



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

6 February 2022 Melbourne-Rome global digital Congress

Time: Sunday, 6 February 2022 13.00-15.00 CET

Venue: Live streamed meeting on the Congress digital platform

1. Opening by the President

Dr. Jukka Takala, ICOH President, opened the First General Assembly welcoming all the participants.

2. Approval of the minutes of the ICOH General Assembly held in Dublin in 2018

The minutes of the ICOH2018 General Assembly were made accessible to the ICOH members through the ICOH website.

Decision:

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

3. President's Report

(Reference: ICOH Report 2018-2021, pp.13 - 23)

Dr. Takala reported on the activities carried out during the tenure 2018-2021.

The implementation of ICOH plans and priorities progressed well in terms of engagement and connections with key organizations and institutions. In particular, the collaboration with ILO and WHO was highly active during the last term. ICOH participated in several in-presence and virtual meetings with the ILO and WHO in Geneva and maintained constant communication with both.

ICOH was systematically present at WHO's World Health Assembly (WHA): a number of written and spoken ICOH Statements were presented and posted in the WHA, emphasizing the work-relatedness of health issues, the need for universal occupational health care for specific vulnerable groups of workers, such as those exposed to the coronavirus causing the COVID-19 infection.

ICOH supported the ILO in various annual events, for example through the ICOH Statements presented on the occasion of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, which occurs on 28 April each year. Another ICOH Statement was released in connection with the discussion at the 341st Session of the ILO Governing Body on 22 March 2021 on including occupational safety and health (OSH) in the ILO's category of "fundamental rights".

ICOH also participated in the 22nd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work (Toronto, 19–22 September 2021) organized by the ILO, in collaboration with the International Social Security Association (ISSA) and the Canadian IWH Institute.



The good cooperation with ILO and WHO was reflected by the participation of the ILO and WHO General Directors in the ICOH2022 Congress Opening Ceremony.

Given the continued and fruitful collaboration with the two international Organizations, Dr. Takala proposed to reactivate the ILO/WHO Joint Committee, which held its last meeting in 2003.

Institutional collaboration between ICOH Sustaining Members and Affiliate Members was also encouraged during the last term through many contacts, meetings, and discussions.

Finally, Dr. Takala remarked that ICOH finances remained stable and survived the difficult circumstances of the last two years. The President expressed deep gratitude to the Secretary General and the Secretariat for the intensive coordinated efforts, which made it possible to meet the challenge of organizing the ICOH2022 Congress, in a fully digital format.

Decision:

- The President's Report was approved.

4. Report of ICOH Scientific Committees

(Reference: ICOH Report 2018-2021, pp. 39-57)

Ms. Claudina Nogueira, ICOH Vice President in charge of Scientific Committees (SCs), reported on the activities of the term 2018-2021.

There are currently 37 SCs, which provide scientific support for ICOH and contribute to advancing the health and safety of workers globally. Many SCs have collaborated with other SCs to produce scientific products of a high standard and to organize scientific events such as conferences, symposia, training courses, seminars and webinars. Many SCs have established and/or strengthened their collaborations with non-ICOH organizations at international, regional, and national levels. Thirty-five SCs submitted Final Triennium Reports.

The SC with the highest number of publications was the SC on Cardiology in Occupational Health, whose members have published in excess of 70 publications in 2020 and 2021. The most collaborative event involving the SCs was the *International Conclave on Occupational Health (OCCUCON 2020)*, a joint conference of eight ICOH SCs, the 70th Annual National Conference 2020 of the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH), and the 68th Annual Conference of the IAOH Mumbai Branch. Ms. Nogueira went through the SC highlights and main outputs for the 2018-2021 tenure. Then, she remarked that the SCs contributed extensively and enthusiastically to the development of the scientific content of the ICOH2022 Congress in various ways:

- SC members recommended plenary and semi-plenary speakers – one opening keynote, 11 plenary keynotes, and 24 semi-plenary presentations have been scheduled;
- Most of the Special Sessions (which involve invited speakers and are not peer reviewed) were organised by the majority of the SCs, although some Special Sessions were proposed by non-ICOH organizations;
- SC members peer reviewed abstracts submitted to Free Paper Session topics, for oral and poster presentations.

