



SAIW and SAIW Certification

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SAIW Certification Governing Board

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I am very pleased to report that we are now in the advanced stages of launching the Welding Federation of Africa (WeldFA) as a non-profit company with eight founding members from countries across the African continent. We have all agreed on a Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI), which is now with the attorneys, and we expect our first board meeting to take place within the next few weeks.

Due to COVID, we have learnt to employ low-cost and effective communication through virtual meeting and conferences, with participants dialling in from their own offices and countries. We intend to continue to leverage this for technology transfer, including cross border training and board meetings, which, we believe, will considerably reduce the need to travel. So an Africa-wide welding federation becomes a much more viable entity in today's world.

WeldFA will be used to help develop welding capability across Africa, to enable the drive towards industrialisation and growth on our continent. According to the African Development Bank's 2020 Annual Development Effectiveness Review (ADER), the last decade has seen manufacturing growth in Africa outpacing the global growth rate. In 2019, Africa's industrial GDP expanded by 17% to \$731-billion (in 2010 dollars), with the value-add of manufacturing surging by 39%.

But around two-thirds of value-added manufacturing takes place in just five nations: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa. Also, the COVID-19 pandemic has upended economic growth, disrupted trade and financial flows and triggered losses of millions of jobs. This makes the drive to industrialise Africa all the more urgent, and welding and related technologies are key to the success of such industrialisation.

The MOI details the different membership categories, starting with National members, which include nationally recognised bodies for welding and joining and formally incorporated groups or welding associations in African States.

Regular members will include any organisation in Africa involved in and carrying out welding and welding related activities and programmes, such as training, inspection, research, development, fabrication, construction and installation. Individuals are also welcome if they are involved in the practice or business of welding and related technologies, while associate members who have an interest in promoting welding related development will also be welcomed.

The key day-to-day activities envisioned as the core business for the African Federation include the promotion of goals, policies, systems and programmes for the development of welding technology in Africa, and the harmonisation of personnel training, examination and certification systems.

In addition, we aim to promote collaboration; organise seminars, workshops and conferences; represent Africa in the international welding community at all formal IIW meetings; and encourage the formation of welding societies and national welding bodies in countries where such organisations do not yet exist.

We hope to see more African participation in regional research and development activities and to provide a platform for the exchange of scientific and technical information, and innovative research in Africa. This will be supported by a system of honorary awards to recognise exceptional contributions made to Welding in Africa.

With its incorporated office in South Africa, we at SAIW will be striving to help make WeldFA a continental champion of industrialisation: supporting engineering, science and the application of joining technologies; providing a networking forum for scientists, researchers, industry and educators; and disseminating leading-edge information and best practices.

I invite any organisations or individuals interested in participating to join us, through the SAIW or directly through WeldFA (info@weldfa.org).

John Tarboton