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**ACCREDITATION - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS**

This paper has been prepared by the Rapporteur on Accreditation (Dr. Rozsa Ring). It contains information on the latest developments at the international and regional levels in the area of accreditation.

The document is presented for information to delegations. It is reproduced in the form in which it was received by the secretariat.

## **1. ACCREDITATION ENHANCING TRADE**

1. There are more and more products and services available, which means that the need for consumer protection has never been greater. Consumers can be protected by certification, inspection and testing of products and by manufacturing under certified quality management systems. Customers need confidence in the certification, inspection and testing work carried out on their behalf, but which they cannot check for themselves. This checking is the job of accreditation bodies.

2. Accreditation is the procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that an organisation or a person is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. Accreditation bodies are established in many countries, often by the government or with the encouragement of government, with the primary purpose of ensuring that conformity assessment bodies (testing and calibration laboratories, inspection and certification bodies) in the country are subject to oversight by an authoritative body. Accreditation reduces risk for government, business and customers by ensuring, through regular surveillance, that conformity assessment bodies are both independent and competent. Accreditation delivers confidence in certificates and reports by implementing widely accepted criteria set by the international (ISO/IEC) and European (CEN/CENELEC) standardization bodies. The standards address issues such as impartiality, competence and reliability, leading to confidence in the comparability of certificates and reports across national borders. Governments have confidence in testing and certification in support of regulatory functions.

3. This uniform approach allows countries with similar accreditation systems to establish agreements between themselves, based on mutual evaluation and acceptance of each other's accreditation systems. Such international agreements, called mutual recognition arrangements, are crucial in enabling certificates and reports to be accepted between these countries. In effect, each partner in such an arrangement recognises the other partner's accredited conformity assessment bodies as if they themselves had undertaken the accreditation of the partner's conformity assessment bodies. This developing system of mutual recognition arrangements between accreditation bodies has enabled the accredited organisations to achieve a formal international recognition, and allow certificates and reports accompanying exported goods to be more readily accepted on overseas markets. This effectively reduces costs for both the manufacturers and the importers, as it reduces or eliminates the need for products to be retested in another country.

## **2 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION**

### **2.1 International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC)**

4. ILAC is an international cooperation between the various laboratory accreditation schemes operated throughout the world. Founded 20 years ago, ILAC was formalised as a cooperation in 1996 when 44 national accreditation bodies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). On 20 January 2003, ILAC was successfully incorporated and became an Association under Dutch Law.

5. ILAC membership consists of Full member, Associate or Affiliate accreditation bodies, national coordination bodies, regional cooperation bodies and of stakeholders.

(a) Full members (44 accreditation bodies representing 35 countries as of Sept 2003): These are accreditation bodies that meet the requirements for associates and have been accepted as Signatories to the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC Arrangement).

(b) Associates (15 accreditation bodies representing 15 countries as of Sept 2003):  
Accreditation bodies that:

- operate accreditation schemes for testing laboratories, calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, and/or other services as decided from time to time by the ILAC General Assembly;
- can provide evidence they are operational and comply with the relevant standards, ILAC application documents and the obligations of the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement;
- are recognised in their economy as offering an accreditation service.

(c) Affiliates (19 accreditation bodies representing 16 countries as of Sept 2003):  
Accreditation bodies that:

- are currently operating, being developed or intended to be developed for testing laboratories, calibration laboratories, inspection bodies, and/or other services as decided from time to time by the ILAC General Assembly;
- declare their intention to operate their accreditation programs in compliance with the requirements set out in the relevant standards and ILAC application documents.

(d) National coordination bodies (1 body as of Sept 2003):

Formally established national bodies having responsibility for the coordination of laboratory and/or inspection body accreditation activities in particular economies.

