



**AGM held on Friday the 1st.March 2024
IEM House, Quatre Bornes**

President's Report for Period 2023-2024

Dear Colleague Engineers

Good evening and welcome to this year's Annual General Meeting.

I have the pleasure to present to you the President's Report for year 2023/2024.

My main personal focus for the year 2023-2024 has been the WA project. I recall that we have been working on it since 2017 and the goal was to put in our application for Provisional membership of WA by June 2024. I am pleased to inform you that this goal has been achieved.

Putting this project in the right context and perspective given that Mauritius is a small island developing state, with a population of 1.3 million inhabitants, with 3 public universities and one main private university, and not many engineers (unfortunately willing to provide voluntarily time, effort) to work on it and what has been achieved to date has been nothing short of a miracle.

Colleagues at the International Engineering Alliance or at the WFEO and even colleagues at ECSA and NBA, are most pleasantly surprised that IEM has got to the point where we are, and without cutting a single corner.

Applying for membership of WA was a challenge for IEM and we have had to work very hard to produce all the required documentations and walking the documents through a long process of having them peer reviewed, approval by various sub-committees and Committees, passing the tests of scrutiny by our ECSA/NBA/WFEO mentors and well wishes.

The effort made by IEM's EAB team was such that it created such good impressions that overseas friends of IEM went out of their way to provide advice. Here, I thank Dr Elizabeth Taylor, immediate past-chair of Washington Accord and Dr. Marlene Kanga of WFEO.

I would here also thank the Vice chancellor of UOM and the DG of UTM who provided IEM with two programs each for the EAB teams to carry out accreditation visits under the watchful eyes and ears of the mentors from ECSA, Dr. Brandon Collier Reed and NBA's Dr. Sanjay Agrawal.

During the visits, it was EAB's teams that were under scrutiny and being judged for their competencies.

This accreditation exercise last November 23 taught us two important lessons. Working together in the higher interest of the country and our profession is a win – win for all of us. The exercise proved that our documentation and accreditation procedures met the expected standard set by the WA. We also proved that those, we had trained as accreditors, were competent and delivered during the accreditation. The universities, in return, got a report on the implementation of their programs with reference to the WA standard, and any deficiencies noted were thus flagged and the Universities could thereafter address them.

OBLIGATIONS of IEM with reference to Delivery of Accreditation functions

Colleagues, I believe it is my sacred duty to remind you, including those of us who have shown interest to serve the IEM on its Executive Council, of the nature of the obligations that are associated with becoming a Provisional Member of the Accord, that is, if our Application to become a member is successful and IEM is admitted as a Provisional Member in June this year.

Our obligations to the profession

After struggling for 7 years to be recognized as the Uncontested Agency for accreditation of engineering education in Mauritius, we have certainly taken on the very serious obligations to undertake engineering programme accreditation in the Republic, such that the Government (which funded us), the Universities which will now look upon us to provide the mandatory accreditation services, and society at large will expect us to deliver.

Those of us who have been part of the CRPE Council and the CRPE Panel of assessors will be aware that evaluation of engineering degrees for accreditation purposes is a very different tasks from that of assessing graduate engineers for the purpose of registration. Accreditation is a very demanding task such that unless members follow the training sessions and related workshops on the Washington Accord requirements and the IEM's accreditation standards, criteria and processes, including the evaluation of degree programmes, and follow the rules, they should stay away from it. In due course they should themselves be running the training workshops for accreditors and the Universities.

Our Obligations to the International Community

These are set out in Section B 2.3 of the IEA Rules and Procedures:

- (i) Annual Financial obligations, in terms of membership fees payable to the Washington, and Obligations to participate in the activities of the Washington Accord, that is attending the biennial meetings of the International Engineering Alliance
- (ii) Participating as Accreditors and observers at accreditation assignments overseas; this is normally at the cost of the foreign institutions, and
- (iii) Obligations to provide benefits to graduates of accredited or recognised programmes of other signatories. This has already been accepted through the MoU between CRPE and IEM under which CRPE will recognizes all Washington Accord accredited engineering degrees.

