

JOINT MEETING

Cooperation with the Metre Convention, ILAC and other International Organizations

BIML REPORT

On February 27th, the annual coordination meeting between the OIML, the Metre Convention and ILAC was held at the BIPM. Again this year, the meeting served to demonstrate that the three organizations have very similar concerns and priorities, and also that a considerable number of fields were indeed common to all of them: two general issues were identified as being worked on in the three organizations in a similar way and are consequently considered as being important fields for cooperation:

- Studies on the economic impact of metrology and accreditation worldwide, especially on the cost to countries of technical barriers to trade, will be the object of mutual information and consultation,
- Government awareness of the issues developed by the three organizations, together with coordination with standard-setting bodies and Regional Organizations, are major prerequisites for the joint projects of the three organizations to be successful,
- All three organisations either have or are in the process of agreeing and implementing Mutual Recognition Arrangements/Agreements and the global consistency of these arrangements is an important issue for their coordination.

In addition to the usual items on the agenda (Joint Committee for Guides on Metrology (JCGM) activities, ISO 17011, ISO 9001, etc.), two particular issues were discussed and further joint meetings have been held.

The revision of OIML D 1 *Law on Metrology* is a priority for a number of members of the three organizations, since many countries are revising their own law on metrology, on legal metrology, on conformity assessment, etc. A *Law on Metrology* is a concern for the three organizations, since it sets the bases for

traceability and consistency of measurements. A joint working group met on February 28th and discussed the working document, which had been drawn up by the OIML (BIML and the USA). Following the incorporation of comments submitted by the joint working group, this working document is now at the status of first committee draft (1 CD) of OIML TC 3 and will shortly be submitted for discussion within the three organizations, so as to progress jointly rather than individually at the next meeting of the joint working group.

The revised D 1 will be different from the existing one. While D 1 was previously a model law on metrology which was recommended to be adopted in the various countries, the future D 1 will consist of fundamental points to be considered when drafting laws on metrology, laws on legal metrology and laws on conformity assessment. These elements will take into account the different specific requirements of the countries, such as the level of economic development, the degree of centralization of the country and the extension of the role of the state compared to that of private bodies.

The second issue of common interest is to promote consistency in the assistance programs to developing countries and to improve the way in which metrology and accreditation are taken into account in these programs. A Joint Committee had been formed, the title of which was initially *Joint Committee for Coordinating Assistance to Developing Countries in Metrology*. The aim of this Joint Committee is to assist international development agencies, funding organizations and governments to design technical assistance programs which have consistent and comprehensive parts dealing with metrology, legal metrology and accreditation. Another purpose of this Joint Committee is to provide technical assistance bodies with a list of experts whose technical competence is adapted to the tasks required by the programs.

A further meeting was held on 24 April 2002 between the BIPM, ILAC and the OIML to study the ways in which this Joint Committee could be further developed, in association with other international organizations whose activity is complementary to metrology and accreditation (ISO, ISO/CASCO, ISO/DEVCO, IEC, IAF), and with some regional organizations that are interested by this issue (OAS, APEC, SADC, SIM). UNIDO also participated in this meeting, and the OIML was represented by the BIML Director and the Chairperson of the OIML Development Council. All the participants recognized the need to expand the scope of the Joint Committee to include the coordination of technical assistance to developing countries and countries in transition in metrology, accreditation and standardization. A number of activities to be considered by this Joint Committee have been identified and will be discussed at its next meeting in Stockholm on 28 September. ■