(e) Regional cooperation bodies (4 bodies as of Sept 2003):

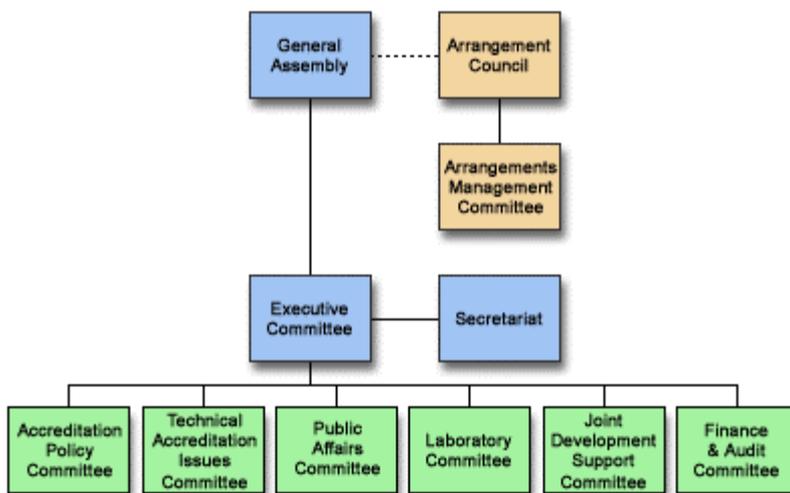
Formally established regional accreditation cooperation bodies having objectives similar to and compatible with ILAC and which consist of formally nominated representatives of the accreditation interests from at least four economies.

(f) Stakeholders (19 bodies as of Sept 2003):

Representative international, regional and national organisations having objectives similar to and compatible with ILAC and include bodies such as associations of laboratories, laboratory practitioners, inspection bodies, purchasing organisations, regulatory authorities, consumer associations and trade organisations.

### 2.1.1. ILAC structure

6. To assist in progressing the work of ILAC, seven committees have been established. ILAC members participate and contribute to the committees, or to working groups established by the committees to address particular issues or areas of accreditation. Overseeing the work of the committees and the overall direction of the Cooperation is ILAC's Executive Committee, consisting of an elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the immediate Past-Chairman, as well as the Chairmen of the above committees, plus representatives of various regional accreditation bodies. The Executive Committee meets on a regular basis to review progress and plan further work. The Executive Committee and seven other committees report to the members at each annual General Assembly.



### 2.1.2. ILAC publications

7. To promote international trade and to harmonise accreditation worldwide ILAC has issued publications and brochures of a general nature on the work of ILAC, the value of being, or using an accredited laboratory, and the purpose of the ILAC Arrangement. Brochures are in a variety of languages including English, Chinese, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Guidance publications for laboratories and accreditation bodies are also available which may provide information on the application of the accreditation criteria for specific applications. Procedural and policy publications assist ILAC's operation and form part of the criteria for the ILAC Arrangement evaluations. ILAC publications and brochures are available on ILAC's website: [www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org)

### 2.1.3. ILAC Arrangement

8. The ILAC Arrangement is based on the results of an intensive evaluation of each body carried out in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures contained in several ILAC publications. Each accreditation body signatory to the ILAC Arrangement agrees to abide by its terms and conditions and by the ILAC evaluation procedures. The signatories have been peer-reviewed and shown to meet ILAC's criteria for competence. The evaluation involves a team of peers, generally senior staff or experienced accreditation bodies. Evaluations include time spent at the headquarters office of the applicant body to determine compliance with ISO/IEC Guide 58. Additionally, the evaluators witness the performance of the applicant's assessors during actual assessments to determine if the laboratories are in compliance with ISO/IEC 17025 standard and there is a sufficient depth of examination to determine competence.

9. The ILAC Arrangement builds upon existing or developing regional arrangements established around the world. The bodies participating in these regional arrangements are responsible for maintaining the necessary confidence in accreditation bodies from their region that are signatories to the new ILAC Arrangement. Each recognised Regional Cooperation Body must abide by the procedures defined in ILAC requirements documents. Currently, the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) and the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) are the only ILAC-recognised regions with acceptable mutual recognition arrangements and evaluation procedures. The Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and the Southern African Development Cooperation for Accreditation (SADCA) are still developing their arrangements. Other regions being developed in other parts of the world are in their infancy. Bodies that cannot be affiliated with a recognised region may apply directly to ILAC for evaluation and recognition.

