



S. Lehtinen

Meeting of ICOH National/Area Secretaries

in connection with the 31st ICOH Triennial Congress in Seoul, Republic of Korea

Date 4 June 2015, 17.30–19.15
Venue COEX Convention Centre, Grand Ballroom 101-102, Seoul, Republic of Korea
Participants See attached list of participants
Topics discussed

1. Opening of the meeting

ICOH President Kazutaka Kogi opened the meeting and bid all participants cordially welcome. All participants briefly introduced themselves. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1 to these minutes.

2. Welcome by Dr. Kazutaka Kogi

Dr. Kazutaka Kogi welcomed all to the meeting. He mentioned as a positive development the active networking of ICOH National/Area Secretaries during the past Triennium. He also very much appreciated the enthusiasm and commitment shown by ICOH National/Area Secretaries.

3. Vice President's Report of NS' activities in 2012–2015

Ms. Suvi Lehtinen, Vice President in charge of NS activities, briefly reported on the activities of the ICOH National/Area Secretaries carried out in 2012–2015. A total of 58 National/Area Secretaries were appointed during the Triennium. She continued by reporting that the aim at the beginning of the Triennium had been to continue the two-way communication among the Network of National/Area Secretaries. This was implemented through 3–4 Information Letters from the Vice President per year. Another goal set for the Triennium was to organize at least one regional meeting of ICOH NSs in each continent. A total of 4 meetings were organized, covering all continents. The meeting reports are posted on the ICOH website http://www.ichweb.org/site_new/ico_reports_national_secretaries.asp.

In addition, ICOH NSs contributed during the Triennium to three specific tasks, requested by ICOH SCs. A questionnaire survey on emergency care organized by Dr. Alexis Descatha, Chair of the Working Group and ICOH NS for France. The second was a contribution to the inquiry concerning representatives of countries to the Working Group on Mining sent out by Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut. The third specific task was a request by Dr. Su Wang and Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut to serve as judges for the Young Researchers Poster Competition at ICOH2015.

During the previous Triennium, an excellent joint effort was made in 2010–2011 by the NSs in their replies to the Questionnaire dealing with the OSH institutions in the countries and the status of occupational health services. A scientific article was published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health* 2013;39(2):212–6.

A second round of this latter survey is going on, and replies have been received from 45 ICOH NSs. The deadline for replies is 8 June 2015. The survey replies will be analysed by Jorma Rantanen, Suvi Lehtinen and Sergio Iavicoli. All who have contributed to the survey will be acknowledged.

All these contributions of ICOH NSs were very much appreciated.

4. ICOH membership campaign and NSs' role by Dr. Sergio Iavicoli

Dr. Sergio Iavicoli made a presentation on the membership situation in the countries and emphasized the important role of ICOH National/Area Secretaries in this issue. He also reported that with the new membership campaigns, the share of members from developing countries has increased from 18% in 2003 to 51% in 2014. He reported that in the past Triennium, a total of 562 new members joined ICOH. He mentioned that ICOH's Scientific Committees are expected to contact the NSs whenever they organize symposia or workshops in their countries. The scientific meetings organized by the Scientific Committees offer an excellent forum for membership campaigns. A one-page marketing leaflet (promoting ICOH's benefits) has been prepared to facilitate membership campaigns. He also mentioned the important role of the National Associations on Occupational Health in membership campaigns. The ICOH website currently offers several modes of payment for membership fees.

5. Discussion

Several questions were put forward in the lively discussion that followed the presentations:

Payment of membership fees from developing countries

The difficulties in paying the membership fee, in developing countries in particular, was taken up. The current PayPal system has facilitated the paying of the membership fee in many countries. However, there are some countries where the debit card is the only card used, and in some countries perhaps not even that.

In order to avoid problems with bank transfer payments and lacking credit card, it was concluded that a total of 5 membership fees may be collected together and transferred as a bulk payment with the names of the members whose fees are included.

Communication concerning the visas and financial support available for Congress participation

A request was put forward to ensure in connection with the next ICOH Congress that information concerning visas and the availability of financial support for developing country and transitory country experts will be disseminated well in time before the Congress. The financial support will be handled in connection with the submitting of abstracts, as in previous ICOH Congresses.

Process of joining of new members

The easiest way of attracting new members to ICOH is in connection with symposia, workshops, conferences and meetings organized by ICOH Scientific Committees and/or ICOH National Secretaries. For this, the joint efforts of SCs and NSs are further encouraged.

Some feedback was received as to the contribution by ICOH Board Members in the Region and ICOH VP in charge of NS activities, as to serving as 2. and 3. endorsers in cases where it has been difficult to easily find other ICOH members in GS.

It was proposed that the National Secretary of the country in concern will be copied the e-mail correspondence of the Secretariat with the applicants. The National/Area Secretaries may follow up the appointment process as they have access to their own member list in the Virtual Office on ICOH website.

Elections of ICOH

The topic of ICOH elections and the mail delivery in some countries was discussed. In the ICOH Constitution, it is stipulated that ICOH elections are handled by postal ballot. It turned out in the discussion that in some countries there is a postal workers' strike going on for a significant time. This has been reacted by the ICOH Secretariat by sending the postal ballots to the ICOH NS by courier mail. As additional measure, two reminders were sent by email to the whole membership in order to ship ballots to those who failed to receive them.

However, the figures showed that the number of ballot papers received by the Secretariat is in line with the previous elections.

The proposal of looking into the change of the election process to the direction of electronic voting was put forward more than once. The Secretariat will work to improve the process and will examine the possibility to introduce electronic vote.

6. Comments from President and Vice President Elect

Dr. Jukka Takala, ICOH President Elect, welcomed all ICOH National Secretaries to participate in the General Assembly on Friday afternoon, as he was planning to present the first plan of activities for the new Triennium in that connection.

Dr. Seong-Kyu Kang, ICOH Vice President Elect, expressed his thanks for all ICOH NSs attending the ICOH2015. He continued that he very much looked forward to working together with ICOH National/Area Secretaries in the forthcoming Triennium 2015–2018. He encouraged the National Secretaries to be in touch in cases that would call for joint development of communication or other issues of relevance for the work and activities of ICOH National Secretaries.

7. Closing of the Meeting

After the rich, lively discussion, Dr. Kogi expressed his thanks to all participants for their proposals and ideas. ICOH has an important role to play in international occupational health and safety, and all its resources are needed for improving workers' health in all parts of the world. He said that we look forward to an interesting and challenging new Triennium. On the basis of the enthusiasm and dedication shown during the past Triennium, we can expect to carry out many new activities. He warmly thanked all participants for their

active interest and fruitful discussion, and also wished every success to all participants in their efforts and activities at the national level.

Notes made by

Suvi Lehtinen
ICOH VP 2012–2015

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