All these joint efforts led to a scientific programme including 115 hours of live and on-demand scientific contents: 56 Special Sessions, 146 Oral Presentations and more than 550 e-Posters across 38 topics in occupational health and safety for a total of more than 400 speakers.

As a final remark, Ms. Nogueira referred to the health, economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have changed forever the ways in which we live and work. At international, regional and local levels, and across all sectors, organizations have mobilised their resources and skills to develop and/or share all they can about COVID-19 for the benefit of their workers, their families and their communities. ICOH has stepped up to the plate, and contributed to the ongoing global battle against the pandemic in many different ways (Statements, surveys, publications, SCs outputs, etc.).

In taking the floor the ICOH President thanked Ms. Nogueira for the massive work done together with the Australian colleagues and the ICOH SCs for the ICOH2022 Congress scientific programme.

Decision:

- The Report on ICOH SCs was unanimously approved.



5. Report of ICOH National/Area Secretaries

(Reference: ICOH Report 2018-2021, pp. 60-75)

Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang, ICOH Vice President in charge of the National/Area Secretaries (NSs), informed the General Assembly of the activities carried out by the NSs during the term 2018-2021.

Firstly, Prof. Kang reminded the ICOH members about the role and duties of the NSs. The rules and process for appointing a NS were also illustrated. During the triennium, 70 NSs were officially appointed; this was a very positive result compared to the previous two terms (+20% increase). Prof. Kang also remarked the importance of using the communication tools offered by ICOH, such as the Newsletter and NS Virtual Office, as an aid to the activities of the NSs.

Regional Meetings of ICOH NSs were held in Africa and Latin America in 2019, but no Regional Meetings were held in Asia in 2020 due to COVID-19. In 2021, the Vice President held online meetings for the NSs in each region to discuss the ICOH2022 Congress and election of NSs for the 2022–2024 triennium. These were successful meetings for communication between the VP and the NSs.

Finally, Prof. Kang informed the audience about the online Business Meetings of the NSs organized on a regional basis on February 11, 2022.

In his capacity of Chair of the ICOH2022 Congress Fundraising Committee, Prof. Kang briefly reported on the scholarship provided to participants from low- and middle-income countries to attend the ICOH2022 Congress. He illustrated eligibility requirements and priority criteria for allocation of funding to the applicants. This time, the limited costs related to the digital format of the Congress made it possible to support all the delegates who applied and were eligible for the scholarship (107 out of 285 applications).

Decision:

- The Report of the ICOH National/Area Secretaries was unanimously approved.

6. Report of the Secretary General

(Reference: ICOH Report 2018-2021, pp. 26-38)

The ICOH Secretary General, Prof. Sergio Iavicoli, firstly gave an overview of the membership campaign. The overall figures, indicating a total number of 2107 ICOH members in good standing at the end of the triennium, showed a continuous growth of the membership (+6.7% with respect to the previous term). Prof. Iavicoli showed the leading countries in ICOH membership and highlighted the best results achieved in India, USA, Japan, Italy, Brazil, and others. Prof. Iavicoli also remarked a more balanced distribution of membership among the continents, where members from low- and middle-income countries represent 58% of the total membership. Such a positive result was gradually achieved thanks to the actions taken to increase the participation of ICOH members from developing countries in ICOH events, which has always been one of the main strategic goals of ICOH since the beginning of his 19-year tenure as Secretary General.

The renewed support of Sustaining and Affiliate Members was another important result: particular thanks were due to KOSHA for its continuous support with the Newsletter publication and to INAIL for ensuring the activities of the ICOH Secretariat General. Prof. Iavicoli then invited the attendees to visit the ICOH Publications section on the website to access the most recent outputs including the ICOH Report 2018-2021 with more detailed information in the Officers' reports.

