For its Fourth General Assembly, AFSEC is being hosted by one of its newest members, the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Government of the DRC and its National Electrotechnical Committee will host AFSEC at the La Grand Hotel, Kinshasa.

The events will comprise the main General Assembly from 12-13 September 2014, preceded by meetings for the AFSEC management and invited partner organizations on 11 September. The General Assembly will include a workshop on the theme “The role of standardization in regional integration”.

On behalf of the AFSEC President, the secretariat and the host organizing committee, all distinguished guests, representatives of supporting organizations, its members and other delegates

WELCOME TO KINSHASA!

AFSEC - IEC Ex International two-day seminar in Lubumbashi 8-9 September 2014

A two day seminar on the IECEx conformity assessment system for equipment for use in explosive atmospheres is being organized by the IEC, in collaboration with the National Electrotechnical Committee of the D R Congo and AFSEC from 8-9 September in Lubumbashi, D R Congo. This builds on other similar successful conformity assessment seminars in Abidjan in 2011 and in Nairobi in 2013.

Highlights from 2014

Working session with the Commission on Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union

Addis Ababa, headquarters of the AUC 3-4 March 2014

In meetings with Mr. BABA Moussa: Director of Infrastructure and Energy and members of his staff, Mr KOUTOUA (AFSEC President) and Mr JOHNSON (Executive Secretary) provided feedback on the progress and challenges in AFSEC. The Director congratulated AFSEC on the achievements thus far, and encouraged AFSEC to make efforts to increase membership and offered the Commissioner’s office support in this endeavour.

He further encouraged AFSEC to provide the AUC with more information about standards recommended for common adoption thereby helping to finalize the process of adoption, promulgation and diffusion to the various members. This provision will help to develop the regulatory framework for the adoption of standards at the AU. It was confirmed that a budget allocation for AFSEC for 2014 had been approved by the AUC, but was dependent on higher level financial agreements between the AU and EU being finalized. Future biannual reports to the Commissioner will include a chapter on standardization and conformity assessment, which will be prepared by AFSEC.

The Director requested AFSEC for a report on "the challenges of the electricity market, a challenge for Africa". A copy of that report prepared by the secretariat is available on the AFSEC website.
During the opening ceremony of the first Africa Smart Grids Forum, which took place on 14 May, 2014 at the Sofitel Hotel Ivoire in Abidjan, the Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Mr Adama Toungara, thanked all the organizers, namely AFSEC, CIE, CODINORM, CIS, ASEA and AU Commission on Infrastructure and Energy, for holding such a forum. He praised AFSEC's choice of the main theme of the Forum “The Smart Grids, an Emerging Solution for Africa”, explaining that it fitted with the vision of the Ivorian Government. Attendance at the forum was so well that organizers had to get the logistics department to increase the number of seats.

The AFSEC president, Mr Claude KOUTOUA, was happy to report that 20 of the 24 country delegations attending the Africa Smart Grid Forum were from African countries.

The plenary sessions began on the morning of Thursday, 15 May. It focussed on the benefits of smart grids. The presentations were based on the experiences of countries like France, China, South Korea and on the benefits that African countries could derive from these experiences. Dr Hussein ELHAG, Executive Director of AFREC / African Union, noted that Africa is in the process of making a great shift to smart grids. Smart grids could help African countries achieve more energy savings and provide electricity to more people.

Mr Frans VREESWJIK, Secretary General of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), said the issue is not to know whether Africa is ready for the Smart Grid: It is no longer an option, it is a necessity. He observed that Smart Grid facilitates the supervision of existing networks, enables integration of renewable energy sources and permits to get free from legacy systems. He said that Africa must seize the opportunity to innovate and build intelligent networks from scratch, following the example of China.

As far as renewable energies are concerned, Mr Sabaty Cisse, Director of Energy presented the vision and strategy of the Ivorian Government in terms of energy development, and the objectives and action plans for 2013-2030.

CIE also hosted a beautiful gala dinner which was lit up by a highly colourful spectacle marked by a speech delivered by the company's Director General, Mr Dominique Kakou. The highly successful event ended on 16 May 2014. For a "Gazette" and photographs for each day of the Africa Smart Grid Forum please see http://www.africasmartgridforum2014.org
The Inaugural meeting of the AFSEC Conformity Assessment Committee was held 1-2 July 2014 in Johannesburg, organised by the AFSEC Secretariat, with representatives from DR Congo, South Africa and Zambia, under the direction of Eva ODUOR, Second Vice President supported by the AFSEC Secretariat. A strategic business plan (SBP) was drafted, for review by the AFSEC Management Committee. Mr Gauthier MBUYA, from the NEC D R Congo was proposed for nomination as Secretary for this committee.

At the same venue in Johannesburg, the inaugural meeting of AFSEC TC 82 took place, comprising representatives from Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, South Africa and Zambia. The draft strategic business plan for this committee will also be presented to the Management Committee for approval and endorsement by Council during the fourth GA. Mr Euloge Koutoua KASSI, from the NEC in Côte d’Ivoire is the committee’s nomination for TC secretary, while Leon DROTSCHE, South Africa, was proposed as TC chairman. The TC 82 meeting was also the forum for formally re-establishing the project team for the development of the rural electrification guidelines, under the leadership of the nominated project leader, Olivier MUKESHIMANA, Rwanda and with membership from eight AFSEC members and affiliates, and technical experts from Germany. Some 17 delegates from ten countries participated with support from the AFSEC secretariat. This meeting was sponsored by PTB Germany. Resulting from this meeting, a project plan and draft outline for the guidelines have been prepared.

Further meetings of both the CAC and TC 82 have been proposed for January 2015. More AFSEC members are encouraged to consider joining these committees.