



## Meeting of ICOH National Secretaries

in connection with the Argentina Occupational Health Congress, 1-4 October 2013, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Date 3 October 2013, 10.30–13.00  
Venue Buenos Aires, Argentina

Participants César Cano Candiotti, ICOH Member, Peru  
José Carneiro, ICOH NS for Brazil  
Elia Enriquez, ICOH Board member, Mexico  
Laura Flores, ICOH NS for Paraguay  
Arturo Juarez Garcia, ICOH NS for Mexico  
Raul Gomero, ICOH NS for Peru  
Raul Harari on behalf of Homero Harari, ICOH NS for Ecuador  
Veronica Herrera-Moreno, ICOH NS for Chile  
Suvi Lehtinen, ICOH Vice President, Finland  
Maria Cristina Pantano, ICOH Member, Argentina  
Orlando Pitti, ICOH Member, Panama  
Jorma Rantanen, ICOH Past President, Finland  
Claudio Taboadela, ICOH NS for Argentina  
Paula Viapiana, ICOH NS for Uruguay  
Gloria Villalobos, ICOH NS for Colombia

### Topics discussed

#### 1. Welcome

Suvi Lehtinen bid all participants warmly welcome. She expressed ICOH appreciation that so many ICOH National Secretaries were present.

#### 2. Introduction of participants

All participants briefly introduced themselves. In this connection, Suvi Lehtinen referred to the good representation of the NSs in the meeting, and mentioned that the Local Organizers had not only supported the participation mentally, but also in financial terms. The participants warmly thanked Dr. Claudio Taboadela and Dr. Cristina Pantano for this support by giving a big applause.

#### 3. News from ICOH Vice-President

##### ICOH National Secretaries

Suvi Lehtinen informed the meeting participants about the current situation of ICOH National Secretaries, totalling globally currently 51, two are in the appointment process, and 10 still pending.

### **ICOH NS Regional Meetings**

The VP mentioned that one informal NS regional meeting was arranged in connection with the International Conference on Work, Well-being and Wealth on 27 August 2013 in Helsinki. She continued that there may be a possibility to arrange the next ICOH NS regional and/or global meeting in connection with the ILO-ISSA World Congress, scheduled for 24–27 August 2014, Frankfurt, Germany. A couple of ICOH NSs from Latin America expressed their plans to attend. For the Asian Region, ACOH 2014 is being contacted and it is scheduled for 2–4 September 2014. In the African Region, ARAOH is arranging an International Conference on 12–14 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya. This is being explored.

### **Improving the exchange of information**

Concerning the exchange of information, VP has sent 3-4 National Secretary Information Letters on brief news to all NSs. SL asked whether the National Secretaries would have any proposals for topics to be discussed in the forthcoming info letters. Proposals can be sent to SL, [suvi.lehtinen@ttl.fi](mailto:suvi.lehtinen@ttl.fi).

NSs are kindly requested to send brief news and articles (250 words) to Professor Seong-Kyu Kang, Editor in Chief of the ICOH Newsletter. This will allow all ICOH members to learn what is happening in the countries.

The Mid-term Reports are due 1 November 2013. All Officers will prepare a report to the ICOH Mid-term Meeting, scheduled for 8–10 February 2014, among others, the VP will report on NS activities.

SL also encouraged the NSs to organize meetings of ICOH members in the country. Some countries used to have such a practice for a long time. The VP also inquired about the usability of the NS Virtual Office on the ICOH website.

## **4. Brief reports of ICOH National Secretaries**

### **Argentina – Claudio Taboadela**

Dr. Claudio Taboadela dealt in his presentation with three topics, first on regionalization of ICOH, secondly on official ICOH languages, and third, collective membership of ALSO. He pointed to the ICOH Bye-Laws indicating that ICOH may have National, Regional and Area secretaries. So far, however, no Regional Secretaries have been appointed. He proposed that a Regional Secretary/Secretaries for Latin America be appointed. Secondly, he pointed to the Articles 1, Section 4 of the Constitution of ICOH which stipulates that the official languages of the ICOH are English and French. He continued by pointing out that some of the core documents (Constitution, Bye-Laws and ICOH Code of Ethics for Occupational Health Professionals) have been translated, in addition to English and French, also to some other languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, but not into Spanish. Third, he took up the question of ALSO membership in ICOH.