As a Provisional Member, IEM will be expected to maintain its capacity to deliver accreditation and demonstrate to Washington Accord that we are doing so. Failing to deliver will result in IEM's being downgraded to what is called the Conditional Status. This means IEM can be removed unless we show we have updated ourselves and our standards and procedures. IEM will need to send a Report to Washington to Accord on its Updated Procedures and Key Personnel, as well as an Analysis of gaps between the IEM standards and procedures and those of the Washington Accord.

As a provisional member Washington Accord will require IEM to take on one or two Mentors who will be tasked with guiding us to prepare ourselves for eventual application for Upgrading to full membership of the Accord, also referred to as Signatory. This interim period will take a minimum of 2 years and can extend to 4 years. Only in rare cases it will be extended. For Info, India and Pakistan took 7 years from Provisional to Full Member.

IEM will be expected, through the Engineering Accreditation Board, to work with the Universities to ensure that their programmes are outcome based and conform to our requirements. When seeking upgrading to signatory status, IEM should undertake the accreditation of two programmes at two different universities (as was done in November 2023 for Provisional Status) and these will be observed by 3 Reviewers from Washington Accord. The Reviewers will need to be satisfied that we have developed and acquired the competence to accredit engineering degree programmes and can sustain the accreditation activities.

When IEM becomes a Signatory of Washington Accord, the challenge will be to demonstrate every 6 years that our Competence and capacity to conduct accreditation is up to the standard expected by the Accord. The judges are just other Engineering Institutions like ourselves, but bigger.

To conclude this part of my Report let me add that under the Constitution of IEM, the Institution has undertaken an obligation to provide the Engineering Accreditation Board with all the support it needs, financial and logistics to permit it to discharge its accreditation functions, and to ensure that its accreditation decisions are taken in full autonomy without interference from the Government, Higher Educational Authorities, the Universities, and of course IEM Council itself.

IEM has been assured by CRPE of a contribution of Rs500 per registered engineer on its annual roll and on our side, as provided for under our constitution, IEM provides for a 10% increase in the annual subscriptions towards accreditation costs.

I would like to put on record our thanks to the CRPE and the HEC for their collaboration and for their appreciation of the responsibilities being assumed by the EAB.

Let me end my report on the WA project by informing you that on 8th February 2024, we uploaded our application on the basecamp site of IEA and that our application will be on the agenda of IEA at its annual general meeting to be held from 9 to 14th June 2024. We shall keep you posted on the outcome of IEM's decision.

Allow me, for record just to add that presently out of 54 countries on the African Continent, only South Africa is a signatory of WA and last year, Nigeria, one of the richest African countries with a population of over 224 million became a Provisional member. When Mauritius becomes a provisional member this June, we shall be the third African Country to be a member of WA.

Is not that something to be proud of.

The second Project I want to report on is SAFEQ.

Why is this an important project, you might ask?

Mauritius was elected President Elect of SAFEQ in 2022 and will take over as its President in October 2024.

SAFEQ comprises 11 member states namely Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zambia and

Zimbabwe and its main objective is to ensure an appropriate level of efficient human resource capacity in the built environment professions, particularly engineering to enable Africa to ultimately achieve sustainable development.

Presently, Botswana holds the chair of SAFE0. The Secretariat is being provided by Zambia Institution of Engineers and due to lack of funding, no face-to-face meeting has been possible. The few on-line meetings that have been held have not led to neither any major decisions nor to any action on the ground.

To give SAFE0 its *raison-d'etre* and to make it relevant, IEM has proposed that SAFE0 sets up some technical committees to look at issues that are specific to the sub-region as well as those issues that are common to some countries.

Mauritius has recently proposed the setting up of various Technical Committees for the following themes: -

- (1) Water, (2) Energy, (3) Education, (4) Capacity Building, (5) Climate Change (6) ICT

We already have some members serving on three committees including two that we are chairing, namely one on ICT with Dr. Sheeba Armoogum and the other committee will be on Climate Change, chaired by myself.

