

BACKGROUND

AFRICAN IRON AND STEEL ASSOCIATION, AISA, is a product of complex but strenuous effort dating back to the mid 80s. As a continent, Africa lags far behind other continents in terms of industrialisation, growth and social development. The desire to get out of this situation compelled some African countries to commit themselves to the establishment, development and sustenance of a virile iron and steel sector in their national economies. This commitment was further strengthened by the desire to evolve a forum that would enable these countries exchange experience and documentation on raw materials, semi finished products, capital goods, technical know-how and training facilities among themselves.

It was also reasoned that such a forum would stimulate production and commercial exchange between the countries in the Continent and in addition, promote the implementation of training programs suited to their unique situations. Added to this is the need to stimulate greater inter-regional cooperation through other regional organisations like the South East Asia Iron and Steel Institute - SEASI, the Arab Iron and Steel Union - AISU, and the Latin American Iron and Steel Institute - ILAFA. Furthermore, it was anticipated that such a forum would serve as a viable tool to generate direct inputs in other industrial sub-sectors such as capital goods, agricultural machinery and spare parts.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The need for a forum that would harness, coordinate and promote the efforts of African countries was discussed at a meeting of experts on the preparation of guidelines for the establishment of mini-plants on iron and steel held in Vienna, Austria, in September, 1985. It was at this meeting that the establishment of a viable iron and steel sector in their national economies of African countries was agreed. This would be the major prerequisite to speedy transformation and all round development of their respective societies.

Three years later, a meeting on iron and steel technologies in Sao Paulo, Brazil, categorically recommended the establishment of an African Iron and Steel Association (A.I.S.A). Similarly, in June, 1989, the Conference of African Ministers of Industry, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, adopted a resolution requesting the United Nations Industrial

Development Organisation (UNIDO) to take appropriate measures for establishing AISA. The Abuja declaration of June, 1991, on Industrial decade for Africa fully endorsed the need for setting up such an Association.

A field mission undertook a tour of eight African countries, between December, 1988 to February, 1989, notably Algeria, Cameroon's, Cote de'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to determine, among others the usefulness of establishing the Association. Based on the report of this field mission, a UNIDO expert was deployed to prepare a draft statute for the Association. Between July 3rd and 4th 1989, UNIDO convened an evaluation meeting which subsequently recommended for an African expert group meeting on the establishment of the African Iron and Steel Association. Consequently, between November 12th to 16th, 1989, the group met in Algiers, Algeria, with 12 African countries, viz: Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Present at that meeting were representatives of UNIDO, AISU, and those of the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This meeting unanimously pledged its commitment to support the establishment, within the shortest possible time, of the African Iron and Steel Association (AISA). It also approved that the headquarters of AISU in Algiers, Algeria, be temporarily used as the AISA secretariat pending the selection of a permanent site in accordance with procedure and conditional ties to be drawn out. Subsequently, the meeting directed the convening of AISA constitutive Assembly to be held in an African country to be selected after due consultation between AISU secretariat and UNIDO. Other resolutions include preparing the final Statute of AISA and evolution of selection criteria of the AISA headquarters in consultation with the relevant nations and organisations.

December 16th and 18th, 1991, the constitutive Assembly convened in Algiers, Algeria, where AFRICAN IRON AND STEEL ASSOCIATION was formally established, its Statute adopted, and also designated the relevant organs of the Association. In accordance with the procedure articulated in the selection criteria (stipulated in articles 105 to 112 of the Statute of the Association) the assembly elected Nigeria to host the permanent Secretariat. Engineer Timothy Ch. Efobi of Nigeria was elected the first President of the Association while Dr. Sanusi Alhaji Mohammed, also of Nigeria, was elected (in line with the provisions in the Statute) to run the Secretariat in the interim pending the

Nigerian Government's nomination of a suitable candidate for the post of Secretary General. Dr. Mohammed was eventually nominated by the Federal Government of Nigeria and his nomination, ratified by the Board of Directors at the Association's first meeting held on 16th November, 1991. This was communicated to the General Congress held in Abuja, Nigeria, 17th and 20th November, 1992.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Following the adoption of the Statute of AISA, article 8 details out the scope of activities of AISA which covers the mining, production, processing and marketing associated with iron and steel. Similarly article 9 spells out the goals of the Association as to promote and encourage throughout the African continent, the development of, first, the mining and processing of iron ore, and the iron and steel and metallurgical industries, and second, the processing, distribution and consumption of iron and steel products, by-products and associated materials and industries. Within the context of the above goals, the Statute further allows the Association to promote and liaise with a view to establishing extensive and profitable cooperation between and among its members on a regular and permanent basis, specifically in information exchange, technical and techno-economic studies and training. In the field of information exchange, AISA has the following objectives:-

