



Inter American Accreditation Cooperation

IAAC Chair Report From September 2016 to August 2017

This report covers IAAC activities from the 21st General Assembly in Lima, Peru, in September 2016 until this 22nd General Assembly in Bogota, Colombia.

For me it is always a pleasure to at an IAAC meeting and be among friends. Before I begin my report, I want to thank Francisco and his staff for being such a delightful host and accommodating all of us. The warmth of our friends, the delicious food, and the wonderful hotel all serve to provide an excellent venue for our annual meeting. It's comforting to see so many familiar faces, but is it also good to have the opportunity to welcome new members and colleagues. I think we are all enjoying being here in Bogota. I had the pleasure to be here several years ago to participate in the CASCO meetings. And in June just a few years ago I had the privilege to be a member of the peer evaluation team evaluating ONAC here in Bogota. And I know many of us remember, with great fondness, when we had our General Assembly in the beautiful sunny coastal city of Cartagena a few years ago.

It is interesting to note that one of our stakeholder members, ASOCOLAB is holding its Congress in Bogota this week. Liliane, our Vice Chair, was invited to speak at its Congress yesterday. And our newest stakeholder member, UILI, planned their General Assembly to be in Bogota because we, the IAAC, am meeting here this week. I had the honor to address their group on Wednesday. The Quality Infrastructure Council of the Americas, QICA, of which IAAC is a member, together with COPANT and SIM, also had the opportunity to meet yesterday. It is exciting to see so many organizations related to quality and conformity assessment that are converging around our General Assembly.

When last we met in Lima about a year ago the IAAC celebrated its 20th year anniversary. We celebrated this in Lima with presentations from almost all of our past presidents. I want to take this opportunity to recognize two of our past presidents that have been with us this week. Beatriz and Ileana, will you please stand up so that we may extend to each of your our great appreciation.

I will also take this opportunity to thank others.

- I want to thank Victor, our very experienced and very competent Secretary. For all of us that volunteer to lead different committees of IAAC, Victor is an invaluable resource to assist us. I also want to recognize Nelson, a relatively new member of the Secretariat, but one that is already making a valuable contribution. Victor and Nelson, please stand up so that we can show our appreciation.
- I want to thank Liliane, my Vice Chair. Not only is she serving IAAC as Vice Chair, but she is representing us very well at ILAC and IAF; at ILAC as the JDSC Co-convenor and member of the ILAC EC and at IAF as the MLAC Vice Chair. Please join me in recognizing Liliane's great contributions.

- I could continue in this manner because there are so many individuals making significant contributions, but I stand in order to applaud and thank all of you; each and every one of you that is here to day, and also some that are not able to be here. Thank you.

In Lima, I was elected President to lead the IAAC for the next two years; to carry on and advance the legacy passed on to me by our past leaders. I think as most of you know, I accepted the position with reluctance because I had just finished six years of leading IAF as its President. I know that part of the reason I was asked to be President of IAAC is because of my experience at IAF, but part of the reason was also because it seems that no one else felt ready to take this on. So one of my challenges as your President is to work with all of you, my colleagues here in the IAAC, to lead continued development and evolution into an organization that will be self-sustaining and successful for the next 20 years and beyond. I hope we will be able to achieve this together.

Even though I accepted this position with reluctance, I consider it a very high honor, and distinct privilege, for me to serve as your President and I will strive do my very best for you. I thank all of you for your confidence in me.

The accreditation cooperations like IAAC and most of the other regional cooperations, are organizations of volunteers, as are ILAC and IAF, the global cooperations. We all have very small paid Secretariats. EA is the one exception at this stage having a full time paid executive director and secretariat receiving significant support from the EU. How often do we sit in meetings and say "IAAC should do this" or "ILAC should do that" or "When is IAF going to do such and such"? Who is IAAC, or ILAC or IAF? The answer is "It is us". It will be more accurate to say "we should do this" or "we should to that" or "we should do such and such" because it will only get done if one or more of us volunteer and work to do it.

But with all of this said, it is truly amazing what we have accomplished. The world looks to ILAC and IAF, and the regions, to safeguard the credibility of accredited conformity assessment. Many do not know that this recognition is built upon the work of volunteers. I am very sure that the time will come, and sooner than later, when we must evolve into organizations increasingly resourced by paid leaders and employees.

IAAC this past year has felt directly the pain when some of our volunteers are not able to fulfill their commitments because of changes within their bodies. This seems to be a higher risk for IAAC than elsewhere, although I am aware of this happening within other regions as well as at ILAC and IAF.