10. There are 44 signatories to the ILAC Arrangement in the field of testing and 36 signatories in the field of calibration. The ILAC Arrangement and the list of signatories are available on ILAC's website: [www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org)

11. The recent seventh General Assembly of ILAC held in 20 and 22 September 2003 adopted 28 resolutions. Besides the approval of new signatories to the ILAC Arrangement, new Associates, new Affiliates and new stakeholders, the main interest in the accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies are as follows:

- to support the alignment of ISO/IEC 17025:1999 & ISO 9001:2000;
- to extend the ILAC Arrangement's scope with accreditation of inspection bodies: an ILAC/IAF Guidance Document for ISO/IEC 17020 as the basis for accreditation of inspection bodies will be issued upon approval and will be used in the peer evaluations in cooperation with the International Accreditation Forum;
- to register an ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) Mark, which may be used by the ILAC Arrangement signatories and their accredited bodies;
- to establish a Forum for Proficiency Testing Providers, which would consider the topics of conformity assessment including accreditation of Proficiency Testing Providers;
- to develop harmonised policy and procedure for accreditation or third party assessment of Reference Material Producers;
- to prepare guidance documents for the accreditation of opinions and interpretations, accreditation of sampling, accreditation of medical laboratories and expression of the scope of accreditation for testing and calibration laboratories.

12. More information on ILAC is available on its website ([www.ilac.org](http://www.ilac.org)) or at ILAC Secretariat:

c/o National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA)  
7 Leeds Street, Rhodes NSW 2138, Australia  
Phone: +612 9736 8374, Fax: +612 9736 8373, Email: [ilac@nata.asn.au](mailto:ilac@nata.asn.au)

## **2.2 International Accreditation Forum (IAF)**

13. IAF is the world association of conformity assessment accreditation bodies and other interested in conformity assessment in the field of management systems, products, services, personnel and other similar programmes of conformity assessment. On 25 September 1998, IAF was incorporated under the General Corporation Law of Delaware, USA.

14. IAF membership is open for Accreditation Body members, Association members and Regional Group members.

- (a) Accreditation Body members (42 accreditation bodies representing 39 countries as of Sept 2003): Accreditation bodies that accredit bodies for certification/registration of quality systems, products, services, personnel, environmental management systems or similar programmes of conformity assessment and which declare their common intention to join the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA).
- (b) Association members (14 bodies as of Sept 2003): Organisations involved in the use or implementation of certification/registration systems.
- (c) Regional Group members (6 bodies as of Sept 2003): Regional groupings of accreditation bodies whose aim is to include the maintenance of regional multilateral agreements recognising the equivalence of their members' accreditations.

### **2.2.1. IAF structure**

15. The highest level of authority in IAF is the Members in a General Meeting. General meetings make decisions and lay down policy in the name of the members. The Board of Directors is responsible for legal actions to be carried out on behalf of the members, for developing broad policy directions for IAF and for ensuring that the day-to-day work of IAF is carried out in accordance with policies approved by members. The Executive Committee is responsible to the Board of Directors for the day-to-day work of IAF on the basis of decisions made by the members and directions by the Board of Directors. The operations of all IAF Committees and Subordinate Groups are subject to the IAF General Procedures.



### 2.2.2. IAF publications

16. IAF Procedures documents lay down the procedures to be followed in implementing IAF programmes, spelling out the procedures and processes, which must be followed in order to satisfy the IAF objectives. Members of IAF seeking membership of the IAF MLA must conduct their operations in a way, which complies with all the requirements of the IAF Procedures, which are relevant, or achieves the objectives of the Procedures in some equivalent way. IAF also publishes Guidance for the use of accreditation bodies when accrediting certification/registration bodies to assure that they also operate their programmes in a consistent application and equivalent manner. IAF publications are available on IAF's website: [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu).

