

World Accreditation Day 2011

Joint Statement from ILAC and IAF Chairs Supporting the work of Regulators



We are delighted to announce that World Accreditation Day will take place on June 9th 2011. This year's theme is based on how accreditation is used to support the work of Regulators.

Accreditation provides confidence in the competence and integrity of conformity assessment activities that can be used to support the implementation of government policies and regulations that impact on health, welfare, security and the environment.

Government departments and regulatory authorities may specify in their public policies, government specifications and regulations that accredited bodies be used, and so gain confidence that competent bodies have been used to determine compliance with laws, regulations and specifications.

More and more Regulators throughout the world are recognising the benefits of using accreditation. For example, in the US, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for toy testing, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in the nuclear area, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for food safety, have all made accreditation a core element of their policy making strategy. In Asia-Pacific, accreditation underpins the ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) sectoral MRA for electrical and electronic equipment as a means of meeting the mandatory requirements of each member and to support the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). Whilst in Europe, a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe is written into Regulation, which recognises the benefits of accreditation by legislating that it be used as a means to show compliance with mandatory regulatory requirements.

The mainstream acceptance of accreditation by pan-regional bodies, and domestic regulators within individual governments, also helps member governments of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to meet their responsibilities of the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT Agreement). IAF and ILAC are now also mentioned as key players by the United Nations.

This increased recognition from Regulators was reflected in a survey of the ILAC Membership carried out in 2010, which reported that accreditation is used and accepted to support Government policy in all the 55 economies that responded. In fact, 77% of economies stated that their Regulators actually require results from accredited organisations. This represents an increase of 36% since 2002, demonstrating the value and confidence that Regulators derive from accreditation.

Whilst this growth represents strong progress, wider recognition remains a core objective for IAF and ILAC, both through the adoption of accreditation into new policy areas but also its expansion into new

territories and regions. Accreditation is a proven tool that can be applied to a wide variety of assessment, approval or evaluation tasks that can be used to address a wide range of Regulatory requirements both in Developed or Developing economies. World Accreditation Day 2011 provides the ideal platform to build on this progress and to gain even wider recognition.