

Communiqué July 12,1996

Representatives of accreditation bodies and other organizations from twenty six (26) countries or economies attended the eighth meeting of the IAF in Seattle, Washington, USA on 11-12 July 1996. Actions taken move the IAF towards its goal of establishing confidence in the accreditation programs of its members. This will enable conformity assessment results produced in one place to be accepted world wide.

During the course of its meeting, the IAF noted that at the beginning of its meeting, accreditation bodies from twenty (20) countries or economies had signed the IAF Memorandum of Understanding committing themselves to the IAF's objectives.

The IAF participants elected Reuben Autery of the US, its current chairman, to continue in this position. Harry Gundlach of the Netherlands was elected vice-chairman. The IAF also decided to continue its current secretariat arrangement with the US accreditation body representative, while representatives of the IAF's leadership develop a plan for the future structure and administration of the IAF.

Reports of IAF working groups provided a basis for significant results. Ratification of an IAF guidance document for certification/registration bodies, based on a European document, was announced. Work on a successor document, based on an international guide, was also reviewed. Additionally, the IAF noted the ratification of its policies and procedures document for arriving at a multilateral agreement among accreditation bodies and acted to approve its amendment and implementation to begin the formation of the agreement. Finally, the IAF heard reports on the status of trial implementation of supplier audit confirmation as part of the registration process and of progress on documentation for environmental management systems, procedures for evaluation of IAF's progress and value, and other important application activities.

The IAF expects to begin implementation of its program for multilateral agreement in September, 1996. Also during this year, the IAF will initiate steps to cooperate with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on their joint program for Quality System Assessment Recognition (QSAR)