

North America National Secretaries' Meeting
Monterrey, Mexico
September 13, 2003

Attendees: Drs. R. Facci, J. Morales, R. Orford, and T. Popov

1. **Welcome by Dr. Facci:** Dr. Ruddy Facci, Vice President of ICOH, welcomed the attendees and stated that it was an honor and a privilege to be in Monterrey. He asked Dr. Robert Orford to record the meeting and send him the minutes (action: Dr. Orford) and noted that Dr. Todor Popov was attending as a special guest, representing MEDICHEM and Bulgaria.
2. **Welcome and Report by Dr. Morales:** Dr. Jorge Morales, National Secretary for Mexico, thanked Dr. Facci for his visit to Monterrey and for the excellent presentation he made at FeNeSTAC. He noted that it would be important to identify a Canadian secretary to attend the next National Secretaries' meeting for North America. Finally, he noted that Dr. Jorge Morales has been successful in increasing the Mexican ICOH membership from 5 to 25 in the past two years
3. **National Secretary History:** After the Singapore Congress in 2000, Dr. Bengt Knave asked Dr. Facci to organize the National Secretaries. Prior to that time, there were no clear expectations of the National Secretaries and they received little or no guidance from ICOH. That will now change. Dr. Facci has identified 54 National Secretaries in the 92 countries of ICOH. They are in his opinion the "third pillar" of ICOH (the other pillars are the Board and the Scientific Committees) and they play a very important role in representing the ICOH President and Officers, including participation in national occupational health events in their countries.
4. **ICOH News:**

At the Iguassu Congress, a change was made to the membership fees. Now, the triennial fee will be 60 Swiss Francs for countries with a GNP of less than \$15,000 per person per year as defined by the United Nations. Members from wealthier countries will have a triennial membership fee of 270 Swiss Francs. The fee may be paid by bank draft or by credit card

The Officers also agreed that all major documents of ICOH will be translated into English, French, and Spanish, although Spanish has not been designated as an "Official Language" of the Commission at this point. Dr. Facci will send the list of Scientific Committee, Task Groups, Networks and liaisons to the National Secretaries for information.
5. **National Secretary Guidelines:** proposals :
 - a) National Secretaries serve for no more than two triennia (six years) following their selection, which is also the limit for Board members and Officers of ICOH.
 - b) A National Secretary should not be, at the same time, a Board member or an Officer or a Chairman of SC

- c) The Guidelines will leave it up to individual countries to set rules for selection of the National Secretary, but he asked for input on how this might be done. Dr. Orford identified three options: a. Continue the present system whereby the National Secretary is selected by the ICOH Officer(s). b. Hold an election. Organizing the election would be the responsibility of the outgoing National Secretary, and only ICOH members in that country would be eligible to vote. c. Ask the major national occupational health organizations in the country to collectively select the ICOH National Secretary (who would have to be an ICOH member).

Dr. Morales noted that the democratic process could work in countries with more than five or six members, but that it would be difficult for smaller countries with fewer members. Dr. Popov suggested that FAX could be used in the balloting process rather than mail in ballots to save time and money. The length of time a National Secretary should be a member of ICOH before their selection will not be defined, but it is expected that normally they will have had a prior membership of several years. No change to the ICOH bylaws will be needed, since the selection method will be up to each country individually.

6. Dr. Morales suggested that the ICOH Constitution and Bylaws be made part of the ICOH website if they are not there already. Dr. Facci will make this recommendation to Dr. Sergio Iavicoli, the ICOH Secretary General (action: Dr. Facci).
7. Dr. Facci expressed concern that the addresses for some National Secretaries were not current. It is their responsibility to inform him and/or the Secretary General of address changes. A current list of addresses will be sent to all National Secretaries by email (action: Dr. Facci). Dr. Morales suggested that the list be included in the ICOH website if it is not there already. He also suggested that the Officers should meet with the National Secretaries during the Interim Board meeting between Congresses. This could be done on the fourth day of that meeting. The next Interim meeting will be in Helsinki in January, 2005.
8. **Report by Dr. Orford:** Dr. Robert Orford, National Secretary for the United States, thanked Dr. Facci for his support and congratulated Dr. Morales on his excellent work with the Monterrey Convention and Visitors' Bureau in preparing the proposal to host the 2012 International Occupational Health Congress in Monterrey. He noted that the size of the US made it difficult for potential members to gather the three signatures needed to apply for ICOH membership.

Dr. Facci suggested that in the future, perhaps only the National Secretary's signature should be required. Also, with the ease of electronic communication, perhaps the application could be made over the internet or by email. He will be discussing these ideas further with the Secretary General (action: Dr. Facci). Finally, he noted that the United States had more members than any other single country, at approximately 220, and that he believed there was potential for further membership growth, especially with the support of Scientific Program Committee Chairs, who might be persuaded to

meet in the United States on occasion, and to invite participation by researchers and others interested in the work of their Committee. Dr. Orford agreed.

Dr. Orford also suggested that email be used more often for communication with members, and suggested that an electronic list of addresses, telephone numbers, and email addresses for members based in their country, be sent to each National Secretary. He will contact Dr. Iavicoli with this request (action: Dr. Orford). Dr. Facci suggested that the Secretary General should provide the National Secretary with this information for all new members who have been accepted for membership by the International Commission. This could be accomplished if the National Secretary signs or otherwise authorizes the membership application (as discussed above).

- 9. Latin American Countries Interested in Having a National Secretary:** Dr. Facci noted that there are several Latin American Countries without a National Secretary. He is planning to address this matter through personal contacts with occupational health professionals in those countries. Dr. Morales offered to help, particularly by contacting appropriate individuals he knows in Honduras and Venezuela (action: Dr. Facci and Dr. Morales).

- 10. National Secretaries' Program:** Dr. Facci reviewed a list of meetings that have been proposed for National Secretaries during the coming three years. Several of these have already been confirmed. Dr. Popov recommended that all National Secretaries who are able to do so should consider attending the MEDICHEM meeting in Goa (Indian Continent) in October, 2005. Dr. Facci will send an updated list of meetings to National Secretaries in the near future. Dr. Orford noted that there were no meetings scheduled for the North American National Secretaries in the 2004-2006 period. Dr. Morales suggested that the next meeting of the North American National Secretaries could be held at the FeNeSTAC meeting in Torreon, Mexico in October, 2005, perhaps in conjunction with an Officers' meeting. Dr. Facci will discuss this with the other Officers (action: Dr. Facci).

11. End of the meeting