



**Report on Activities of
ICOH National/Area Secretaries**

2012-2014

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31 January 2015

Report on Activities of ICOH National/Area Secretaries in 2012–2014

Suvi Lehtinen, Vice President

1. ICOH President appoints National/Area Secretaries (NS)

A meeting of the ICOH National Secretaries (NS) was held on 19 March 2012 in Cancun, and gathered a total of 58 participants. The reports of the previous term were discussed, and priorities – the communication of information, membership campaigns, and networking – for the current tenure were drafted.

The Vice President (VP) sent an e-mail to the NSs with tenure for 2009-2012, asking for the results of the election or agreement made among the ICOH members in the country concerning the nomination of an NS, in order for the ICOH President to appoint the NSs after their election. The message also contained

- the Guidelines for ICOH National/Area Secretaries
- the Contact Information Form to be filled in by the elected NS
- the Transparency Declaration Form to be filled in by the elected NS.

The tasks of the ICOH National/Area Secretaries, which are defined in the Guidelines, and are based on ICOH Bye-Laws, are:

- to represent the activities of ICOH in the country or area for which they are designated
- to promote the cooperation and communication among the ICOH members of their country or area
- to promote the links to other ICOH bodies.

After the initial appointments of National/Area Secretaries by the President, new Secretaries were continuously appointed in the course of 2012–2013. In line with the practice of the previous Triennium, an ICOH NS was also mobilized in the countries that did not previously have one due to low ICOH membership. The list of the National/Area Secretaries is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

Appointing of ICOH National Secretary also in countries with a small ICOH membership has been interpreted as a positive approach from ICOH side. It brings these experts into the ICOH NSs Network, with the aim of increasing information sharing.

The current number of ICOH National/Area Secretaries appointed is 58. They are distributed among the continents as follows:

Regions	Appointed
North America	3
Latin America	10
Europe	23
Eastern Mediterranean	3
Africa	10
Asia	8
Oceania	1
Total	58

as of 31.12.2014

The total number of countries with ICOH members is close to 90.

2. Work Plan for ICOH National/Area Secretaries

As soon as an ICOH member has been appointed as ICOH National/Area Secretary by the ICOH President, Vice President has sent a draft Format for a National/Area Secretary Work Plan 2012–2015, which can be utilized in the planning of national activities.

The tasks of all ICOH National/Area Secretaries are in principle the same, although there are differences between countries with over 100 ICOH members and those countries with only one or a few members.

Developing the work plan

- Making the ICOH Core Documents and ICOH Promotion tools available
- Selecting a few activity lines for current tenure
- Setting a target for increasing ICOH membership in the country
- Utilizing ICOH administrative support (President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary-General, the Secretariat)
- Utilizing the National Secretaries' Virtual Office
- Participating in the NSs' regional meeting (to be informed by the VP)
- Generating and maintaining contacts with National Associations in Occupational Health.

All these have been realized relatively smoothly. It seems that most of the National/Area Secretaries have used the NS Virtual Office on the ICOH website. The Virtual Office makes it easier for the NSs to carry out their tasks.

Evaluation of activities

- Report of activities sent to the VP twice during the Triennium.

The NSs are obliged to report back on their countries' activities twice during the Triennium. The percentage of reports was higher than in previous triennia (51 replies out of 58). The summary of the reports for 2012–2014 will be presented to the Board and the General Assembly in May-June 2015.

3. Increasing ICOH membership

The NSs play a crucial role in membership campaigns.

Setting a target for membership in 2015

In their reports and communications, some National/Area Secretaries have expressed challenges and difficulties in recruiting new ICOH members, due to economic situations in particular. Some of these challenges can be eased by measures carried out by the VP or ICOH Secretariat, but others need to be tackled by the NSs themselves. Some countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, Peru and Zimbabwe, have set quite ambitious targets for increasing membership. In several countries, the number of ICOH members has significantly increased during the current Triennium, e.g. in Kenya.

Information sharing

Every NS aims to introduce ICOH at one annual congress of the National Society of Occupational Medicine (or respective organ) within his/her three-year term. On the basis of NS reports, this seems to be the most common form of sharing information about ICOH and membership recruitment, and is being done constantly in many countries.

