



# Minutes of the First General Assembly of the International Commission on Occupational Health

**29 April 2018  
Dublin, Ireland**

**Time:** Sunday, 29 April 2018 14.00-16.45

**Venue:** Wicklow Hall 2, Convention Centre Dublin  
Spencer Dock, N Wall Quay, North Dock, Dublin 1, Ireland

Dr. Jukka Takala, ICOH President, opened the First General Assembly welcoming all the participants and expressing his thanks to the organizers of the ICOH 2018 Congress for the excellent preparation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Occupational Health.

## 1. Approval of the minutes of the ICOH General Assembly held in Seoul in 2015

The minutes of the ICOH 2015 General Assembly were widely spread among the ICOH members through the ICOH website.

### **Decision:**

- The ICOH General Assembly unanimously approved the minutes of the Seoul Congress.

## 2. President's Report

(Reference: ICOH Triennial Report 2015-2017, pp.10 - 22)

Dr. Takala reported on the activities carried out in the triennium 2015-2017.

ICOH has carried out activities according to the priorities set at ICOH 2015 and in continuity with the lines set by the Seoul Statement on "Development of Occupational Health Services to All". In March 2017, the Midterm Meeting was held in Florence, Italy to review the work done and discuss the ongoing activities.

Dr. Takala also mentioned the National Secretaries' Survey on OH Services. The results show the need for improvement of the content of OHS especially in poorest countries.

The discussion then turned on the key points of the Action Plan: evidence, ethics and engagement. For ethics, ICOH President recalled the third edition of the ICOH Code of Ethics and related translations. As for evidence, a focus is needed on problems and solutions, especially for developing countries.

ICOH has been active in its collaboration with ILO and WHO, which will continue in the next triennium.

Dr Takala also remarked the importance of the Policy forum, which would focus on occupational cancer and the identification of priorities, with the aid on a live poll.

Dialogue and engagement with NGO and sister organizations has continued with good outcomes and will be strengthened in the future.

Dr. Takala informed the General Assembly that four countries presented a bid for the ICOH 2024 Congress. A fifth bid was originally presented by the Netherlands, but it was withdrawn at a later stage.



Dr. Takala opened the floor to questions and comments. No questions or comments came from the audience.

**Decision:**

- The President's Report was approved.

### 3. Report of ICOH Scientific Committees

(Reference: ICOH Triennial Report 2015-2017, pp. 30-50)

Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut, ICOH Vice President in charge of Scientific Committees, reported on the activities of the triennium 2015-2017.

Dr. Fingerhut informed the General Assembly on the name changes of 2 Scientific Committees as approved by the Board: SC on OH for Health Workers (former SC on OH for Health Care Workers) and SC on Effectiveness in Occupational Health Services (former SC on Health Services Research and Evaluation).

Thirty-seven Scientific Committees operated diligently and collaboratively, generating high-quality scientific work and products. Thirty-six of the 37 SCs organized or participated in at least one conference during the triennium, resulting in 96 conferences offered globally during this period.

Dr. Fingerhut also remarked the contribution given by the Scientific Committees to the scientific programme of the Congress: all SCs were highly engaged in identifying and recommending Plenary and Semi-plenary speakers for the Congress.

Furthermore, with their support, the Policy Forum, 94 of the 106 special sessions and 72 oral abstract sessions were organized. SCs also peer reviewed about 1500 abstract submitted by attendees; more than 600 posters in total were displayed.

Dr. Fingerhut recalled the Student Poster competition, organized by herself as VP in charge of Scientific Committees and chaired by Su Wang, Chair of SC Accident Prevention, assisted by Garrett Burnett of NIOSH.

Dr. Fingerhut also presented an important outcome from SC MinOSH, two ICOH Statements on Tuberculosis: "Preventing Tuberculosis Among Silica Dust Exposed Workers" and "Preventing TB among Health Workers". This is the result of an input gathered at the conference of the SC on Mining in 2017.

**Decision:**

- The Report on ICOH Scientific Committees was unanimously approved.

### 4. Report of ICOH National/Area Secretaries

(Reference: ICOH Triennial Report 2015-2017, pp.51-64)

Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang, ICOH Vice President in charge of the National/Area Secretaries (NSs), informed the General Assembly of the triennial activities carried out by the NSs.

Firstly Prof. Kang recalled the activities and duties of the NSs. During the triennium, 56 NSs were officially appointed. Among them, 10 were appointed in countries that had not had a NS in the previous triennium.

The 56 National Secretaries operated according to the strategic priorities set by the ICOH work plan with good results.

Then, Prof. Kang recalled the rules and process for appointing a NS. He also remarked the importance of using the communication tools offered by ICOH, such as the Newsletter and Virtual Office, as an aid to the activities of the NSs.



The NSs have worked for the recruitment of new members, especially in conjunction with local meetings, and collaborated with the Secretariat to support the membership renewal campaign and other activities. Communication and collaboration with SCs officers is also important, even with respect to the organization of national and regional symposia, and thus needs to be reinforced.

During the triennium, a minimum of one regional meeting of ICOH NSs in each continent was arranged in connection with an international conference organized by one of the countries in the region.

Prof. Kang recalled the importance of strengthening communication exchange between NSs and VP/Secretariat, along with the utilization of the dedicated tools, with the aim of achieving better results for the next triennium 2018-2021.

**Decision:**

- The Report of the National Secretary activities was unanimously approved.

## 5. Report of Secretary General

(Reference: ICOH Triennial Report 2015-2017, pp. 24-29)

The ICOH Secretary General Prof. Sergio Iavicoli firstly gave an overview on the membership campaign. The overall figures, indicating a total number of 1976 ICOH members in good standing at the end of the triennium, showed a continuous growth of the membership. Prof. Iavicoli showed the leading countries in ICOH membership and highlighted the best results achieved in USA, Japan, Italy, Peru, India, Brazil, and others.

Prof. Iavicoli also remarked a more balanced distribution of membership among the continents. The major outcome was the increase of members from developing countries: at the end of the triennium 2015-2017, the majority (53%) of ICOH members is from developing and transitory countries. In this respect, Prof. Iavicoli recalled that the differentiated fees for developing countries were introduced upon the initiative of Prof. Bengt Knave, who was the ICOH President at that time. Another implementation put in place during the triennium 2015-2017 was the differentiation of the fees on three levels, according to the GDP per capita of the countries, as approved by the General Assembly in Seoul in 2015.

As for the young members, the continuous efforts to reduce the average age are producing the expected results: the average age of new ICOH members is 45.7 years. The implementation of a strategy aimed at a major involvement of the young generations remains a priority item.

Then Prof. Iavicoli reported briefly on the ICOH Survey, which was administered to the ICOH members in good standing. The study was conducted with the aim of gathering opinions and suggestions from the membership, so as to implement current strategies and efforts based on the members' needs, expectations and current involvement. Preliminary results were presented at the Congress, and further analysis will be conducted during the next triennium.

The renewed support of Sustaining and Affiliate Members was another important result: the number of Sustaining members increased to 20, five of whom joined ICOH for the first time.

Then, Prof. Iavicoli presented some of the initiatives carried out during the term. As for the membership recruitment strategy, a focus on low income countries led to satisfactory results. Two case studies were presented: a very positive experience was the meeting of the SC on Work and Vision held in Peru in 2016, where a good number of new members were recruited; and also the action in Nepal, which led to the appointment of a NS and the reactivation of the membership in the country with the help of the Noro fund. Another important initiative was the ICOH Statement on Qatar 2022 World Cup and Migrant Workers. The issue was firstly raised at the General Assembly in Seoul and then dealt with by ICOH in 2015.

Prof. Iavicoli presented the benefits for ICOH members. Ninety-nine ICOH events were organized globally during the triennium. Several publications are available in printed and/or digital copy: the ICOH Code of Ethics, the OH Guide, the Ergonomics Guidelines, the Global Survey on OH Services, the ICOH Core Documents now printed in a new design, the International Newsletter, promotional material for ICOH membership, the ICOH Newsletter.



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Prof. Iavicoli also presented the gadgets prepared to strengthen the family feeling and to attract young members: small gifts (pins, pen drives, power banks) were distributed at the ICOH booth.

ICOH Secretary General also showed the ICOH website, social media webpages and ICOH app, which provides ICOH members with useful tools such as the possibility to save event dates on their calendar, and facilitates networking within ICOH members.

The ICOH Heritage repository was also briefly introduced: the proceedings of 100 years of ICOH congresses will be digitalized and collected in a database, with search keys by title, author and keywords. The project is now underway and the release of the beta version is planned for December 2018. With 45,000 authors listed and over 18,000 abstracts in pdf format, the ICOH Heritage repository will be the most comprehensive collection on OH.

Finally, the ICOH Secretary General reported on the ICOH accountings: the ICOH finances for the Triennium 2015-2017 were balanced and Auditors expressed their assessment as follows: *“In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the International Commission on Occupational Health as of October 31, 2017 and of the results of its operations and cash flows for the period then ended in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union.”*

A brief discussion followed Prof. Iavicoli's presentation.

Dr Shamusideen Kadiri from Nigeria commented on the data of the best results for membership recruitment, and on the opportunities to expand ICOH in Africa.

Dr. Janice Green from Jamaica asked for more information to know about the possibility of nominating a National Secretary for Jamaica, which did not have one for the triennium 2015-17.

