate, in meetings of the CASCO CPC (Chairman's Policy Committee), WG 27 (Drafting requirements for use in conformity assessment applications), WG 29 (Revision of ISO Guide 65 – Product Certification) CASCO WG28 (Revision of ISO Guide 43 – Proficiency Testing) CASCO Plenary, ISO TC212 (Technical Committee - Clinical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems) ISO TC 69 (Technical Committee - Applications of statistical methods), ISO TC 176 (Technical Committee - Quality Management and Quality Assurance) and the IAF, ILAC and ISO Joint Working Group.

ILAC was also actively represented at ISO REMCO (reference materials) which met in Tsukuba, Japan on 5-8 June 2007 and the APLAC Workshop on reference materials, held in conjunction with this ISO REMCO meeting. The meetings focussed on the review of ISO Guide 34 "*General Requirements for the competence of reference material producers*". ILAC and its Regional Cooperation Body members are continuing to contribute to the revision of this important guide together with other related work on reference materials.

ILAC and the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) have continued the cooperation begun in 2003. ILAC now holds a seat on the WADA Laboratory Committee (LC) and will teleconference the next LC meeting in September 2007 as well as attending the WADA conference in November 2007. WADA held its fourth training course for (Accreditation Body) Assessors in April 2007. It is pleasing to note the good progress this collaboration continues to make and in particular that it has matured to the point that a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations is currently being developed.

Secretariat Staff

We are pleased to welcome Amanda Stubbs who joined the ILAC Secretariat on 15 May 2007, as Administrator – ILAC Secretariat a role she shares with Alison Hay. Amanda replaced Nilla Merrigan who left the Secretariat, to take on a role with another organisation, on 2 May 2007.

Sharon Kelly, who joined the Secretariat in January 2007, attended her first series of ILAC meetings in Beijing in June. Sharon is currently focussing on the Secretariat's activities in support of the ILAC Arrangement Management Committee (AMC), Arrangement Council and the joint sessions of the ILAC AMC and its IAF counterpart the MLA MC.

From 1 January 2007, Annette Dever has taken on the role of ILAC Secretary from Alan Squirrell. Annette and Alan have worked together in the Secretariat for the past 6 years. Alan continues to support the work of ILAC and the Secretariat, in the role of ILAC Executive Liaison, on a part-time basis.

The work of the ILAC Secretariat

Work on the ILAC website continues, in particular additional information, including terms of reference, membership and working groups details, has been added to the ILAC and joint ILAC/IAF committee pages in the members only area. As always feedback on the website is welcome from all users of the ILAC website.

The Secretariat has also been busy with the preparation of a revision to the ILAC Bylaws and several other publications that have either been published or are nearing completion.

The ILAC-MRA Mark registration process continues and, as at 24 May 2007, 42 ILAC Full Members had signed Licensing Agreements with ILAC, for the use of the Combined MRA Mark (the Combined MRA Mark is the ILAC-MRA Mark used in combination with the accreditation body's own mark).

Once again the ILAC Secretary will meet with the Secretaries of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the Regional Cooperation Bodies, in Sydney in October, to further the work begun last year in relation to opportunities for, closer cooperation and communication between the Secretariats.

ILAC Membership

ILAC membership as at 24 August 2007 is as follows:

- 58 Full Members (Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement) representing 46 economies;
- 17 Associates representing 16 economies;
- 21 Affiliates representing 21 economies;
- 5 Regional Cooperation Bodies
- 1 National Coordination Body
- 23 Stakeholders

The ILAC membership (total 125 bodies) now covers a total of 82 different economies worldwide and approximately 30,000 laboratories and 5,000 inspection bodies are accredited by the 75 ILAC Full Members and Associates.

Further information on ILAC can be obtained from the ILAC website at www.ilac.org, or email the Secretariat on ilac@nata.asn.au.

Annette Dever
ILAC Secretary
September 2007