- * To promote cooperation and mutual assistance between members on technical, economic and commercial matters;
- * To encourage closer relationship between members that would lead to partnership concerning projects of common interest;
- * To facilitate and enhance activities involving cooperation and mutual aid between member companies;
- * To render Consultancy services and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, collaboration and assistance between member companies on the one hand, and other relevant companies, governmental, and non-governmental organisations on the other;
- * To assist member companies' request to solve their various problems;

- * To help member companies acquire, market and/or exchange raw materials, iron and steel and other metallurgical products and semi-products under the best possible conditions;
- * To upon request, assist member companies with the recruitment of qualified personnel;
- * To strive to keep member companies abreast of developments in the steel sector at continental and global levels through the acquisition and dissemination of high grade information.

In the area of technical and techno-economic studies, article 11 mandates AISA to pursue the following objectives:-

- * To equip it self with suitable structures enabling it to render Consultancy services such as feasibility, engineering, managerial, productivity and market forecasting and diagnostic studies for member companies;
- * To help member companies in their technological options and the design of management systems for production and maintenance;
- * To propose to companies planning new projects, solutions adapted to suit the types of products necessary in African countries and incorporating optimum use of local raw material;
- * To encourage member companies to cooperate in standardizing their products and technical specifications;
- * To work towards the gradual introduction of an inter-enterprise data bank and an integrated management system;
- * To assist member countries in the area of environmental management and control.

With regards to training, AISA will be guided by the following:-

- * To encourage and broaden the scope of and provide training for staff of member companies, especially those of technical and managerial levels;

- * To design scientific training on the basis of up-to-date techniques and the systematization of teaching aids and effective audio-visual equipment;
- * To encourage inter-enterprise staff training schemes and promotes seminars, symposia and conferences as viable forms of training;
- * To initiate refresher and/or advanced training courses within specialized organizations; and
- * To obtain fellowships and specialized grants from, among others, international or regional organisations.

MEMBERSHIP:

AISA membership is open to any public or private company or enterprise which is based in a member state of the Organisation of African unity (OAU). However, distinction is made between Active, Associate, and Observer members. The former applies to companies and enterprises whose overall focus of operation is in the iron and steel sector and whose average turn-over is in conformity with the requirements laid down in article 17 of the Statute of the Association. Associate membership, on the other hand, is extended to organisations, agencies or research departments as well as companies, enterprises or establishments whose activities relate only partly to the iron and Steel Industry. The average turn over of Associate member is stated in article 18(2) of the Statute of the Association. Observer members are those whose activities are not associated with iron and Steel or those belonging to international organisations and are interested in the activities of the Association.

Application for membership:-

Any applicant for Active or Associate membership of AISA must submit an application to the Secretary General of the Association. The application must, in addition to the request for membership, include information on nationality, share capital, nature of activities, objectives, production capacity and average turn over for three years preceding

the date of application. The information is expected to be supported by relevant documents.

Application for Observer status should be addressed to the Secretary General stating nature of activity and other details of the organisation.

Application received by the Secretary General shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors which shall approve or reject, without appeal and by absolute majority, the request for membership brought before it. In the event of rejection of application, reason(s) for such shall be communicated (by the Secretary General) to the applicant.

An applicant whose request for membership has been rejected may address himself to the reason(s) advanced and if satisfactorily addressed, request the Board of Directors, at its next session, to re-examine the application on the basis of the new information.

The granting of membership of AISA to any applicant shall be subject to the pre-payment of fees within three months following notification.

Membership of AISA shall be lost through voluntary resignation, non compliance with the conditions of membership, and bankruptcy or dissolution of the organisation. Membership may also be withdrawn as a sanction imposed for failing to pay annual subscription for two years or failure to comply with the Association's Statutes.

Subscriptions:-

The scale of subscription for all categories of membership is based on calculation factor arrived at by the nature of business or activity and turn over, (copy of the scale is enclosed with application for membership or may be obtained from the Secretariat). The scale is approved by the General Assembly after recommendation by the Board of Directors following proposal by the Secretary General, and is subject to review every three years or as the need arise.

