

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

MTN/NTM/W/226

22 March 1979

Special Distribution

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

Group "Non-Tariff Measures"

Sub-Group "Technical Barriers to Trade"

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR TESTING LABORATORIES (ILAC/78)

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its meeting of July 1978 the Sub-Group noted that the Second International Conference on Recognition of National Programs for Testing Laboratories (ILAC/78) would be held and invited the Chairman to keep it informed of further developments (MTN/NTM/47, paragraph 8).
2. The Conference, which was attended by representatives from twenty-four countries and nine international organizations, exchanged information on experience gained by countries which have or are planning accreditation schemes, considered reports of three task forces set up by ILAC 1 and adopted the resolutions set out in the annex.

ANNEX

ACTIONS OF THE ILAC/78 CONFERENCE

- Considering that the 2nd ILAC Conference has confirmed the need to organize and develop international cooperation and circulation of information on systems of accreditation of test laboratories with a view of promoting the recognition of tests performed under such systems, thereby facilitating international trade.
- Taking into account the great diversity of national situations.
- Considering that a more thorough examination of different aspects of laboratory accreditation is necessary before final decisions are made as to the form adopted to conduct international activity in that field but that at this point it is not yet recognized that it is desirable to envisage the creation of a new supranational organization for that particular purpose but rather to seek among existing bodies those which could take this activity in charge.

The Conference adopted the following resolutions:

Resolution 1

Acknowledging the work of the three Task Forces set up at the Copenhagen meeting and in order to continue and extend their work, the Conference decides to create three new Task Forces as follows:

1. Task Force A:

The mandate of Task Force A would be to make an analysis of the legal problems raised by the recognition of national laboratory accreditation systems considering, inter alia, the answers given by the participants to the questionnaire drafted by Task Force 2 bearing in mind that the answers will be provided to the best of the ability of the participants.

2. Task Force B:

To accept the offer of the Australian delegate to prepare a draft directory of organizations or bodies which operate accreditation systems or other schemes for the assessment of testing laboratories. The draft of the directory shall be based on information provided by such organizations or bodies. In providing such information, the organizations or bodies shall identify the criteria against which they claim to operate and in particular the extent to which they comply with the criteria listed in Annex 1 of the report of Task Force 3 and in the criteria listed in ISO Guide 25. The Task Force is to

advise the Australian delegate on the information to be sought. This draft directory will only be circulated to those involved in the ILAC Conferences. The Task Force should report to the next ILAC Conference on the problems encountered in collecting and presenting the information including costs and size and make proposals for its further maintenance and dissemination.

3. Task Force C:

To prepare, in cooperation with ISO and other concerned international organizations, a paper on the needs, objectives, and the effects and consequences of laboratory accreditation and prepare a list of basic terms and their definitions relevant to laboratory accreditation or assessment. ISO should be invited to provide the secretary of this Task Force.

Resolution 2

That as a first step towards international harmonization, ISO Guide 25 be widely circulated among other international organizations to serve as a basic element of any test laboratory accreditation program.

Resolution 3

That Task Forces A, B, and C present progress reports at an interim meeting of the conference to be held in Sydney, Australia between October 22-26, 1979. A plenary meeting of ILAC should be held in mid-1980 to which the Task Forces will present their final reports. At the plenary meeting, delegates should, where possible, come prepared to make decisions on behalf of their governments or organizations as to the continuation of activity in the field of international acceptance and recognition of national accreditation systems.

Resolution 4

To endorse and support the ISO/CERTICO work in developing rules, guides, and other documents relating to the establishment of international conformity certification systems.

Resolution 5

To welcome the work of the GATT Code for Preventing Technical Barriers to Trade, and in order to ensure the mutual compatibility of the Code and the work emanating from ILAC, the Gatt Secretariat should be invited to keep ILAC informed of any development relating to the GATT Code which could have an impact on the work of ILAC.

Resolution 6

That the Conference commend the regulatory harmonization program of the UN/ECE Working Party on the Building Industry. The Conference recognizes that the Working Party has accorded the highest priority to the harmonization of approval and control rules for buildings and building products (UN/ECE project 08.5.6). The Conference supports the aims of this project which are:

1. The adoption of internationally agreed standard methods of test (even in the absence of internationally agreed building product standards).
2. The establishment of an international system of test-house accreditation.
3. The international mutual recognition of national certificates of acceptance for building products and components.

In recognizing the usefulness of ILAC activities to the realization of the aims of the UN/ECE Working Party, the Conference recommends the establishment of close cooperation between these two developing activities.

That the ILAC/78 Conference strongly recommends that its Chairman name a person to represent him at the January 22-26, 1979, meeting of the ad hoc group of experts on quality approval and control upon receiving such invitation of the UN/ECE Working Party on the Building Industry.

In response to these resolutions, Dr. Forman, Chairman of ILAC/78, in consultation with Mr. Thoft of Denmark, Mr. Monaghan of Australia, and Mr. Bryden of France, appointed the following as Chairmen of the Task Forces:

Task Force A: Mr. Allen J. Farrar (U.S.A.)
Task Force B: Mr. J. Stanley Linton (U.K.)
Task Force C: Dr. Robert Middleton (ISO)

The Chairman also named the following to the Planning and Agenda Committee for the next meeting scheduled for October 22-26, 1979, in Sydney, Australia:

Mr. Frank Monaghan (Australia), Chairman
Mr. Per Lund Thoft (Denmark)
Mr. Alan Bryden (France)
Dr. Howard I. Forman (U.S.A.)

Mr. Bryden volunteered to host an ILAC meeting in Paris, France during the summer or fall of 1980.