

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

TBT/W/13

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Special Distribution

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

INTERNATIONAL LABORATORY ACCREDITATION CONFERENCE

Note by the Secretariat

1. In TBT/W/8 the secretariat distributed information about a number of international standardizing bodies. The present document gives information concerning the International Laboratory Accreditation Conference (ILAC) the work of which is relevant, in particular, to Article 5 of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.
2. ILAC met for the first time in October 1977, and met again in October 1978 and October 1979. Its next meeting will be organized by the French Ministry of Industry and will be held in Paris in October 1980 under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Bryden (France). More than thirty countries and seven international organizations will be participating in the Conference.
3. The Conference brings together representatives of countries and of international bodies wishing to exchange information on the legal and technical problems raised by the mutual recognition of test results, which could be facilitated by the existence, the implementation and the recognition of test laboratory accreditation systems.
4. At the end of the 1978 Conference, three Task Forces were established to work on:
 - 4.1 a survey of legal and regulatory matters raised by the mutual recognition of test reports and of test laboratory accreditation systems;
 - 4.2 a directory of national laboratory accreditation systems, and, more generally, of national testing organizations;
 - 4.3 the survey of needs, objectives, effects and consequences of the implementation of test laboratory accreditation systems, and comparison of the criteria used for laboratory accreditation. These task forces will present their conclusions to the 1980 Conference in Paris.
5. The following specific objectives have been established for the Paris meeting:
 - 5.1 development of definitions of international terms used for test laboratory accreditation systems and related activities (ISO is preparing a terminology guide in this field);

- 5.2 comparison between criteria used in the implementation and operation of test laboratory accreditation systems and recommendations for minimum criteria to be used for international recognition purposes;
- 5.3 study of the legal aspects of the international recognition of test laboratory accreditation systems, and in particular of obstacles to the acceptance of test results issued in other countries;
- 5.4 examination of the tasks and actions that existing international organizations could undertake to promote the development of regional or national test laboratory accreditation systems.