We have launched a call for Engineers to step forward to serve and provide their input and leadership on all these committees **and we are still waiting.**

a. Graduate mentoring Programme

This project that was started in 2017 is a commitment of IEM to support and mentor our young graduates leading to their registration with the CRPE. These young graduates are the future flag bearers of our profession and the better they are educated and coached, the better the future will be for all and generally for mankind.

I thank Eng Kamlesh Greedharry for his leadership and all those wonderful engineers who have volunteered their time to assist and guide these graduates.

b. Membership committee

We have only 412 members to date and the present membership committee has been working hard to sensitise and recruit new members.

c. CPD courses Annex D

I regret to inform you that IEM did not organise a single CPD course during 2022-2024.

d. Training Centre no activity organised at the training centre.

e. Communications - No newsletter issued.

f. Conferences talks visits

The graduate mentoring team under the leadership of Eng. Kamlesh Greedharry organised two site visits. One to a smart city site at St Pierre and the other to the site of the A1-M1 bridge site.

UNESCO/WFEO WED 2023, WED 23 was celebrated at UOM and the theme was **Engineering Innovation for a more Resilient World** and the hybrid online and face to face seminar with the participation of international experts namely Riya Rahiman (Ms), CDRI, India; Tomoya Shibayama (Prof), WASEDA University, Japan and Sanajaya Bhatia (Mr), UNDRR. I would like to thank Dr. Manta Nowbuth for her leadership in putting together the seminar. On this occasion, the UOM also launched the Policy Booklet on Climate Resilient Infrastructure.

UNESCO/WFEO, This project is a testimony of the enhanced image of IEM at International level as UNESCO and WFEO turned to IEM to organise a Workshop on Climate Change Education (21-25 November 2022) for the Trainers of Teachers at MIE.

The World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO), recognises the importance of addressing climate change as part of its strategic objectives to advance the UN SDGs. A Pilot Project had been developed and was delivered in Mauritius. The Institution of Engineers, Mauritius, is supporting the country's initiatives to address the challenges associated with the impacts of climate change.

The first workshop was held online from 20-29 June 2021 (during COVID-19 lock down), and this online workshop was attended by 47 Educators, 42 from Mauritius and 5 from Rodrigues. A follow up workshop on Climate Change Education, again jointly organised by the UNESCO, the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), the Institution of Engineers Mauritius (IEM), the Office for Climate Education (OCE) and the National Environment Agency (NEA) Singapore in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), was held most successfully in November 2022.

Now UNESCO/WFEO is planning to replicate this training in other African sub-regional areas.

In Conclusion, I express my appreciation and thanks to the members of the EXCO, for their commitment, time and work to improve the status of our profession. **We could and should have done better BUT we have done the best with what we have.**

I have special words of appreciation for those who are providing exemplary leadership and putting in time and effort with their heart and soul, working for the Engineering Accreditation Board. This is history in the making and my greatest wish is that you members of IEM would get involved and support this project. This is the greatest and most challenging achievements of IEM and will bring about a paradigm change to the profession in terms of recognition of the Engineering Degrees awarded in Mauritius and also enhance the reputation of Mauritius at international level.

I have a very special thank you to two incredible fellow engineers, who have, for the past seven years given their heart and soul and had worked day and night to move forward the WA project. They are Dr. Andre Chan Chin Yuk and M. Jagadish Soobarah. There are a few other engineers who have also greatly helped, amongst whom we have Dr. Manta Nowbuth. We thank those engineers both academics and from industry who acted as accreditors, after having followed our training courses. They came through with flying colours as accreditors during the November 2023 visits to UOM and UTM.

Colleagues, Engineers are the drivers of Change, and we need to lead the battle against Climate Change. We, as Engineers, are in the privileged and exceptional position to use our engineering knowledge and skill to build a better and safer Mauritius for all.

If you want the Engineers to be better respected and listened to, then we need to be more visible and be perceived by society as the providers of essential services to improve the quality of life of our fellow citizens. Engineers are the only ones by virtue of our education and training who can contribute and ensure that life is sustainable for all.

Together, we can do it.

Thank you.

Raj H Prayag GOSK. PDSM. CEng. PEng FIEM
1st March 2024