I am pleased to report that we successfully weathered such changes during this past year, the first year of my term. This is evidence of the wisdom of our past leaders in setting up the structure of IAAC with each committee and subcommittee having a Chair and Vice Chair. Ferney of ONAC, newly elected in Lima as Vice Chair of the MLA Committee stepped up to effectively lead the MLA Committee when we lost our Chair due to the organizational changes of one of our members. This past year has demonstrated the resilience of our organization.

But we have also implemented changes that I hope will reduce the adverse impact of such changes upon IAAC going forward. We will be requesting written assurances from the leaders of our members that those taking on leadership positions will be given the support by their bodies to fulfill their commitments for their terms of office, or give reasonable notice to IAAC when this

cannot continue. We have also implemented a new process, that we call an “induction” whereby the IAAC Chair and other members of the EC as well as the Secretary will conduct a Webex meeting with the new leadership of an AB to help them better understand IAAC and the international accreditation infrastructure and the critical roles that their staff are playing. We have recently trialled this new process.

While we have had some set-backs due to such changes, I am pleased to report that the new leaders of these members are with us and are demonstrating the continued commitment of their bodies.

Taking on a leadership position within IAAC often carries with it the additional responsibility of representing IAAC at ILAC and IAF, often being expected to provide written reports and to make presentations at various ILAC or IAF committees. It reflects poorly upon IAAC when the IAAC representative is unable to be present and make their report. Recognizing this, and also recognizing that this absence can be due to factors beyond the control of any of us, I have recommended to the EC that IAAC pay to have Victor present at both of the annual meetings of ILAC and IAF. Victor is usually knowledgeable enough of the work of each of our groups that I am confident that he could step into the breach, so to speak, and present a written or oral report and to handle any questions.

Taking on a leadership position within IAAC is also the door to increased opportunities to take on leadership roles within ILAC and IAF. Some of these positions can be filled by anyone designated by IAAC, so if someone is unable to continue the IAAC can simply name another individual. But other positions are elected by ILAC or IAF membership or appointed by the ILAC or IAF ECs...and are usually very influential positions. These positions may be lost to us if someone is unable to continue. I am pleased report that our team was able to get Maribel of ema appointed to be the ILAC co-convener of the JWG A Committee when Johana Acuna was unable to continue...but we could very easily have had this go to someone not a member of IAAC.

I apologize for the extended discussion of this topic, but continuity of participation and leadership may be one of the greatest challenges for our region. I will continue to focus on this subject for my term as President and I hope when I finish my term that we have some solutions for this. I welcome any suggestions from any of you with regard to this. It will take our collective efforts to resolve this.

Another challenge for IAAC, but which is also a challenge for all of the accreditation cooperations globally, is getting work accomplished when we meet only once or twice a year face to face. So this year we have had the Secretariat subscribe to WEBEX, and we have successfully used it a couple of times. So I am urging each of our committees and subcommittees, especially those that are smaller, to strongly consider meeting more often via WEBEX. WEBEX is ideal for any small group (10 or less) that is also developing any document as the document can be viewed and edited live during the WEBEX. All you have to do is contact Victor to arrange for a meeting to be scheduled. And even though we have the language issue, we have worked through this successfully in WEBEX meetings.

I could, as Chair, report more on things like the strategic plan, membership, internal audits and management review, the upcoming peer evaluation of IAAC by ILAC and IAF and other subjects,

but these are on our agenda today so we will wait until then. However, I have just a couple of points that I want to mention.

- The first is regarding the peer evaluation process. In IAAC and all of the regional cooperations each AB is obligated-mandated-required to provide qualified individuals to serve as peer evaluators consistent with the scope for which they are recognized. This is a cost to each signatory-to make their people available at no cost to the cooperation-to serve as peer evaluators of other ABs or other regions. In theory if each AB does this, we have no problem. In truth this always has been and still is a huge huge problem. We have a continual great inconsistency between ABs is fulfilling this obligation. The MLA committee and Secretariat have come up with new measures of performance of each of us ABs, and can now measure reliably how many peer evaluation days are consumed by an AB and how many peer evaluator days are provided by that AB so that we can put in on an accounting basis. So this week the MLAC Committee took a decision for a new process that may very well resolve this very long standing issue. For the first time I am optimistic we have a solution to this problem.
- The second is regarding the expansion of the MLA. The process within our region as well as at ILAC and IAF is too slow. We are not responding as fast as our stakeholders need so they can respond to market needs. Collectively we are failing our economies. But this is a focus in the Strategic Plans of ILAC and IAF and we are making progress. This week we moved faster in considering new subsopes to be added to the MLA. So I am optimistic about this subject also.

So I will end my report and again, thank you for allowing me the privilege to serve as your President.

Thank you.
Randy Dougherty
IAAC Chair
August 25, 2017