Finally, the ICOH Secretary General reported on the ICOH accountings: the ICOH finances for the tenure 2018-2021 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 Commission as of September 30, 2021, and of the result of its operations and its cash flows for the financial period then ended, in accordance with the International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union."*



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After the presentation of his report, the ICOH Secretary General submitted to the General Assembly the triennial fees 2022-2024 with the proposal of confirming the fees as they were in the previous term, as per the following prospectus:

Triennial membership fees – Individual Membership			
Countries with	GDP<5,000 USD	5,000<GDP<15,000 USD	GDP>15,000 USD
Active member	45.00 CHF	72.00 CHF	345.00 CHF
Young <34	30.00 CHF	45.00 CHF	72.00 CHF
Retired	30.00 CHF	60.00 CHF	90.00 CHF
Triennial membership fees – Sustaining Membership			
Countries with	GDP<5,000 USD	5,000<GDP<15,000 USD	GDP>15,000 USD
Sustaining membership fee	800.00 CHF	2500.00 CHF	5000.00 CHF
Triennial membership fees – Affiliate Membership			
Affiliate Membership with 200 or more members	660.00 CHF		
Affiliate Membership with less than 200 members	440.00 CHF		

Decisions:

- The Report of the Secretary General was unanimously approved;
- The fees for the triennium 2022-2024 were unanimously approved.

7. Auditor and Vice Auditor election

In execution of the ICOH Constitution Article 4, Section 1, the ICOH General Assembly is responsible for the approval of one Auditor and one Vice Auditor. Prof. Iavicoli asked for a quotation among the top four leading auditors' companies in the world ranking. Two quotations were submitted to the ICOH Secretariat by BDO and Ernst & Young (EY). 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 EY as Vice Auditor for the triennium 2022-2024. 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: EY

Decisions:



- The Auditors' report was unanimously approved;

Secretary General's end-of-term remarks

Prof. Iavicoli concluded his last report as ICOH Secretary General by making some final remarks after an almost 19-year mandate. Prof. Iavicoli stated that it was a great privilege to serve as ICOH Secretary General for almost 20 years in the oldest and largest professional scientific organization in the field of occupational health. Many achievements were attained in the long term. ICOH membership has constantly increased since 2003 and the number of members from low- and middle-income countries has grown significantly. Thanks to the introduction of a differentiated fee system, approved by the General Assembly in 2003, with lower costs for members from low- and middle-income countries, students, and retirees, ICOH has witnessed an increased participation of OSH experts from low- and middle-income countries, a better gender balance, and more active participation of young members. Furthermore, the historical role of ICOH as an international non-governmental professional society that is particularly active in the area of advocacy activities and policy advising has been revived and strengthened. In this respect, Prof. Iavicoli mentioned the ICOH contribution to the development and implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the Centennial Declaration, the Cancun Charter on Occupational Health for All, the Helsinki Declaration on Management and Elimination of Asbestos-related Diseases, and the Seoul Statement on the Development of Occupational Health Services for All. Then, Prof. Iavicoli addressed some words of esteem to his successor Dr. Diana Gagliardi as the first female Secretary General in the history of ICOH. Finally, Prof. Iavicoli acknowledged Professor Jorma Rantanen, his great mentor and friend, and the other Presidents with whom he had the privilege to work, Dr. Kazutaka Kogi and Dr. Jukka Takala. He extended his gratitude to all the Vice-Presidents with whom he worked: Alain Cantineau, Ruddy Facci, Bonnie Rogers, Marilyn Fingerhut, Seong-Kyu Kang, Claudina Nogueira, and Suvi Lehtinen. He thanked all the members serving on the Board since 2003, the SC Chairs and the NSs, and of course, the entire ICOH membership. Special thanks were also due to the ICOH staff for representing the driving force of the Secretariat over these 19 years.

8. Amendments to ICOH Constitution

Dr. Takala presented the Board proposal for amendments to ICOH Constitution aimed at including the immediate Past Secretary General as a member of the ICOH Board.

