



World Accreditation Day 2010

Joint message from Daniel Pierre and Randy Dougherty, ILAC and IAF Chairs

We are delighted to announce that World Accreditation Day will take place June 9th 2010. This year's theme of 'Global Acceptance' reflects the core aspiration of the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) and the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA). These Arrangements, which this year celebrate their 10th and 12th anniversaries, respectively, create an international framework to support international trade through the removal of technical barriers.

Technical barriers to trade are recognised as being potential obstacles to the free flow of goods and services. The exchange of products, services, and capital between countries account for an important element of a country's gross domestic product, and represent a vital source of revenue for developing countries in particular. The Arrangements, established by ILAC and IAF, and signed by national Accreditation Bodies on a voluntary basis, provide a mechanism to recognise the equivalence of accredited conformity assessment activities in different economies. By accepting the equivalence of assessment methods, the need for multiple assessments is eliminated and most importantly the results from the accredited organisations in different economies can then be accepted in confidence. In other words, there is no need for products and services to be re-evaluated in each territory that a business chooses to enter.

At the national level, there is greater recognition of accredited activities, in particular from regulators, who are using the arrangements to deliver policy objectives from health and safety to the protection of the environment, as well as providing the conditions that support a competitive economy through their impact on the export performance of businesses.

From a business perspective, the arrangements can significantly reduce compliance costs by removing unnecessary repeat testing or the need to comply with redundant local requirements. This also has a positive impact on time-to-market, which can be reduced through this streamlining of the approvals process.

Looking to the future, ILAC and IAF will continue to meet the expectations of a growing base of stakeholders. This will include responding to the needs of both industry and regulators, who are increasingly turning to accreditation to meet their regulatory responsibilities. As international organisations, the primary role of ILAC and IAF is to ensure consistency and equal reliability among all accredited activities delivered under their jurisdiction, to ensure that the 'Global Acceptance' of accredited conformity assessment results is universally achieved.