



SAIW and SAIW Certification

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As the President of Africa's TWF, I was very proud to have been part of our first Annual Assembly and International Conference in Cairo.

TWF is a dynamic and forward-thinking organisation dedicated to advancing the welding industry in Africa. It provides a platform for professionals in the welding industry to network, share knowledge and collaborate towards achieving sustainable industrial development.

During the conference we had the opportunity to meet with the leadership of the IIW to discuss cooperation that could foster the accelerated growth of the welding industry across the continent. There are 54 countries in Africa, and the SAIW is currently the only IIW Authorised National Body (ANB).

While SAIW has been able service the needs of some African countries by delivering training and setting up Approved Training Bodies (ATBs), we have had to apply to the IIW for an Extension of Scope to operate in each country. We feel that the TWF, the IIW and the SAIW should cooperate to develop a Strategy for Africa that is affordable to African countries and will assist them in fast-tracking industrial growth – with welded fabrication at its core.

Here in South Africa, we have recently had meetings with our fellow industry associations, SAISI, Sassda and others, with a view to organising a Metals Conference, probably this August. While SAIW will present NDT, welding and fabrication, we are looking at a conference with the theme of growing the South African Steel Industry. We want to bring out the World Steel Association's Secretary General to give a talk and we hope to get strong support from our local steel and stainless steel producers.

We are targeting fabrication companies, our ISO 3834 clients and our corporate members, and we hope to put together an exhibition for suppliers to the steel and fabrication industry to exhibit new products, technologies and services. If we get a number of associations together, we think we can organise a decent sized conference with different breakaway sessions that would offer maximum benefit to our fabricators and a boost to the steel industry as whole.

We have recently done an ISO 3834 presentation to the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) and some entrepreneurs looking to supply local mines from factories in Middleburg. SEDA is exploring funding its members to get ISO 3834 certification. The reason is most pleasing. These local fabricators are suppliers to the mines in the area but are increasingly being excluded because more and more mining houses are insisting that fabricators are certified to ISO 3834. So the value of raising and controlling weld quality standards through our flagship SAIW ISO 3834 Certification Scheme is now beginning to be of interest to mining, our biggest industry.

We've got Sasol Group back for 2023, as well, a very strong group of 20 individuals. They will be with us for a year doing a comprehensive collection of courses, in NDT, process plant inspection, competent persons, ASME Codes, Paint Inspectors, Welding Inspectors and practical welding. Many of these courses will be run in Secunda to make access easier and more cost effective. Only those courses requiring laboratory equipment will be run at the SAIW. We also have a group of IAEA students from Malawi who will be with us for around six months, doing NDT.

I am pleased to report that the growth in student numbers and income for the first few months of this year is exceeding our expectations. Although we are still well down on where we were in 2019, we are already nearly 50% up on budget expectations. We are back on a sustainable growth trajectory, which suggests that our restructuring has been worthwhile. Long may this continue.

John Tarboton