



OIML Permanent Working Group on Developing Countries

17 June 2005, Lyon, France

Participants: Mr Kochsiek (OIML Acting President), Mr Seiler (PWGDC Chairman), Mrs Annabi (Tunisia), Mr Carpenter (USA), Mr Ooiwa (Japan), Mr Tukai (Tanzania), Mr Dunmill (BIML)

1 Opening

Mr Kochsiek opened the meeting by welcoming participants to Lyon adding that the old OIML Development Council had been disbanded due to its lack of positive results. Although the Forum in Berlin had produced, and was continuing to produce, some good results, he hoped that PWGDC members would be able to report some results since the last meeting, thus demonstrating that this group was a more effective means of conducting the OIML's work for developing countries.

2 Chairman's report

Mr Seiler began by expressing his thanks to the PTB for continuing to provide assistance for his activities as Chairman of the PWGDC although he had now retired.

He went on to report that he had produced a work programme based on the meetings held in Berlin, which was circulated to members of the PWGDC in February 2005. He said that his work since then had been mainly that resulting from the Forum:

Equipment (work programme item 5):

German local verification offices had adjusted and verified the weights and Mettler-Toledo had overhauled the balances, both doing the work for free. After negotiations with a shipping company, the equipment was now ready to be sent, but at a cost of 23 000 €, showing that donating equipment to developing countries was not as easy or cheap as it may seem. The recipient countries were to be Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ukraine.

Mr Carpenter commented that the USA had encountered the same problems as the PTB when trying to ship donated equipment. The costs of shipping were high and there were also often customs problems due to tax being payable on gifts. Mr Seiler said that for this reason it was important that the recipient countries understood that they were responsible for making the necessary enquiries and arrangements with their own customs authorities. Mr Tukai explained that when Tanzania had received equipment from Germany, they had liaised with the German Embassy and their local customs authorities and having received a statement saying that the equipment was aid for developing countries and quoting its value, no tax had been paid. Mr Ooiwa

added that in order to avoid problems, it must be made clear who is responsible for the equipment throughout the process of its transfer to a recipient country.

Mr Seiler continued by saying that information on additional equipment which had been offered by German verification offices since the Forum had been sent to the BIML and Mr Dunmill had said that this information would be published on the website, along with application forms which required an undertaking that the equipment would be used for verification. Feedback on this kind of concrete result as a result of the Forum would assist legal metrology authorities, who traditionally are not very good at seeking funding.

Needs assessment based on posters (work programme item 4):

The PTB had also decided to offer training to COOMET and SADC MEL based on information presented on their Posters at the Forum.

Existing translation of OIML Recommendations

Mr Seiler reported that the COOMET website had translations into Russian of many OIML publications. Mr Dunmill undertook to add a link to this information on the OIML website.

3 Report of the members of the PWGDC

Mr Seiler asked members to report on the progress they had made on tasks allocated to them on the work programme.

Mrs Annabi reported that contacts with Syria had shown that around 50 OIML Recommendations had been translated into Arabic, and that they were ready to continue with other translations. She asked how these translations could be made available. Mr Seiler replied that they should be made available on a website, to which a link could be added on the OIML website. Mr Dunmill confirmed that this approach was preferred, since the OIML was to take no responsibility for translations of publications into languages other than English and French.

Mr Ooiwa reported that the APLMF region uses English since most of the languages used in the region are purely domestic. Moving to the subject of training, he reported that many training texts were available to APLMF members. He added that they were now working on accessible information on rice moisture measurement and other measurements for agricultural products. He said that there were also simplified verification instructions on petrol pumps, but that Australia held the copyright for these. He agreed to raise the copyright question again at the next APLMF meeting.

Mr Carpenter reported that OIML publications which were available in Spanish were to be made available on the SIM website, and that the Office of Weights and Measures at NIST had produced a mass metrology CD in English and in Spanish, which could be obtained by registering on their website, so that updating was possible. Again, Mr Dunmill agreed to put a link on the OIML website for all this information. Mr Carpenter went on to say that SIM was also trying training by means of video-conferencing. He finished his report by saying that the SIM books on Legal Metrology and Metrology for non-metrologists were successfully used in awareness-raising activities at the political level.