### 2.2.3. IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA)

17. Accreditation body members of IAF are admitted to the MLA only after a most stringent evaluation of their operations by a peer evaluation team, which is charged to ensure that the applicant member complies fully with both the international standards and IAF requirements. Once an accreditation body is a member of the MLA it is required to recognise the certificates issued by certification/registration bodies accredited by all other members of the MLA.

18. IAF has also granted special recognition to two Regional Accreditation Groups, the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) and the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC), on the basis of the acceptance of the mutual recognition arrangements established within these organisations. Membership of the IAF MLA is recognised as being satisfied by membership of either the EA MLA or the PAC MLA and IAF members who are also signatories of these regional MLAs are automatically accepted into the IAF MLA.

19. There are 30 signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Agreement for quality management systems. The IAF MLA and the list of signatories are available on IAF's website: [www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu).

20. IAF has started a cooperation with the United Nations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change Clean Development Mechanism (UNFCCC). The accreditation process under the UNFCCC executive board for the clean development mechanism (CDM) has been launched. More information on the process is available on UNFCCC website: [www.unfccc.int/cdm](http://www.unfccc.int/cdm).

21. The recent seventeenth Annual Meeting of IAF held in 19 and 21 September 2003 adopted 47 resolutions. Besides the approval of new signatories to the IAF MLA, new Associates, new Affiliates and new stakeholders, the main interests of the accreditors of laboratories and inspection bodies are as follows:

- to publish an IAF Guidance on Cross Frontier Accreditation;
- to extend the IAF Arrangement's scope with accreditation of inspection bodies: an ILAC/IAF Guidance Document for ISO/IEC 17020 as the basis for accreditation of inspection bodies will be issued upon approval and will be used in the peer evaluations in cooperation with the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation;
- to register an IAF MRA Mark, which may be used by the IAF MLA signatories and their accredited bodies;
- to publish a Press Release as outlined in 2.2.4. below.

#### **2.2.4 ISO 9001 Certification/Registration after 15 December 2003**

22. At its Annual Meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia, in September 2003, IAF reaffirmed to the market that all accredited certification/registration of quality management systems to ISO 9001/2/3:1994 ceases to have validity on 15 December 2003. The decision that this would happen was taken in 1999 by IAF along with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in preparation for the withdrawal of those standards by ISO in favour of ISO 9001:2000 (which came into effect on 15 December 2000).

23. Organisations that base their purchasing decisions on the fact that their supplier is "ISO 9000 certified/registered" are reminded that after 15 December 2003 the only credible demonstration of conformity of an ISO 9000 quality management system will be an accredited certification/registration to ISO 9001:2000.

24. After 15 December 2003, all accredited certification/registration to ISO 9001/2/3:1994 will have expired. Any use of accreditation marks based on such certificates will therefore be an error, and in contravention of the intellectual property rights of the owners of the marks.

25. More information on IAF is available on its website ([www.iaf.nu](http://www.iaf.nu)) or at IAF Secretariat:  
53 Manuka Circle, Cherrybrook, NSW 2126, Australia  
Phone: +612 9481 7343, Fax: +612 9481 7343, Email: [adviser@accreditationforum.com](mailto:adviser@accreditationforum.com)

#### **2.3. Accreditation-related activities of UNIDO**

26. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), which coordinates all activities of the United Nations System in the field of industrial development in developing countries including countries with economies in transition, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ILAC and ISO on 30 October 2000.

27. The purpose of the MOU is to establish cooperation between UNIDO, ISO and ILAC in realising the following common interests:

- Since accreditation of laboratories and inspection bodies, according to ISO/IEC 17025, ISO/IEC 17020 and ISO/IEC Guide 43-1, confronts laboratories and inspection bodies, particularly small and medium sized ones in developing countries, with serious challenges, an international system of mutual recognition of both accreditation bodies and test reports, calibration certificates and inspection reports issued by different accredited entities needs to be put in place.

