ICOH-IEA Statement at the 73rd World Health Assembly, supported by IOHA

Workers in various sectors of economies, such as 1.7 billion service workers are exposed to high occupational risk from SARS-CoV-2 virus. Under the highest occupational risks are the health workers, emergency response workers, workers in social services and elderly care, and in many other services. Their staying at and returning to work, work ability, occupational health and safety are critical in the pandemic.

The work ability and return to work of the whole workforce (comprising 50–70% of total population) is a critical prerequisite for recovery from the current health, economic and social crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has once again demonstrated the need for and value of occupational health, Human Factors/Ergonomics services. ICOH wants to support the objectives of the UN and WHO for provision of Universal Occupational Health Coverage, UOHC. ICOH proposes urgent and effective actions to expand the coverage and ensure competent occupational health, HF/E services for all 3.4 billion workers of the world. With healthy and productive workforce, the world will recover from the severe consequences of the pandemic.

While commending WHO for the policies and actions for the control of the COVID-19 pandemic so far, we propose the following:

1. WHO to pay special attention to the protection of workers against occupational COVID-19 risk at work giving the highest priority to the health workers' protection.

2. Undertake priority action in developing universal occupational health coverage, UOHC, ensuring competent occupational health services for all workers of the world, as decided by the 49th WHA (49.12).

3. Calling immediately upon the 14th Meeting of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health to discuss the collaboration between the WHO and ILO on policies and
    practices for the protection of workers' health and safety against the pandemic.

4. ICOH wants to support WHO in all those endeavours.