



S. Lehtinen

Meeting of ICOH National/Area Secretaries

in connection with the 30th ICOH Triennial Congress in Cancun, Mexico

Date 19 March 2012, 17.45–19.45
Venue Convention Centre, Contoy, Cancun

Participants See list of participants (Annex 1)

Topics discussed

1. Opening of the meeting

Suvi Lehtinen 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, President of ICOH, 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 2009–2011

Ms. Suvi Lehtinen briefly reported on the activities of the ICOH National/Area Secretaries carried out in 2009–2012. A total of 61 National/Area Secretaries were appointed during the Triennium. She continued by reporting that the aim at the beginning of the Triennium had been to increase 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 10 meetings were organized, covering all continents. Six meeting reports are posted on the ICOH website

http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/ico_reports_national_secretaries.asp.

In addition, an excellent joint effort was made 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 total of 47 replies were received, which was highly appreciated. The vast majority of replies were from NSs, and in a couple of cases from WHO Collaborating Centres. In the analysis of replies, also other available data and information sources were utilized. A scientific article has been submitted. NSs were provided with two sets of draft feedback materials, one on occupational health services and the other on OSH institutions in the countries. As both of them were in draft form, all

corrections and additions could be taken on board. Ms. Lehtinen also emphasized in her presentation that the two-term principle applies to all ICOH National/Area Secretaries, regardless of the mode in which the election of the NS has taken place.

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 fee system, the share of members from developing countries has increased from 18% in 2003 to 37% in 2011. He reported that in the past Triennium, a total of 423 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 Association 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

In order to avoid problems with bank transfer payments and lacking credit cards, 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.

Assistance in paying the first triennium membership fee

It was concluded that the membership fee of CHF 66 (for three years) of members in developing countries is relatively reasonable. The Noro Fund can be used for experts in the developing countries who are extremely interested in joining, but cannot afford to. National Secretaries, the Vice President and the Scientific Committee on Occupational Health and Development will work together on this in the forthcoming Triennium.

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 procedure of becoming an ICOH member, it being slightly slow. A short CV in English or in French should be attached directly to the application form, only 3–5 lines about the educational and professional experience which is also as a slot in the on-line application form and in the hard copy of the application form. This will speed up the appointment process as the Secretariat does not have to request this separately. In addition, the contact information, e-mail address in particular, should be marked so clearly that applicants can be easily contacted. It was proposed that the National Secretary of the country in concern will be cc:ed 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.

Why three endorsers?

The application form for a new member who wants to join is available on the website, and all National Secretaries have been provided with a hard copy of the application form. The form requests a brief description of the applicant's work history and expertise areas (a 5-line CV) in order to show their connection to occupational health. Endorsement must be received from three ICOH members in good standing. Those who sign confirm that the person works in areas related to occupational health and is a good candidate for becoming an ICOH member. International meetings provide the best opportunities for finding ICOH members in GS who know the applicants and can endorse them. If problems in this arise, either the Vice President or the ICOH Secretary General can be contacted.

Three-year payment

Two questions were put forward: why could payment not be for one year at a time, or for lifelong membership? The Secretary General described the process of collecting payments, sending the payment settlement documents, and sending three or four reminders. Doing this three times during a Triennium would add to personnel costs, and would not be cost-effective. In addition, ICOH's budget is prepared for the General Assembly's approval for a Triennium, and accounting also follows this same period. This makes it difficult to deal with membership fees for lifelong membership.

When first joining ICOH, new members pay the remaining period (3-2-1 years) at the time of their joining, but during the second triennium members pay the whole fee regardless of the time of payment. According to the rules, all members should pay the membership fee during the first 6 months of the triennium.

Joining the Scientific Committees

Each ICOH member in Good Standing has the right to belong to three Scientific Committees of his/her own choice without any additional fee. ICOH Bye-Laws 11, Section 2 stipulates that the Chair of the Scientific Committee appoints the members of the Committee. Chairs will be instructed so that they all are aware of the procedure., and members joining various Scientific Committees get confirmation of their membership.

ICOH Journal?

Dr. Seong-Kyu Kang, Editor of the ICOH Newsletter, asked for contributions from NSs to the ICOH Newsletter.

The question was put forward as to whether ICOH could have its own international scientific journal. The Secretary General reported that this same proposal was made fifteen years ago, and on the basis of this experience, and the fact that ICOH covers so many different disciplines, it has been concluded that ICOH does not intend to establish its own scientific journal. The Scientific Committees and ICOH members are encouraged to publish their expert materials in existing high-level international scientific journals.

6. Action Plan 2012–2014 – joint brainstorming

The topics for the work plan of the new Triennium were briefly touched upon at the end of the meeting. One specific topic for the work plan was identified, i.e. Basic Occupational Health Services. This fits well with the work plans concerning the ICOH Strategic Objectives. It was agreed that as soon as the appointments of National Secretaries for 2012–2015 have been made, the Vice President will send a draft work plan on which everybody can comment, add and modify.

7. Closing remarks

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 also wished every success to all participants in their efforts and activities at the national level.

8. Closing of the meeting

Ms. Suvi Lehtinen warmly thanked all participants for their active interest and fruitful discussion, and closed the meeting.

Minutes made by

Suvi Lehtinen

Annex 1 - ICOH NSs Meeting, Monday March 19, 2012

| LAST NAME | FIRST NAME | COUNTRY | E-MAIL |
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| Descatha | Jean Francois | France | |
| Caillard | | France | |

ICOH Officers attending the meeting

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| Lehtinen | Suvi | Finland |
| Rantanen | Jorma | Finland |
| Kogi | Kazutaka | Japan |
| Iavicoli | Sergio | Italy |

ICOH Staff attending the meeting

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|----------|-----------|
| Boccuni | Valeria |
| Oliverio | Antonella |