



## Inter American Accreditation Cooperation

### IAAC Chair Report From September 2015 to September 2016

This report covers IAAC activities from the 20th General Assembly in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in September 2015 until this 21st General Assembly in Lima, Peru.

As this is my last report to IAAC members, it also includes some key milestones achieved by the Inter American Accreditation Cooperation since 2012 as well as some of our challenges.

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It is such a pleasure for me to again be here in Lima with the mysterious fog, the friendly people, the marvelous food, the ancient pyramids, the historic architecture. Did I mention the delicious food, the outstanding ceviche? Yes, these are all the key components for an enjoyable setting that we probably did not have the time to enjoy as much as we would like to because, despite the delightful temptations, the intense week of meetings during our General Assembly demanded our sharp senses and keen insight to work collectively as we continue to push accreditation forward, one MLA at a time, into the last corner of our continent.

This General Assembly in Peru has a very special meaning to all of us. Yesterday at our wonderful 20th anniversary celebration, we had the opportunity to look back and be proud of our founding fathers and mothers, we praised our heroic pioneers, but were not able to relive any episodes of our reckless youth .... if only you could have seen the photo album of some of these IAAC parties, which by the way were conveniently lost. Yesterday we also had the opportunity to celebrate our present and heard from the oracle's messengers about the wonders of the future.

Oh, to have reached the age of 20! At 20, we become independent, are considered a responsible adult (almost) and are not allowed to be rowdy anymore. We want to no longer have to do what your parents, Mr. ILAC and Ms. IAF, tell us to do. Well, actually, we still have to, but we think that we would prefer not to.

We are now an adult Cooperation, with 9 hungry MLAs to feed, and more on the way. We are faced with the need to constantly nurture and pamper generation after generation of policy makers and regulators. We have much to celebrate,

especially our young ABs after their first accreditation. After years of hard work, evaluations and exams, we feel proud when our young ABs graduate and sign their first MLA. So many nice memories!

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I would like to welcome all the representatives of IAAC member accreditation bodies and associations of conformity assessment bodies present here today. I know that each of you has contributed huge amounts of energy to meet IAAC's goals and deadlines. These efforts do not go unnoticed by colleagues in the region, and internationally.

I also acknowledge the special guests that honored us with their presence and that joined us for the celebration of IAAC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Yesterday, with all the activities, I was unable to mention some of you that are here and some that are not. Thanks to all for your contributions.

I also want to recognize representatives from two regional accreditation cooperations, APLAC and EA. We appreciate your effort in joining us and recall the other regional cooperations, with whom we have MOU and great working relationships, but that were unable to join us today. Finally, I want to note the representative from SIM, the regional metrology organization for the Americas. You will recall that in 2014 we created the Quality Infrastructure Council of the Americas, QICA, with our sister regional organizations for standards and metrology. I know the COPANT representative wanted to participate but was unable to travel to Lima.

Welcome and thank you for being here with us today!

We are living in challenging economic times, and at IAAC we face considerable challenges. Yet and at the same time we need to address the growing needs of our members, extending the MLAs to new scopes, developing new accreditation programs and schemes and providing the Cooperation with time, dedication, energy and in particular with human resources. So, we have a number of programs to help us do that.

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### **Strategic Plan**

The redesigned 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, approved last year, has a clear emphasis on 4 key objectives. The first relates to strengthening and expanding the IAAC MLA, which is at the core of our accreditation activity. The second one is about increasing our influence at IAF-ILAC and the regions. The third objective is to promote the participation of IAAC members at all levels of the organization and making sure that IAAC is meeting their needs and expectations. And finally, the fourth and last objective is to strengthen the organization in technical areas while achieving sustainability.

### **IAAC membership**

The Cooperation membership grew from 41 in 2012 to a total of 51 members this year, with a significant increase in our Stakeholder members.

### **IAAC re-evaluation by IAF-ILAC**

IAAC was re-evaluated for the scopes of testing and calibration laboratories and inspection and for QMS, EMS and product certification, resulting in 0 Non Conformities. While we are pleased that the evaluation of IAAC by IAF and ILAC is closed and are thrilled that we had no non-conformities and a single comment, the cycle will start anew in 2017.

