



**International Commission on Occupational Health - ICOH**  
**Commission Internationale de la Santé au Travail - CIST**

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(Agenda item 13.4)

### **Revitalise WHO/ILO Collaboration to prevent COVID-19 at Work**

COVID-19 has caused and still causes enormous loss of health and economic values in all countries. Working people, comprising 50-70% of the total population, are at the centre of the COVID-19 crisis. Health workers, in-service occupations, construction, food industry, cleaning, transportation, police, customs, guard, schools, and social service workers, covering a total of over 2 billion people, are exposed to COVID-19 infection risk in their daily work. Many may transmit the risk to patients, clients, customers or pupils. Several vulnerable groups of workers in the informal sector, migrant workers, and many others are poorly protected and the management of COVID-19 risk is disorganized.

Workability and return to work of the whole workforce is critical for rectifying the health, economic and social crisis.

Despite the impressive and ongoing work by WHO in the management of the COVID-19 crisis and protection of health workers and the general population, the majority of the 3.4 billion working population, as well as the COVID-19 risk workers and vulnerable groups continue to lack the necessary protection from COVID-19 infection (the fourth and fifth billion). The management of the pandemic risk at work needs efficient and effective occupational health services, competent personnel, and the necessary facilities. Today, occupational health services cover less than 20% of the global workforce.

For management of the COVID-19 crisis at work, ICOH proposes the following actions to WHO:

1. Together with ILO, organize the 14th session of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health.
2. As a part of the 13th General Programme of Work, to launch a new strategy for occupational health and ensure competent universal occupational health services for all workers.
3. Put efforts in place for preventing COVID-19 risk and protecting the health of high risk, service and vulnerable workers e.g., by urgent vaccination of all workers considered to be at high risk of COVID-19 infection.

4. WHO to support member States for better diagnosis and registration of work-related COVID-19 infections, and facilitate their compensation as occupational diseases.



Dr. Jukka Takala

President, International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH)