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UNIDO establishes strategic partnership with ILAC/IAF

Vienna, Austria, 11 October 2004 – Carlos Magariños, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), addressed yesterday via videoconference, the fourth session of the Joint International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) / International Accreditation Forum (IAF) General Assembly taking place in Cape Town, South Africa.

Carlos Magariños said that UNIDO fights poverty by facilitating the access to, and the diffusion of, knowledge, information and skills. By assisting developing countries to enhance this type of capabilities, the Organization helps them to foster social advance through technological progress and productivity growth. UNIDO is keen to develop a long-term partnership with ILAC and IAF to enhance the ability of developing countries to become dynamic players in the world trade arena.

Taking into consideration the importance of improving the capacity of developing countries to address the issue of accreditation and conformity assessment, the UNIDO Director-General proposed “the definition of a work programme to be pursued through our collective efforts with a view to strengthening accreditation capabilities with due participation of developing countries. We in UNIDO are ready to lead this effort in cooperation with ILAC and IAF”.

Following his statement, the Director-General signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ILAC/IAF. The Chairmen Mike Peet and Thomas Facklam signed the agreement on behalf of ILAC and IAF respectively, with His Excellency Mr. Mandisi Mpahlwa, Minister of Trade and Industry of South Africa, as witness of honour.

Carlos Magariños considers the signature of this agreement as “the clearest signal we can issue of this common endeavour”. The MoU establishes a strategic partnership between UNIDO and ILAC/IAF in the field of accreditation as part of conformity assessment, in order to enhance the impact of industrial development on economic growth, and to assist the integration of developing countries and transition economies into the global economy. ILAC and IAF had previously expressed their intention to develop further cooperation with UNIDO, noting its leading role in the UN system in assisting development countries overcome technical barriers to trade, and its specific relationships with ISO, WTO and UNCTAD.

The current UNIDO – ILAC/IAF cooperation focuses on Pre-Peer Evaluations for Laboratory Accreditation Bodies (with ILAC), as well as for Accreditors of Certification Bodies (with IAF). Joint activities aim at raising awareness of the importance of accreditation and its role in trade facilitation, by promoting the acceptance of accredited tests and calibration results (ILAC) and accredited ISO 9000 certificates (IAF). Pre-Peer Evaluations aim at providing governments and relevant national accreditation institutions in developing countries with a pre-evaluation model, to facilitate their participation in relevant Mutual Recognition Arrangements.

Note for editors

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that focuses its efforts on relieving poverty by fostering productivity growth. It helps developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their fight against marginalization in today's globalized world. It mobilizes knowledge, skills, information and technology to promote productive employment, a competitive economy and a sound environment. UNIDO has 171 member states. For more information, please visit www.unido.org.

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) are specialized bodies for matters of accreditation. Both are operating Mutual Recognition Arrangements that provide mutual recognition of laboratory, inspection body and certification body accreditors.

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