Suvi Lehtinen responded to the first two items, and promised to discuss and get clarification from the Secretariat General to the third issue. ICOH Bye-Laws have regulations for Regional Secretaries, although so far no proposals have been made to ICOH President for appointment. If the task of the Regional Secretary will be taken into use, the procedure needs some more clarification among the roles of the National and Regional Secretaries. This issue will be taken up on the agenda on the ICOH Officers' meeting in February 2014.

The language issue was discussed in ICOH General Assembly in 2000 and in 2003. In the General Assembly in 2003 in Iguassu, it was decided that the status of official languages will not be changed, but ICOH members in various countries, e.g. those in Spanish-speaking countries, were encouraged to translate ICOH core documents into their national languages, after having agreed on the procedure with the ICOH Secretariat General.

### **Brazil – José Carneiro**

Dr. José Carneiro informed us on the activities of ICOH NS in Brazil. As soon as appointed, he contacted all ICOH members in the country. In addition, he has weekly monitored the situation of ICOH members in NGS. The results of communicating with them have been extremely good. NS has also worked in close collaboration with ICOH Secretariat General in checking the contact details of the member list. ICOH activities have been presented in several conferences, and the ICOH Joint Conference in Sao Paulo on 22-26 September 2013 attracted many new applications for ICOH membership. Brazil has currently 115 members, and the membership is on the increase. As goals in 2013, the following were mentioned: Keeping close relationship with ANAMT, Encouraging members to participate in SCs; Increasing the number of active members (until Aug 2013 the increase has been 55.4% but during the Joint Conference ICOH, a large effort was made to recruit new members and about 50 new applications were sent to Rome. One additional goal is to get at least 1 more OH Association as an Affiliate Member.

José Carneiro was congratulated for the activities and good results.

### **Chile – Veronica Herrera-Moreno**

Veronica Herrera-Moreno described the situation in Chile concerning the training of occupational health physicians. They have just started the organization of curricula at the University. She expressed her interest to collaborate with some other countries' universities and occupational health experts to compare and share experiences related to the education and training of occupational health physicians.

### **Colombia – Gloria Villalobos**

Gloria Villalobos described the National Surveys carried out in Colombia. The Second National Survey on Working Conditions and the development of legislation have been on the focus of activities. She also mentioned that the information on Scientific Committee activities to ICOH National Secretaries would be extremely welcome and appreciated.

In the discussion, a request was made to get the article published in the Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health on the ICOH Survey. SL promised to arrange it.

### **Ecuador – Raul Harari**

Raul Harari informed that Homero Harari, who is the ICOH NS for Ecuador, unfortunately could not attend the present meeting because of other commitment elsewhere. He said that he will inform the ICOH NS of the discussions in the meeting. He informed that they have organized some seminars that clearly seem to attract participants and also offer a platform for attracting new members to ICOH. He also mentioned that they would need some support from ICOH for their activities. He referred to the ICOH Code of Ethics and said that it has been very useful.

In the discussion, the ICOH sponsorship of various events was inquired. Suvi Lehtinen said that an inquiry should be sent to ICOH Secretary General with the programme of the meeting and a request for ICOH co-sponsorship. Secretary General will look into the programmes of the events, and make the decisions. Unfortunately, ICOH cannot support the meetings financially.

### **Mexico – Arturo Juarez Garcia**

Arturo Juarez Garcia mentioned that after appointment in July 2012 he presented his work plan in a national congress in September. He referred to a wide collaboration in the organization of both national and international conferences in the country. In connection with these meetings, ICOH stand has been organized which has helped the communication with ICOH members in the country. During January-October 2013 there has been a clear increase in the number of ICOH members. He has also worked on creating an ICOH Mexico website. Some discounts have been arranged for ICOH members of books and conference fees. This has been advantageous from the members' viewpoint.