Dr. Okon Akiba, National Secretary for Nigeria, invited Dr. Takala to the African conference as a speaker.

Dr. Shyam Pingle from India congratulated for the good representation of developing countries, especially Peru and India, for their impressive results in membership recruitment. Dr Pingle wished that such balanced distribution could reflect on the ICOH leadership.

Dr. Rajesh from India added that the possibility of having an ICOH Congress in a developing country would be another good occasion to improve accessibility.

Dr. Iavicoli stressed the importance of collaboration between all involved parties in order to achieve always better results in terms of membership recruitment and activities.

### Decisions:

- The Report of the Secretary General was unanimously approved;
- The Auditors' report was unanimously approved;

After the presentation of his report, the ICOH Secretary-General presented the current fee system for individual members as adopted by the General Assembly in 2015.

| <b>Triennial membership fees – Individual Membership</b> |                         |                                   |                          |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Countries with</b>                                    | <b>GDP&lt;5,000 USD</b> | <b>5,000&lt;GDP&lt;15,000 USD</b> | <b>GDP&gt;15,000 USD</b> |
| <b>Active member</b>                                     | 45.00 CHF               | 72.00 CHF                         | 345.00 CHF               |
| <b>Young &lt;34</b>                                      | 30.00 CHF               | 45.00 CHF                         | 72.00 CHF                |
| <b>Retired*</b>  | 30.00 CHF               | 60.00 CHF                         | 90.00 CHF                |

\*The Status of retired members will be acknowledged to those who are older than 64 and will supply the documentation of their retirement.



The proposal for affiliate membership was to maintain the current fees unchanged.

| <b>Triennial membership fees – Affiliate Membership</b> |         |           |
|---|---------|-----------|
| <b>Affiliate Membership with 200 or more members</b>    | 660 CHF | Unchanged |
| <b>Affiliate Membership less than 200 members</b>       | 440 CHF | Unchanged |

Then, Prof. Iavicoli presented the proposal for new fees for Sustaining membership, based on three levels of GDP, as for individual membership.

The process was first discussed at the Midterm Meeting in Florence, Italy, in March 2017, when the Board gave a task to the Secretariat General to develop a new fee system. The proposal was then reviewed by the Officers and the Finance Committee, then discussed at the Board Meeting on April 28, 2018. The Board decided to approve the proposal to be brought at the General Assembly, which is in charge of deciding on the fee system according to ICOH Constitution, art. 4, section 1.

The new fee system was developed in order to increase accessibility for developing countries and to expand and strengthen the network with sustaining members.

| <b>Triennial membership fees – Sustaining Membership</b> |                         |                                   |                          |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Countries with</b>                                    | <b>GDP&lt;5,000 USD</b> | <b>5,000&lt;GDP&lt;15,000 USD</b> | <b>GDP&gt;15,000 USD</b> |
| <b>Sustaining membership fee</b>                         | 800 CHF                 | 2500 CHF                          | 5000 CHF                 |

**Decision:**

- The new fee system was unanimously approved and will be adopted on experimental basis for the triennium 2018-2020.

## 6. ICOH Newsletter

(Reference: ICOH Triennial Report 2015-2017, pp.65-67)

Dr. Eun-A Kim reported on the triennial work carried out as Editor-in-Chief of the ICOH Newsletter. In accordance with the publishing plan, seven editions were published between December 2015 and December 2017.

The Newsletter achieved its goal of providing information on members and their activities through ICOH communities, such as Scientific Committees' report in international conferences, National Secretaries' reports on domestic and regional activities, introduction of Sustaining members, information on publications and upcoming scientific meetings, welcome to new members, Message from the Secretary General, etc. The printed copy was sent by postal mail to all members in good standing and an electronic version was available on ICOH website.

**Decision:**

- The Report on ICOH Newsletter was unanimously approved.





## 7. Nomination for Auditors and Vice Auditors

In execution of the ICOH Constitution Article 4 ,Section 1, ICOH Secretary General was charged by the Board with the task of proposing to the General Assembly the appointment of two auditing firms. Prof. Iavicoli asked for a quotation among the top 4 leading auditors companies in the world ranking. Three quotations were received by the ICOH Secretariat.

On the basis of costs calculation and in consideration of the full accomplishment of the international standards required, the Secretary General submitted to the Board the proposal to elect BDO as Auditor and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) as Vice Auditor for the triennium 2018-2020. The Board agreed with the proposal, to be presented to the General Assembly for final approval.

Thus, Prof. Iavicoli proposed the appointment of the two following firms:

Auditor: BDO Italia  
Vice Auditor: PwC

### **Decision:**

- The General Assembly approved the proposal for the appointment of the Auditors and Vice Auditors.