Dr. Takala referred to the Articles of the Constitution, to be amended and implemented as follows:

Article 5, Section 6

The Board of the ICOH shall be elected by postal and/or electronic ballot and shall consist of the Officers, the immediate Past President, **the immediate Past Secretary General**, and 16 other members in good standing, so as to represent as far as possible the different disciplines and a balanced geographical distribution. No more than two of these 16 members may be citizens of the same country. If necessary, no more than two further members of the Board chosen for their ability, or to represent a geographical region or a discipline, may be proposed by the President and co-opted by the Board. The Editor of the Quarterly Newsletter shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board.

Article 5, Section 7

The Board is empowered to implement the purposes of the ICOH as defined in this Constitution, and shall to this effect:

- (a) Review the programme of work of the ICOH and its Scientific Committees;
- (b) Assist the Officers, in particular by means of administrative working groups or committees;
- (c) Amend the Bye-Laws whenever necessary;
- (d) Recommend the venue of future International Congresses on Occupational Health to the General Assembly;
- (e) Recommend the election of honorary members;
- (f) Expel members under the circumstances of Article 2, Section 7;
- (g) Make recommendations to the President for submission to the General Assembly for its approval;
- (h) If necessary, co-opt up to two additional Board members as proposed by the President;



- (i) Approve any additional language used at an International Congress;
- (j) Review the accounts.

The Board shall meet at least once in each triennium and at any other time which the President may consider necessary. A special meeting of the Board can also be convened at the request of a majority of its members. A Board meeting is valid when out of its **22** members (Section 6), the President or another Officer representing him and ten other Board members are present.

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

Decision:

- The General Assembly approved the Constitutional changes for the inclusion of the immediate Past Secretary General as a member of the ICOH Board.

9. Venue for the ICOH2027 Congress

Dr. Takala informed the General Assembly about the three candidacies for hosting the ICOH2027 Congress: Medellin (Colombia), Mumbai (India), and Barcelona (Spain). He reported that virtual meetings with ICOH Officers (one for each bidding committee) were held to check the solidity of each candidacy, according to ICOH Bye-Law 7, Section 2.

Then he gave the floor to the representatives of the three bidding committees, who presented their bids to the ICOH General Assembly, in alphabetical order of country name.

Then, Dr. Gagliardi took the floor to remind of the bidding process set by the ICOH regulations. According to ICOH Bye-Law 7, Section 2, the Board decided to admit the candidacies of Medellin (Colombia), Mumbai (India), and Barcelona (Spain) to the voting procedures, because they all met the minimum requirements established by the ICOH Guidelines on Congress Organization. According to ICOH Constitution Article 6, Section 1, ICOH Bye-Law 7, Section 3 and the ICOH Guidelines on Congress Organization, the Board decided to recommend Mumbai (India) as the venue for ICOH2027 Congress.

Finally, Dr. Gagliardi explained the electronic voting procedure: ICOH members in good standing attending the ICOH2022 digital Congress would be eligible to vote at the voting booth inside the Congress platform from February 7, at 10:00 CET to February 9 at 13:30 CET (voting available 24h). The electronic voting would be made through the ELIGO voting system platform.

Dr. Gagliardi informed the audience that the results of the elections would be announced during the Second General Assembly on February 10, 2022.

10. Honorary Members

President Takala announced to the General Assembly the proposal for Honorary Members approved by the Board:

Dr. Kent Anger - USA

The General Assembly approved the proposal.

Prof. Jorma Rantanen - Finland

The General Assembly approved the proposal.

Dr. Anger and Prof. Rantanen took the floor to express a few words of thanks for this important recognition.

11. Other issues

No other issue was discussed.



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Dr. Gagliardi took the opportunity to inform the audience that the results of the elections of ICOH Officers and Board members for 2022-2024 would be published on the ICOH website on February 7, and announced to the Second General Assembly on February 10, 2022.

Closing

The ICOH President Dr. Takala thanked the ICOH members attending the General Assembly and expressed his appreciation for the great work done by ICOH during his seven-year term now coming to an end. Finally, Dr. Takala closed the meeting.