ORGANS OF AISA

The Association is composed of three administrative organs, namely:

- * The General Assembly
- * The Board of Directors
- * The General Secretariat

The General Assembly:-

This comprise of all the Active and Associate members. The General Assembly has a Chairman who is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the President of the Association.

The General Assembly, which would meet regularly, has powers to set short and long term broad policy framework for the operation of the Board of Directors. it shall also elect members of the Board of Directors and consider their annual report.

Other responsibilities of the General Assembly include disciplining the Board and/or its members; appointment, replacement or reappointment of Auditors to examine the accounts and financial documents of the Association as well as examination of any other matter relating to management or operation which may not be within the competence of the Board of Directors or the special General Assembly.

The General Assembly shall meet in regular session during the first quarter of each financial year and be convened by the president (who is it's chairman).

Board of Directors:-

This is made up of 14 Active members and four Associate members, elected by simple majority of all the members of the General Assembly, all category of membership put together. A Chairman and one vice chairman shall be elected for the Board exclusively from among active members, while a second vice chairman shall be elected from the ranks of the Associate members, (these are the president and the two vice presidents of the Association). Election in both cases is by absolute majority and for a two year term subject to re-election for further term(s).

The Board of Directors is vested with the conduct of AISA general policy and implementation of the means needed to ensure its success as well as the election of the Presidents of the Association.

Other responsibilities include the appointment and/or replacement of the Secretary General; drawing up of the agenda for the regular and special General Assembly; nomination of Auditor(s) for the consideration of the General Assembly; approval of working accounts and balance sheets closed annually.

The Board of Directors has power to draw up annual activities, report and other related matters for the purpose of submission to the General Assembly. The Board shall also examine request for membership and granting of Associate membership, subject to the relevant articles of the Statute of the Association.

The General Secretariat:-

This is the central executive body of AISA whose primary, though not exclusively, responsibilities involve implementing the decisions and resolutions of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly and ensuring the day-to-day steady operations of the administrative apparatus and technical services of the Association.

For administrative convenience, the General Secretariat is divided in to four broad departments, namely;

- * Informatics, economics, research and documentation;
- * Human resource development;
- * Technical and economic development;
- * Administration and finance;

In addition, there is also the cabined office of the Secretary General which comprise of;

- * Legal services,
- * Internal audit,
- * Mobilisation and external relations,
- * Corporate services.

The Secretary General oversees and coordinates the activities of the General Secretariat and all the standing committees and departments therein. The Secretary General's appointment is ratified by the Board of Directors (after nomination by the host country) for an initial term of four years. He may serve for as many terms as deem appropriate by the Board of Directors.

FUNDING

The financial resources of the Association consists of AISA membership fees, annual subscription, sales of AISA publications, fees for AISA organised educational/training activities including the organisations of conferences, seminars, workshops etc, revenue

accruing from services provided by the Association for the benefit of its membership and allied organisations and Governments, and also assistance and contribution from member Governments. AISA welcomes technical assistance and cooperation from international organisations relevant to its activities.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU) granted the Association Observer Status of category 'C' at the 61st session meeting of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on February 13th 1995.

AISA is also an affiliate member of the International Iron and Steel Institute (IISI), based in Belgium; an Associate member of: (i) Arab Iron and Steel Union (AISU); (ii) Latin American Iron and Steel Institute (LAISI); (iii) South East Asia Iron and Steel Institute (SEAISI); and (iv) United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

AISA is a Contributing member to :-

- Metal Bulletin (UK);
- Steel Times International (UK);
- Steel Business Briefing (UK)

AISA is an Observer member to the Common Market of Eastern and southern African Metallurgical Industries Association (COMESAMIA).

HEAD QUARTERS:

Following the formal consecration of AISA by the constituent Assembly at its meeting of December 16th to 18th, 1991, Nigeria was elected to host the Head Quarters of the Association. The take off Head Quarters is now operating from the following address and all correspondences and inquiries should be addressed to:-

The Secretary General,
African Iron and Steel Association (AISA),
19B Street 'A' Suez Crescent,
Wuse Zone 4,
P.M.B 268, Garki,
Abuja,
Nigeria.

Tel No: (234-9) 5233170, 5233275, 5232135

Fax: (234-9) 5233275.

URL address:- www.afristeel.org

E-mail address:- afristeel@yahoo.com; afristeel@afristeel.org

A liaison office in the United Kingdom is also open for correspondence and communication, and the address is:

African Iron and Steel Association (Liaison office),

74D Adelaide Road London,

NW3 3PX England.

Tel: (44-20) 75866895

Fax: (44-20) 75866895