In the discussion, it was mentioned that getting a number of Spanish-language good-quality journals into the ICOH list of journals offering discounts of the subscription fees would be very much appreciated. Also, it was confirmed that proposals made by Claudio Taboadela in his presentation are supported by many of the other NSs in the Region.

#### **Paraguay – Laura Flores**

Laura Flores pointed out to the small number of ICOH members in the country, but said that there are several potential members who are interested in ICOH matters. She mentioned especially two Scientific Committees that are of interest, namely Work and Vision and Biological Hazards. A special achievement was the adoption of the ICOH Ethical Code for Occupational Health Professionals in the Resolution 036-001/2012 by the Social Security of Paraguay. It was disseminated to the Ministries of Health, Justice and Labour, to the employers, and the Society of Occupational Medicine of Paraguay. She mentioned as a specific challenge in the country the language barrier.

#### **Peru – Raul Gomero**

Raul Gomero reported that there are 70 members of ICOH in Peru, and they are working on those who are not in GS. In the Second Peruvian Conference there were 300 participants, physicians, nurses, ergonomists, and social workers. These conferences provide a good forum to attract new members also to ICOH. He informed us of the actions to develop curriculum to Occupational Health Physicians. Also, they have a new goal for the activities, i.e. to establish strategic alliances with schools of health and colleges, as well as professional associations. He was happy to report that several experts from Peru attended this on-going ALSO Congress.

In the discussion, Claudio Taboadela congratulated Raul Gomero for good development in Peru in the field of occupational health and safety. There are 30 young physicians who have made their Masters in Occupational Health. The ALSO 2015 Congress will be organized in Lima.

#### **Uruguay – Paula Viapiana**

Paula Viapiana described the ICOH activities situation in Uruguay. She mentioned that there are two pharmaceutical chemists in Uruguay and they are ICOH members. They have contributed to several international meetings, e.g. ILO-ISSA in 2011 and EUROTOX in 2012. They also arrange a distant course on Industrial Hygiene in collaboration with the University of Chicago (300 hours). Also, translating materials for occupational health learning has been one of the activities. As challenges for developing activities she mentioned the lack of formal education. She looks forward to developing industrial hygiene in Uruguay.

#### **Panama – Orlando Pitti**

Orlando Pitti, ICOH member in Panama, mentioned that Panama does not have currently an ICOH NS, but they are interested in developing occupational health and safety activities in Panama, and also informing about ICOH activities to experts in the country. He informed that the regulations are under development, but there are some challenges ahead. Suvi Lehtinen promised to look into the NS situation.

### **5. ICOH Congress 2015 Advances**

Suvi Lehtinen informed the participants of the meeting of the planning situation of ICOH2015. The preparations are well underway. It seems that ICOH President will appoint a Fund-Raising Working Group in the near future to search funds to partially support the participation of experts from developing and transitory countries. In addition, the Local Organizers have reserved a good sum of financial support to financially support the participation of experts from developing world.

## 6. **Process of revising the ICOH Code of Ethics**

Jorma Rantanen briefly introduced to the process of ICOH efforts to revise the Code of Ethics for Occupational Health Professionals and informed the participants of the changes to be expected. He mentioned that the revising work was started by the Ethics and Transparency Committee after the Cape Town Board meeting in 2009. The Group had worked intensively, also involving the Board members, Chairs of Scientific Committees, and ICOH National Secretaries. The interim report was given in Cancun Congress. In the Cancun Board meeting, the President decided to establish a Code Editing Group, which had a meeting on 27-28 June 2013 in Rome. The Group agreed upon the changes that will be presented to the ICOH Board in the Mid-term Meeting in Helsinki in February 2014. Two new approaches have been added, and they are: institutional/organizational ethics and proactive ethics of every professional to act, when needed, although not necessarily anybody requesting to do so (comparable with the public health responsibility of health professionals).

## 7. **Other issues**

As there were no other issues the meeting was closed at 13.00 hrs.

Notes made by

Suvi Lehtinen

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