Mr Tukai reported that SADC MEL had produced simplified verification instructions on beam scales and platform scales as well as two publications on the control and labelling of prepacked goods. Mr Carstens, who was present only for this item in his role as regional coordinator for SADC MEL, explained that these documents had been finalised by the appropriate SADC MEL technical committees and passed to SADC STAN for publication as regional harmonised standards. Since these were still “virtual” documents, which countries were encouraged to use in their regulations, he saw no reason that other countries could not also use them. Mr Tukai continued that SADC MEL was also undertaking translation of some publications into Portuguese. He finished his report by saying that many training modules had been produced in the region, but that these were not stand-alone courses, since they required presentation by a trainer.

Mr Dunmill reported that the Forum website needed some files to be modified to improve compatibility with older software. He said that immediately following the CIML Meeting, he would also be attending the “interactive workshop on influencing and meeting international standards: challenges for developing countries”, organised by the International Trade Centre and the Commonwealth Secretariat. He also reported that the OIML had taken on the secretariat of the JCDCMAS for 2005 and said that current actions of this group included the production of a calendar of events of interest to members and finalisation of the background paper and PowerPoint presentation, which were intended to be used in the promotion of the package of metrology, accreditation and standardisation in awareness-raising events.

4 Assessment of the results achieved so far

The assessment of the results had already been discussed under the previous item, but Mr Seiler asked that he and the BIML be kept aware of results achieved.

Mr Kochsiek asked members whether they had any information on contacts with or activities involving countries which were not members of the OIML.

Mr Carpenter said that it had been decided that the legal metrology infrastructure in Caribbean countries should be developed and that last week, ambassadors of these countries had met prior to approaching the Inter-American Development Bank for funding. The subject was also to be raised at the Presidential Summit to be held in November in Argentina, and the aim was to put into place a law on metrology as well as a training programme.

Mr Ooiwa pointed out that they received requests for helping to set up metrology infrastructure, but that it was important to point out the need for governmental responsibility for the establishment of a national metrology policy.

Mr Carpenter said that within CARIMET, the individual countries had established their own needs and had then been encouraged to work together to consider the region’s needs. It had been realised that in bringing the less developed countries of the region up to a certain level, assistance from other countries in the region was preferable to outside help, since they understood better the local needs and problems.

Mrs Annabi said that it was difficult to understand developing countries needs in legal metrology. Since the regions were quite different, she said that she felt that the regional organisations should be approached to undertake this needs assessment. Mr Seiler said that this had been the idea behind the composition of the PWGDC, which represented the Asia-Pacific, Americas, Southern African and Maghreb regions. Mr Kochsiek said that the idea of an OIML budget for developing country assistance had already been discussed, but that this would be quite small, and would permit perhaps one regional activity each year. He added that the needs must be put forward by the regions, and suggested that Mrs Annabi could put forward suggestions for the needs of Maghreb countries.

Mr Tukai suggested that if such information on needs were obtained, countries could be grouped with others having similar levels of needs and/or development, as had been done following a UNIDO study in his region.

5 Future tasks

Mr Seiler said that as well as the ongoing work on simplified verification instructions, the location of training materials and of translations of OIML publications, the following items should be considered this year:

- 1 OIML officials should respond to requests for support on the promotion of legal metrology throughout the world, and use could be made of the new OIML leaflet as well as the JCDCMAS materials mentioned above. Mr Tukai said that he felt that PWGDC members should also undertake this role when they had the opportunity.
- 2 The Forum website should be further developed, so as to demonstrate the benefits the OIML could offer to developing countries. Mr Seiler asked members to send information on positive outcomes and activities to the BIML, so that they could be published.

6 Results and recommendations to be presented at the CIML meeting

Mr Seiler said that he would present a report on the group's discussions and proposed actions at the CIML meeting to be held over the next three days.

7 Closure

Mr Seiler said that the next meeting should be held in conjunction with the CIML Meeting in 2006. He felt that if necessary, another meeting could be held before this, but asked for closer e-mail contact than had been the case since October, so that he, and other members, could be kept aware of developments and members' activities.

Finally, Mr Kochsiek thanked Mr Seiler for having used his free time since retirement to organise and work for the PWGDC and for continuing to do so for the coming year.