- The introduction of mutual recognition schemes leads to the removal of economic and financial barriers faced by enterprises in developing countries that are in the process of achieving the crucially needed standards. This also leads to the improvement of the quality of their products and increases their access to international markets.
- It is the goal of the three organisations to provide an internationally accepted framework for the establishment and operation of accreditation bodies.

28. UNIDO has developed a concept for the pre-evaluation of accreditation bodies in developing countries with the objective of assessing them to determine if they meet the requirements set forth by ILAC for signature of the ILAC MRA. The concept addresses the issue of obtaining mutual recognition as well as making accreditation financially and technically feasible.

29. In the framework of the MOU 6 accreditation bodies of developing countries have been pre-peer-evaluated and further pre-peer-evaluations are planned. A joint UNIDO/ILAC publication on Laboratory Accreditation for Developing Countries has been drafted and is being edited. In the context of the Regional Programme "Establishment of a System for Accreditation, Standardisation and Quality Promotion", under implementation in the West African Economic and Monetary Union, a Regional Accreditation Body is currently under development in close so-operation with ILAC and IAF. Other accreditation bodies are to be established in the near future with UNIDO cooperation in Central America, in Mekong (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) and in SAARC (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives).

30. The Joint Committee on Coordination of Developing Country Assistance in Metrology, Accreditation and Standardisation has been established among international organisations working in these subject fields to better articulate ongoing projects and emerging initiatives in various regions.

### **3 REGIONAL COOPERATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION**

#### **3.1 European cooperation for Accreditation (EA)**

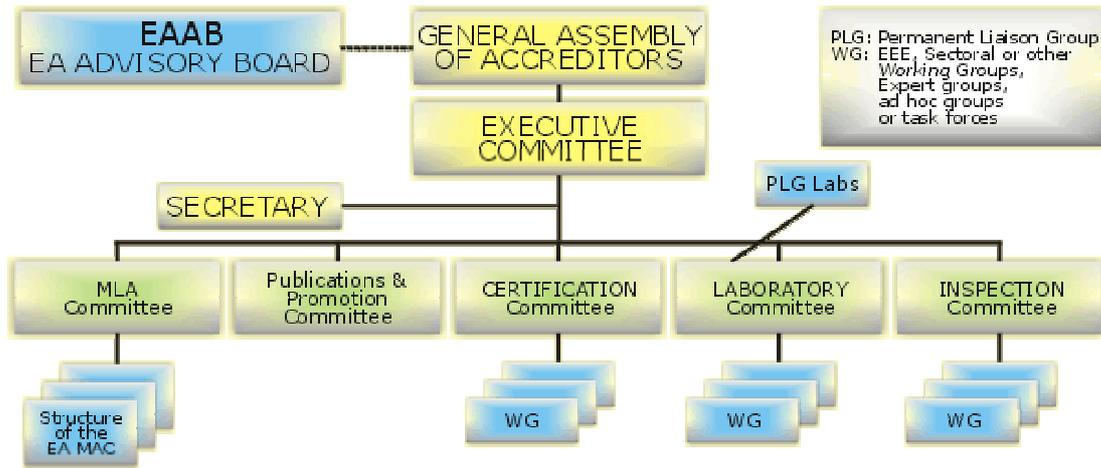
31. EA is a regional cooperation of nationally recognised accreditation bodies of the member states or the candidate countries of the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Associate Membership is open to nationally recognised accreditation bodies in the European geographical area who can demonstrate that they operate an accreditation system compatible with EN 45003 or ISO/IEC Guide 58. EA was established as a legal entity according to Dutch law on 26 June 2000.

32. EA accreditations cover all European conformity assessment activities, such as testing and calibration, inspection, certification of products, certification of management systems, certification of personnel, environmental verification under the European Eco-Management and Audits Scheme (EMAS) regulation.

33. EA has 34 Members representing 30 economies, and 3 Associate members as of Sept 2003.

### 3.1.1. EA structure

34. The highest decision-making authority of EA is the General Assembly consisting of the Chairman and Secretary and the delegates of member bodies. The Executive Committee supported by a Secretariat and Technical Committees carries out day-to-day work. Stakeholders' views on accreditation are taken into account through discussion in the EA Advisory Board, which is independently chaired and composed of representatives of all parties with an interest in accreditation and representatives of the accredited themselves.



