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codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION



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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF LEGAL METROLOGY (OIML) (REPORT OF ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO CODEX WORK)*

Introduction

For many years, the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) has been formally in liaison with Codex Alimentarius. OIML now wishes to substantiate this liaison by actively contributing to the work of relevant Codex Commissions. This paper outlines the purpose and role of the OIML and its activities relevant to Codex.

The purpose of the OIML

Metrology is the science of measurement and its practical application. Legal metrology is everything within the domain of metrology that is regulated in legislation. This can range from the designation of national measurement standards and legal units of measurement to the requirements for measuring instruments under legal control, conformity assessment procedures and enforcement of metrological requirements by inspection bodies.

The OIML is an intergovernmental organization under a Convention signed in 1955. Its main responsibilities cover mutual information in legal metrology, harmonization of legal metrology regulations, development of mutual confidence and recognitions in this field and support to the development of legal metrology; in particular in Developing Countries.

OIML Recommendations (model technical regulations) and Documents or Guides (informative documents) are international standards as defined in the WTO/TBT Agreement, and are best practice in many industrial and other sectors. They require evidence of traceability to the measurement standards of the SI.

The OIML has set up a voluntary System of Certificates of Conformity for measuring instruments with regard to the OIML Recommendations and a Mutual Acceptance Arrangement (MAA) within which Declarations of Mutual Confidence (DoMCs) are signed for different categories of measuring instruments. Test results issued in this Certificate System by signatories of a DoMC which demonstrate conformity with OIML Recommendations are accepted and utilized by the other signatories.

In addition, the OIML is studying further acceptance and/or recognition systems for the assessment of the quantity of product in prepackages and for results of bulk measurements, thus facilitating international trade.

All OIML publications may be downloaded free of charge from the OIML website (www.oiml.org).

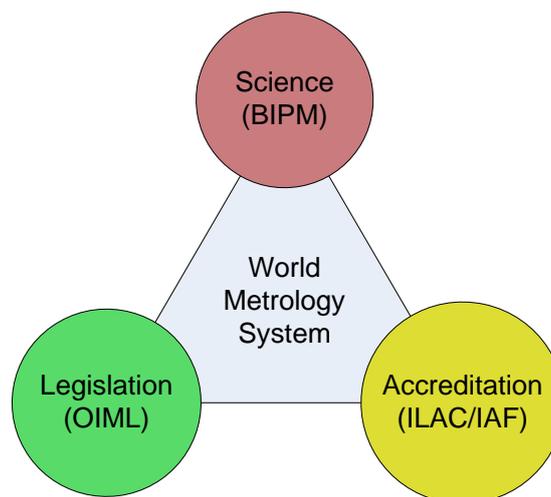
* Document prepared by and under the responsibility of OIML

The OIML and the World Metrology System

Measurements play an essential role in developing confidence between trading partners and in demonstrating that goods comply with written specifications and legal requirements; a process which involves making comparable or equivalent measurements in different countries. Any lack of acceptance by regulatory or other trade-related authorities in an importing country of the measurements made in an exporting country can become a technical barrier to trade.

The infrastructure for metrology in a country comprises a National Metrology Institute which maintains and disseminates traceability to the SI through calibrations and other services. The national networks of accredited and other calibration laboratories then make use of the national traceability framework to perform other measurements and calibrations which can then also demonstrate SI traceability. The national Legal Metrology system/infrastructure makes use of this and of legal infrastructures to demonstrate conformity with regulatory requirements.

(Scientific) metrology, accreditation and legal metrology therefore form three key elements of what is increasingly recognized by many international organizations as an essential infrastructure for national and international consistency of measurements. At the international level, the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), and the OIML collaborate to form the World Metrology System. Close relations are also maintained through MoUs with the International Standardization Organization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), to avoid overlap and duplication of work.



The BIPM and OIML have set up a joint web portal: <http://www.metrologyinfo.org/>. Its objective is to provide metrologists and key metrology decision makers worldwide with information about metrology.

OIML Publications and the WTO/TBT agreement

Members of OIML are signatories to the OIML Convention (<http://www.oiml.org/publications/B/B001-e55.pdf>). Membership of OIML is open to all countries. Each Member is represented in the OIML Committee (CIML), which adopts OIML Recommendations and Documents by (qualified) majority vote.