### **IAAC MLA: signatories and scope extensions**

In 2012, IAAC had 17 MLA signatories in 6 MLA scopes, now we have 20 MLA signatories in 9 MLA scopes.

In 2012, IAAC signed the ILAC MRA for Inspection Bodies. I deserve none of the credit for this because the work had been done before but I was lucky to be the one to sign it.

Only last week, IAAC applied to ILAC and IAF to extend the MLA for the scopes of Proficiency Testing Providers, Food Safety Management Systems and Information Security Management Systems. We expect to apply soon for the scopes of Reference Material Producers and Medical Devices Management Systems.

Our most recent MLA signatories are ONAC of Colombia and ANAB of the USA, both accepted for the IAAC MLA for Medical Devices Management Systems (MDMS). ema of Mexico was also accepted as an IAAC MLA signatory for the scopes of Proficiency Testing Providers, for Reference Materials Producers and for Food Safety Management Systems.

CGCRE of Brazil and NVLAP of the USA maintained their recognition for the full range of scopes they work with.

Extension scopes were approved earlier in the year for ONA of Nicaragua inspection bodies and INN of Chile for inspection bodies and product certification.

The IAAC MLA process is constantly being streamlined and improved. Our pool of peer evaluators has increased but the availability of trained human resources for the peer evaluations remains a significant challenge. In spite of this challenge, IAAC evaluation teams carried out a total of 47 evaluations from 2012 to 2016.

### **IAAC Proficiency Testing programs**

The PT activity, both in IAAC and in individual accreditation bodies, will be undergoing profound changes due to the evolving requirements and restrictions proposed in the revisions of ISO/IEC 17011 and ISO/IEC 17025. You may hear more about this later.

### **IAAC Finances**

IAAC is meeting its financial objectives and you will get a report later today. We have identified some challenges in the management of our finances and we will be implementing improvements in the future.

### **Training Activities**

IAAC is continuously training its peer evaluators and AB staff, and you will hear more information about this during the Management Committee report.

### **Technical assistance projects**

IAAC is implementing three technical cooperation projects sponsored by PTB of Germany. These projects are conducted jointly with the regional organizations for standards and metrology, COPANT and SIM. The Organization of American States (OAS) is also a partner. These projects help support valuable training workshops and the project accomplishments will be reported later on during this meeting.

### **Cooperation with International and Regional Organizations**

IAAC continues to enjoy productive working relationships with IAF and ILAC, with regional accreditation cooperations and other relevant organizations.

### **IAAC Documents**

The IAAC documentation is quite extensive and comprehensive. The effort initiated a couple of years ago to streamline and simplify the documents and procedures is approaching a successful conclusion. But of course, as we know, ensuring adequate and up to date documentation is a never ending activity.

### **News about IAAC**

The IAAC website is the source for information on recent developments in accreditation, mandatory documents and procedures for peer evaluations, as well as newsletters and reports on World Accreditation Day from our members across the region, among many other topics related to quality infrastructure. I invite you to visit the site and see for yourselves.

IAAC also regularly publishes an electronic newsletter but may be moving to other communication vehicles in the future.

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I cannot take credit but for a fraction of the shining results of all this hard work, because it is the result of the collective efforts by each one of IAAC's members, and the beauty is that the groundwork has been laid so that the only way to continue is forward and up.

So here we stand at the cross roads of exciting and challenging times, and it is at this time when I will be honored, at the end of this week, to hand the baton over to a valiant and worthy successor, to continue with the mission, together with all the members, of effectively spreading the benefits of accreditation for the advancement of IAAC members and all the citizens of our region.

In closing, I want to again express my appreciation to all of you for your continued support and efforts on behalf of the IAAC and accreditation in the Americas.

Thanks to our wonderful hosts, for the excellent arrangements and the warm and generous interactions with all the INACAL staff and of course Rocío Barrios, the President of INACAL, and our dear friend Augusto Mello for the excellent organization of this week of very productive meetings.

It has been a very pleasant journey that is ending too quickly.

Thank you. Muchas gracias. Muito obrigada.

Ileana Martinez  
IAAC Chair  
September 9, 2016