### 3.1.2. EA publications

35. To support the elimination of technical barriers to trade and to harmonise accreditation in Europe EA issues publicity and information documents for the promotion of the European accreditation systems, procedural and policy documents for EA internal use, guidance documents for accreditation bodies and documents relating to the different accreditation standards and specific calibration documents. EA also issues ILAC and IAF documents endorsed by EA and other advisory documents. EA publications are available on EA's website: [www.european-accreditation.org](http://www.european-accreditation.org)

### 3.1.3. EA Multilateral Agreement (MLA)

36. EA members can apply for peer-group evaluation of their activities. Members having succeeded in the peer evaluation may sign the appropriate multilateral agreement for certification body, for laboratory or for inspection body accreditation under which they recognise and promote the equivalence of each other's systems and of certificates and reports issued by bodies accredited under these systems. Through the MLA a uniform level of competence of the accredited bodies involved is assured and the need for multiple assessments is diminished or eliminated. This means that the supplier will only need one certificate or report to satisfy the entire European market and all governments.

37. EA has also signed bilateral agreements with accreditation bodies outside Europe. EA has 19 signatories to the MLA for testing, 19 signatories to the MLA for calibration, 18 signatories to the MLA for product certification, 15 signatories to the MLA for environmental management systems certification, 17 signatories to the MLA for quality management systems certification and 15 signatories to the MLA for personnel certification. The EA MLA and the list of signatories on EA's website: [www.european-accreditation.org](http://www.european-accreditation.org).

38. EA will have its twelfth General Assembly in London, UK on 26 and 27 November 2003.

39. More information on EA is available on its website ([www.european-accreditation.org](http://www.european-accreditation.org)) or at EA Secretariat:

c/o COFRAC: 37, rue de Lyon, 75012 Paris, France

Phone: +33 1 44 68 82 25, Fax: +33 1 44 68 82 21, Email: [martine.simon@cofrac.fr](mailto:martine.simon@cofrac.fr)

### **3.2. Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC)**

40. APLAC groups accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific region responsible for accrediting calibration, testing and inspection facilities. APLAC's principal objectives are to foster the development of competent laboratories and inspection bodies in member economies, to harmonise accreditation practices in the region and with other regions.

41. APLAC has 28 Full Members representing 18 economies, 4 Associate Members and 3 Related Bodies as of September 2003.

#### **3.2.1. APLAC structure**

42. The General Assembly is the primary body of APLAC. All Full Members and Associate Members are entitled to send delegates to the General Assembly meetings. The day-to-day operation is managed by the Board of Management and supported by the MRA Council and the following committees: Training Committee, Public Information Committee, Proficiency Testing Committee Technical Committee and Nominations Committee.

#### **3.2.2. APLAC publications**

43. APLAC publishes various policy, technical, advisory and information documents. Copies are available, on request, from the APLAC Secretariat: [aplac@nata.asn.au](mailto:aplac@nata.asn.au).

#### **3.2.3. APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)**

44. APLAC facilitates mutual recognition of accredited test, measurement and inspection results through the APLAC multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement. This reduces the need for re-testing of products and therefore saves time and money. APLAC MRA has 18 signatories as of September 2003.

45. APLAC will have its ninth General Assembly in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 9-14 November 2003.

46. More information on APLAC is available on its website ([www.ianz.govt.nz/aplac](http://www.ianz.govt.nz/aplac)) or at APLAC Secretariat:

71-73 Flemington Road, North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia  
Phone: +613 9329 1633, Fax: +613 9326 5148, Email: [aplac@nata.asn.au](mailto:aplac@nata.asn.au)

### **3.3. Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC)**

47. PAC groups accreditation bodies in the Pacific region responsible for accrediting certification bodies. PAC has 16 Full Members and 3 Associate Members as of September 2003.