## 8. Amendments to ICOH Constitution

Prof. Iavicoli presented the proposal for amendments to ICOH Constitution for the introduction of the electronic vote for the election of ICOH Officers and Board members, as discussed at the Second General Assembly at the ICOH 2015 Congress.

At the Board meeting then held at the end of the ICOH 2015 Congress it was decided to give mandate to the Officers to explore feasibility and possible solutions for the introduction of the electronic vote. At the Midterm meeting in 2017, the Board agreed with the proposal to amend the ICOH Constitution to enable the introduction of the electronic vote.

Prof. Iavicoli presented the proposal for amendments and showed the Articles of the Constitution to be implemented as follows:

### **Article 4, Section 5**

Each individual member in good standing and one representative of each collective member shall have the right to exercise one vote either when attending the General Assembly or when voting in a postal **or electronic** ballot.

### **Article 4, Section 7**

In case a postal **or electronic** ballot is combined with voting at a session of the General Assembly, the voting is valid when the total number of votes cast for and against, together with abstentions, at the Assembly added to the votes received by post **or electronically** is equal to twenty per cent or more of the total individual membership.

### **Article 4, Section 5**

Each individual member in good standing and one representative of each collective member shall have the right to exercise one vote either when attending the General Assembly or when voting in a postal **or electronic** ballot.

### **Article 5, Section 1**

The Officers of the ICOH shall be elected by postal **or electronic** ballot and shall consist of the President, two Vice-Presidents and the Secretary-General... *Omissis*



#### Article 5, Section 6

The Board of the ICOH shall be elected by postal **or electronic** ballot and shall consist of the Officers, the immediate Past President and 16 other members in good standing so as to represent as far as possible the different disciplines and a balanced geographical distribution... *Omissis*

*(The amendments in the above articles are herein marked in bold.)*

Dr. Olivier Lo from Singapore proposed to use “and/or” instead of “or”, to clarify that both postal and electronic ballots would be available.

The General Assembly then voted on the amendments with the proposed formula “and/or”.

#### Decision:

- The General Assembly approved the Constitutional changes for the introduction of the electronic vote as follows:

#### Article 4, Section 5

Each individual member in good standing and one representative of each collective member shall have the right to exercise one vote either when attending the General Assembly or when voting in a postal **and/or electronic** ballot.

#### Article 4, Section 7

In case a postal **or electronic** ballot is combined with voting at a session of the General Assembly, the voting is valid when the total number of votes cast for and against, together with abstentions, at the Assembly added to the votes received by post **and/or electronically** is equal to twenty per cent or more of the total individual membership.

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#### Article 5, Section 6

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## 9. Voting for the venue of ICOH 2024

Representatives of the four bidding committees for the organization of the 34th International Congress on Occupational Health ICOH 2024 – Montreal (Canada), Mumbai (India), Marrakesh (Morocco) and Bangkok (Thailand) presented their bids to the ICOH General Assembly in alphabetical order.

Then Prof. Iavicoli took the floor to remind of the bidding process set by ICOH regulations and explained the voting procedure: the ballot papers were going to be available to ICOH members in good standing attending



the Congress from April 30 at 8.30 to May 3 at 11.00. The results of the elections would be published at the ICOH booth in the exhibition area and announced at the Second General Assembly on May 4.

ICOH Secretary General reported on the regulation by which the Board has to recommend one venue as defined in the ICOH Constitution Article 6, Section 1; ICOH Bye-Law 7, section 2 and in the ICOH Guidelines on Congress organization. In accordance with such rules, Prof. Iavicoli announced to the General Assembly that the Board decided to recommend Montreal (Canada) as the venue for ICOH 2024 Congress.

## 10. Honorary Members

President Takala exposed the criteria for the honorary members election as defined in the Constitution and asked the ICOH Secretary-General to announce to the General Assembly the proposal approved by the Board:

Dr. Edith Clarke – Ghana

*The General Assembly approved the proposal.*

Prof. Masayuki Ikeda - Japan

*The General Assembly approved the proposal.*

Ms. Suvi Lehtinen – Finland

*The General Assembly approved the proposal.*

Dr. Jorge Morales Camino – Mexico

*The General Assembly approved the proposal.*

Prof. Antonio Mutti – Italy

*The General Assembly approved the proposal.*

The new Honorary Members received a plaque in recognition of their nomination.

Dr. Edith Clarke, who was not present, will receive her plaque separately. The plaque for Prof. Ikeda, who was absent, was received by Dr. Moriguchi as requested by Prof. Ikeda.

## 11. Other issues

No other issue was discussed.

## Closing

The ICOH President Dr. Takala closed the General Assembly thanking all the participants.