These publications are drafted by Technical Committees and Subcommittees, the responsibility for each of which rests with a secretariat run by one of the Member States (see http://www.oiml.org/tc_sc/ for information on the composition and activities of OIML Technical Committees and Subcommittees). All stakeholders (Members and Corresponding Members, industry -, trade - and consumer organizations, etc.) have the opportunity to participate in the technical work and comment on draft Recommendations and Documents. Draft publications are available on the OIML website and may be downloaded without restriction (see <http://www.oiml.org/download/cds.html>). Decisions at the level of Technical Committees and Subcommittees are taken by consensus as far as possible.

Member States have the moral obligation to implement these Recommendations and Documents into their national legislation as far as possible. Corresponding Members frequently use OIML recommendations and Documents as the basis for their national legal metrology regulations.

Under the terms of the WTO/TBT agreement, OIML is an international standard setting organization and OIML Recommendations and Documents are considered international standards. They differ from ISO and IEC standards in that they are model technical regulations which not only contain technical and metrological product specifications, but also harmonized provisions for legal metrological control, such as conformity assessment procedures and enforcement by national authorities.

OIML is an observer to the WTO/TBT Committee.

Due to the status of OIML Recommendations and Documents, WTO/TBT Members are obliged to use OIML Recommendations and Documents, or the relevant parts of them, as a basis for their technical regulations, where such regulations are required and relevant OIML Recommendations and Documents exist or their completion is imminent (TBT Agreement, article 2.4).

OIML and Codex Alimentarius

The Codex Alimentarius Commission was created to develop food standards, guidelines and related texts such as codes of practice under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, the main purposes of this Programme being: protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair trade practices in the food trade.

Traditionally, metrological regulations are introduced in national legislation to ensure correct measurements in a number of vital fields of public interest, such as trade (consumer protection), protection of health and the environment, tax collection and enforcement of traffic regulations.

As such, there is an overlap in the scope of activities of both OIML and Codex Alimentarius in the following fields:

- Requirements for the quantity of product (content) in pre-packages;
- Labelling requirements;
- Instruments used for physico-chemical measurements.

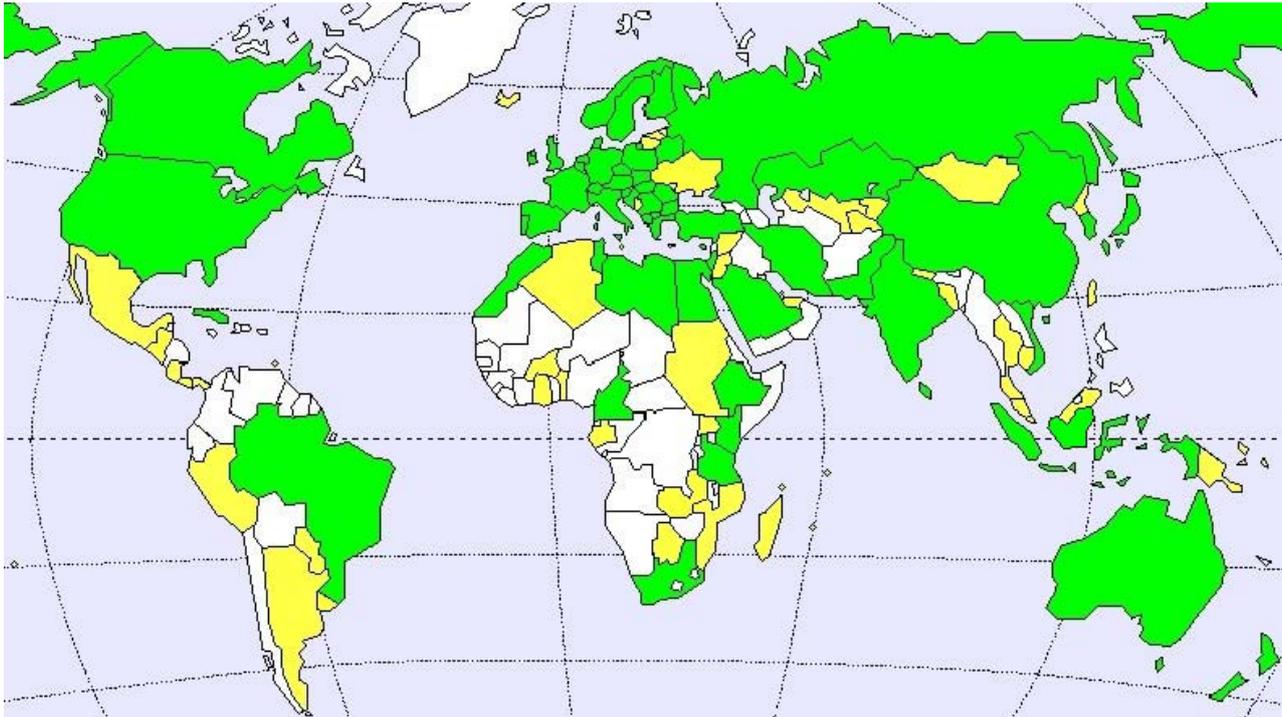
Part of the strategy of both organizations is cooperation with other international organizations to avoid overlap in activities and duplication of work:

- Codex Alimentarius Commission Strategic Plan 2008-2013, Goal 4: “...*Monitoring by the CAC of activities of other organizations that are relevant to food standards, and coordination with them, where appropriate and consistent with Codex procedures, is necessary to achieve complementarity, avoid duplication and prevent development of contradictory standards or guidelines. ...*”
- OIML Strategic Plan 2006 (<http://www.oiml.org/publications/B/B015-e06.pdf>): Strategy 1.6: “*Offer technical support to international organizations which address specific fields (health, trade, etc.), to international technical associations and organizations (such as the World Health Organization (WHO), to manufacturers’ organizations, etc.)*”, Strategy 3.1: “*Engage in ongoing dialogue with the WTO and other international organizations representing trading partners.*”

OIML seeks cooperation with Codex Alimentarius in a pragmatic way by means such as:

- Exchange of information about each others activities; invitation to participate in relevant meetings and make presentations as appropriate.
- Identifying overlapping activities and seeking agreement on how to resolve duplication of work and potentially conflicting standards.
- Participating in technical activities (commenting on draft standards, proposals for amendments of existing standards).

Annex: OIML Membership



Member States		Corresponding Members	
ALBANIA	KAZAKHSTAN	ARGENTINA	MAURITIUS
ALGERIA	KENYA	BAHRAIN	MEXICO
AUSTRALIA	REP. OF KOREA	BANGLADESH	MOLDOVA
AUSTRIA	MACEDONIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV	BARBADOS	MONGOLIA
BELARUS	REPUBLIC OF	BENIN	MONTENEGRO
BELGIUM	MONACO	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	MOZAMBIQUE
BRAZIL	MOROCCO	BOTSWANA	NEPAL
BULGARIA	NETHERLANDS	BURKINA FASO	NICARAGUA
CAMEROON	NEW ZEALAND	CAMBODIA	OMAN
CANADA	NORWAY	COMORES, ISLAMIC FED. REP. OF	PANAMA
P. REP. OF CHINA	PAKISTAN	COSTA RICA	PAPUA NEW GUINEA
CROATIA	POLAND	ESTONIA	PARAGUAY
CUBA	PORTUGAL	FIJI	PERU
CYPRUS	ROMANIA	GABON	QATAR
CZECH REPUBLIC	RUSSIAN FEDERATION	GHANA	RWANDA
DENMARK	SAUDI ARABIA	GUATEMALA	SEYCHELLES
EGYPT	SERBIA	HONG KONG, CHINA	SINGAPORE
ETHIOPIA	SLOVAKIA	ICELAND	SUDAN
FINLAND	SLOVENIA	JORDAN	SYRIA
FRANCE	SOUTH AFRICA	KOREA, DEM. P. REP. OF	CHINESE TAIPEI
GERMANY	SPAIN	KUWAIT	TAJKISTAN
GREECE	SRI LANKA	KYRGYZSTAN	THAILAND
HUNGARY	SWEDEN	LATVIA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
INDIA	SWITZERLAND	LIBYA	UKRAINE
INDONESIA	TANZANIA	LITHUANIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF	TUNISIA	LUXEMBURG	URUGUAY
IRELAND	TURKEY	MADAGASCAR	UZBEKISTAN
ISRAEL	UNITED KINGDOM	MALAYSIA	ZAMBIA
ITALY	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	MALTA	
JAPAN	VIETNAM		