#### **3.3.1. PAC structure**

48. The General Assembly is the main decision body of APLAC. All Full Members and Associate Members are entitled to send delegates to the General Assembly meetings. The Executive Committee manages the day-to-day operation.

#### **3.3.2. PAC publications**

49. PAC publishes policy, technical and information documents and a promotional CD ROM is expected to be distributed during the PAC Annual Meeting in November 2003. PAC has launched several Development Programs to assist members of developing economies.

#### **3.3.3. PAC Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA)**

50. The PAC MLA programs currently cover three areas, such as certification of quality management systems, certification of environmental management systems and certification of products.

51. PAC has 12 signatories to the MLA for quality management systems certification, 9 applicants to the MLA for environmental management systems certification and 3 applicants to the MLA for product certification.

52. PAC will have its Plenary in New Delhi, India on 24-28 November 2003.

53. More information on PAC is available on its website ([www.apec-pac.org](http://www.apec-pac.org)) or at PAC Secretariat:  
Phone: +612 6559 1370, Fax: +612 6559 1374, Email: [belindam@tsn.occ](mailto:belindam@tsn.occ)

### **3.4 InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC)**

54. IAAC is an association of accreditation bodies in the Americas and other organisations interested in conformity assessment. IAAC has 19 Full Members and 8 Associate Members as of September 2003.

#### **3.4.1. IAAC publications**

55. IAAC publishes policy, technical and information for harmonisation of accreditation activities within the region. Documents are available on IAAC website: [www.iaac-accreditation.org](http://www.iaac-accreditation.org) .

#### **3.4.2. Multilateral Recognition Arrangements (MLA)**

56. The IAAC MLA programs currently cover two areas, such as laboratories and certification of quality management systems. IAAC plans to extend the MLA with inspection, certification of environmental management systems and certification of products.

57. Has 3 signatories to the MLA for quality management systems certification and 3 signatories to the MLA for laboratories.

58. IAAC will have its eighth Annual Meeting in Antigua, Guatemala on 6-10 October 2003.

59. More information on IAAC is available on its website ([www.iaac-accreditation.org](http://www.iaac-accreditation.org)) or at IAAC Secretariat: Phone: +52 5555 910532, Fax: +52 5555 910529, Email: [secretariat@iaac-accreditation.org](mailto:secretariat@iaac-accreditation.org)

#### **3.5 Southern African Development Community in Accreditation (SADCA)**

60. SADCA is a cooperation of accreditation bodies from countries belonging to the SADC Southern African Development Community. SADCA has 14 member states of SADC.

61. The main goals of SADCA are as follows:

- to strengthen SADCA as a regional accreditation body,
- to create a regional accreditation service (SADCAS) that would provide accreditation to most SADC countries without having a national accreditation body,
- to raise the level of competence of testing, calibration, certification and inspection services in the SADC region,
- to enable organisations accredited by SADCAS to have their reports and certificates readily recognised and accepted throughout the region and worldwide.

62. SADCA established a Project Management Committee to manage and coordinate the project on the implementation of international guides and standards and to carry out a feasibility study for the incorporation and ownership of SADCAS.

63. SADCA will have its next General Meeting in Mauritius in April 2004.

64. More information on SADCA is available on its website ([www.sadc-sqam.org](http://www.sadc-sqam.org)) or at SADCA Secretariat: Phone: +27 12 349 1267, Fax: +27 12 349 1449, Email: [standard@mail.pci.co.zw](mailto:standard@mail.pci.co.zw)

#### **4 NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BODIES**

65. Accreditation, as mentioned in the first chapter, is generally organised at a national level. In some countries more than one accreditation body has been established, mainly for different conformity assessment activities. ILAC and IAF memberships group national accreditation bodies from 66 countries in September 2003. Information on these accreditation bodies is easily available through ILAC or IAF website. Not all of the national accreditation bodies are members of ILAC or IAF. If the body belongs to regional accreditation cooperation, information on it is available on the regional body's website.

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