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Global Tape Forum Holds Successful Taipei Meeting

Global Test Methods Committee Agree to Standardise Using 'GTF Harmonised TM' Label

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The Global Tape Forum (GTF), the international body comprising regional organisations that addresses key issues of the self-adhesive tape industry requiring worldwide co-operation, met on 19 November 2012 in Taipei, Taiwan, agreeing, among other things, to harmonise tape-industry-created test methods (TMs) among GTF Members.

Held biennially, the only purely global self-adhesive tape event was hosted by the Taiwan Regional Association of Adhesive Tape Manufacturers (TAAT) at the Grand Hyatt Taipei Hotel and attended by 29 Member Association delegates and 4 observers from the 6 current GTF/GTMC Members:

- Afera, The European Association for the Self-Adhesive Tape Industry, www.afera.com
- Afera MEI, The Middle East & India Association for the Self-Adhesive Tape Industry, http://www.afera.com/templates/mercury.asp?page_id=1856
- CATIA, The China Adhesives and Tape Industry Association, www.cnaia.org
- JATMA, The Japanese Adhesive Tapes Manufacturers Association, www.jatma.jp
- PSTC, The Pressure Sensitive Tape Council (North America), www.pstc.org
- TAAT, The Taiwan Regional Association of Adhesive Tape Manufacturers, www.taiwantape.com.

The GTF includes the Global Test Methods Committee (GTMC), the technical body which routinely meets on the same day in the same location and includes a majority of the same delegates. Former Afera Steering Committee Member Mike Ayres chaired the third GTF Meeting, while former Afera Steering Committee Member and Technical Chairman Lutz Jacob headed the GTMC Meeting.

The Meetings were held prior to TAAT's Annual Technical Seminar, themed "New Applications and Marketing for Pressure Sensitive Adhesive Tapes," on 20-21 November at the Taipei International Convention Centre. Each counterpart organisation had been asked to contribute two speakers to the international event, which was attended by 240 tape industry professionals and Taiwan's Vice President, who took special time to meet with the international tape industry guest delegates.

Mr. Ayres opened the Taiwanese two-day technical event with a "Briefing on the GTF". Mr. Jacob spoke on the history of "Global Harmonisation of Test Methods for the Self-Adhesive Tape Industry." Complete programme details of TAAT's Technical Seminar are still available at www.gtf-taipei2012.org.

The GTF and GTMC Meetings together made significant progress in establishing the role and practises of the 3½-year-old international self-adhesive tape forum. All Members will report annually on total pressure sensitive tape production in their respective countries or regions. This data will be reported each November for the previous calendar year. It was established that GTF Members, who account for the majority of global tape production, produced approximately 36 billion square metres of tape in 2011.

Additionally, the GTF website, www.globaltapeforum.com, is set for a re-launch in 2013. Member Associations will create links to this site from their own.

Of significant importance was the Member Associations' pledge to develop and harmonise self-adhesive tape TMs in close collaboration, under the GTF umbrella. Once finalised, the TMs will be referred to as 'GTF-Harmonised TMs', a quality label providing international credibility without requiring the commitments of time and financial resources to the ISO-certification process. The first three ISO-certification procedures cost the European, American and Japanese self-adhesive tape industry associations a total of €25,600 and 5 years' time.

The GTF can legitimately claim to represent the world's self-adhesive tape industry as its Member Associations cover most of the global tape activity. Going forward, the Forum will seek to extend its Membership to Korea and South America.

"Our primary goal is to enhance the worldwide PSA industry by providing a global forum for all Member Associations that enables them to bring greater value to their members. I think we are well on our way to achieving this," commented Mike Ayres of Afera and Advance Tapes International, Ltd., who was instrumental in the GTF's founding and has served as Chairman since the Forum's inception in 2009.

GTF leadership will pass from Afera to the PSTC, which will host the next Meeting as part of their annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A., in May 2014.

The Global Tape Forum (GTF) is a not-for-profit, international organisation created *by* the global tape industry *for* the global tape industry. Its mission is to enhance the worldwide PSA industry by providing a global forum for all Member Associations, enabling them to add greater value to their Memberships.

GTF Members include Afera (The European Association for the Self-Adhesive Tape Industry, www.afera.com); Afera MEI (The Middle East & India Association for the Self-Adhesive Tape Industry, http://www.afera.com/templates/mercury.asp?page_id=1856); PSTC (The Pressure Sensitive Tape Council – North America, www.pstc.org); JATMA (The Japanese Adhesive Tapes Manufacturers Association, www.jatma.jp); CATIA (The China Adhesives and Tape Industry Association, www.cnaia.org); and TAAT (The Taiwan Regional Association of Adhesive Tape Manufacturers, www.taiwantape.com), regional or national tape associations together covering the majority of global tape production.

The idea of creating the GTF arose from discussions between Afera and the PSTC in 2006. The GTF held its Inaugural Meeting in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A., in May 2009, including 13 delegates from 4 regional/national tape associations, and its second Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden, in October 2010, including 23 delegates from 5 regional/national tape associations. The Meeting in Taiwan marks its third official event.

The GTF's objectives are to increase the demand for self-adhesive tapes everywhere; to harmonise key PSA tape TMs; to establish a database of environmental and regulatory trends per region; to gather top-level production data according to agreed-upon categories; to share an open calendar of global PSA educational events, encouraging cross-participation; to hold biennial Meetings hosted by Member Associations on a rotating basis; to establish a small shared fund for running costs; and to appoint a fixed team of volunteer delegates, plus a secretariat, from each Member Association to serve a three-year term.

For more information, visit www.globaltapeforum.com.

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