

**November 4th, 2021**

Dear IAF Members and Stakeholders,

I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to Xiao Jianhua for all the years dedicated to IAF, and to the entire International Quality Infrastructure community.

His guidance has taught us to reach decisions with patience and a clear sense of unity, pausing, when necessary, to allow everyone to understand the choices on the table, without haste. I remember with pleasure the extraordinary meetings organized close to important meetings, in order to involve everyone in reaching shared decisions. It was a winning strategy that has led us to where we are now and I firmly intend to continue it in the years to come. The strength of waiting, and the management of time.

With this spirit of sharing and dialogue we must face the ambitious and important projects ahead of us. These include post Covid management, the enhancement of the IAF database, and the first recognitions in accordance with IEC/ISO 17029.

We live in a complex world, where emergencies and crises spread rapidly on a global scale. The pandemic of recent years as well as the closely related environmental and demographic crises, require governments and all of us to make important decisions. Decisions that will affect the quality of life of future generations.

Accreditation and conformity assessment can help find answers and solutions.

Over the last decade, sustainability has become a central theme on the agenda of many countries and the Quality Infrastructure has likewise moved forward. I remember with pleasure that last June ISO launched the *ISO Strategic Advisory Group on Environmental, social, governance (ESG) ecosystem*.

These are very broad issues that require concerted commitments. IAF is the table where Accreditation Bodies, regions and stakeholders can sit down to share ideas and propose solutions, not starting from opposing blocks but each bringing their own contribution. IAF is not the place where you want to impose your ideas, but a place where you sit and listen and exchange ideas.

In this perspective of enlargement and sharing, the project of ever closer collaboration with ILAC is of fundamental importance, leading us, we hope, to become one single organization. The need for inclusion and understanding of the motivations of others must also be reflected in the structure of an organization. It is a question of cohesion, as well as good management. Unity engenders greater value.

We must remember that Accreditation is above all a service that produces value for users, a value of transparency and efficiency for citizens, businesses and public administrations. We must listen to the needs of regulators and of the market, without ever forgetting the value of our activities.

IAF's Vision is "Accreditation makes the world better", not only because it facilitates trade, but also because it defends people's health, safety and needs. We should bear this in mind it when we defend a position. Defending this concept means having the intellectual honesty to make our experiences and skills available to everyone. For the good of all.

To give sense to what we do.