Some NSs presented the Cancun Charter in their National Occupational Health Convention, and sent a letter to the Minister of Health to inform him of this issue. In addition, the Ergonomics Guidelines and the ICOH Statement on the Global Asbestos Ban have been utilized in a similar way, either in presentations at national conferences or in articles in national journals. In Paraguay, the ICOH Code of Ethics has been adopted in the national Resolution. A special training workshop on the ICOH Code of Ethics was organized in Ghana. In Tanzania, the Code of Ethics has been utilized as training material in university courses on professional ethics. Almost all of the reports point to dissemination of information regarding ICOH activities, the networking of ICOH members' relevant activities, as well as further improvement of ICOH-related websites for national purposes. Good examples of these come from e.g. Hungary, Mexico and Panama, and a national website is being planned in Japan.

NSs have contributed to two e-mail surveys, one on Emergency care and the other on finding members for the ICOH Mining Working Group. The Questionnaire Survey on the status of OHS in the countries will be repeated in the first half of 2015.

Collaboration with National OH Societies and Associations

ICOH NSs should collaborate with the National Associations in their countries in order to raise awareness and draw new members and ensure sustaining members. Some of the ICOH NSs are also presidents of National Occupational Health Associations, which provides an excellent opportunity to attract new members to ICOH. Many NSs mentioned the close relations with their National Occupational Health Associations as an important channel for information sharing and membership recruitment.

ICOH promotion materials

The National Secretaries' Virtual Office (<http://www.icohweb.org/nsvo/>) and the ICOH website (www.icohweb.org) are excellent sources of information on ICOH and tools for promoting ICOH activities. The ICOH Secretariat designs and edits the ICOH

website, with the Secretary General as the Editor-in-Chief.

The Virtual Office and the ICOH website now contain five sources of material that NSs can use for informing occupational health and safety experts about ICOH activities, and thereby encourage them to join ICOH. These are:

1. the ICOH PowerPoint Presentation
2. the ICOH brochure
3. the membership application form (in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian)
4. the ICOH Newsletter
5. a one-page ICOH leaflet (benefits), including the application form (English, French, Spanish)

In addition, the following documents are available in the Virtual Office:

- NS obligations: Contact Information Transparency Declaration Form and NS Report Model for 2012-2014
- List of NSs.

ICOH National/Area Secretaries receive a bunch of the one-page leaflets which inform potential members of the benefits of joining ICOH. The membership application form is on the reverse of the leaflet. This one-page leaflet is a handy tool, but should be accompanied with a presentation on ICOH activities to be more effective.

In addition to these, the Triennial Reports of ICOH are also accessible on the internet, they are more comprehensive but somewhat difficult to print.

The reports from e.g. Brazil, Mexico and Hungary contain good examples of the use of the ICOH PowerPoint presentation.

NSs strongly emphasize the importance of quick, smooth communication with the ICOH Secretariat in cases in which experts wish to join ICOH, thus speeding the process from application to decision.

Achievements and proposals

The 51 reports on the activities of the National/Area Secretaries outline their active roles in ICOH membership campaigns. Special efforts were made by a number of National/Area Secretaries to recruit new ICOH members, particularly in conferences on occupational health and university training courses. It seems that the best response is received when promoting ICOH activities in meetings organized by ICOH Scientific Committees. If Chairs or Secretaries of Scientific Committees are from the country itself, they are invited to present the activities of their Committees, and this is of interest to potential members.

Many ICOH NSs have had the ICOH Core Documents translated into their national languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese and Arabic. This has been strongly encouraged and supported by ICOH.

Clarification of the procedure to financially support ICOH NS activities has been requested.

4. Developing further the multidirectional communication

Communication channels

ICOH brochures and website

A brief ICOH brochure has been deemed useful for NSs in carrying out their tasks. The one-page marketing leaflet has been published and distributed to all NSs.

In addition, it was proposed that an ICOH poster be provided to ICOH NSs to help increase ICOH's visibility in connection with seminars and symposia. Regular teleconferences/webinars on topical themes in occupational health and safety (three times a year) would be welcomed.

VP Information Letters and NS Activity Reports

A continuous flow of information between the NSs and ICOH Officers was already established during the previous Triennium. The VP sent four information letters during 2012, three in 2013, and three in 2014 in order to keep the NSs informed and updated of current ICOH decisions and activities.

Effective communication with ICOH Officers and Secretariat

This has been deemed important, as has full utilization of the new ICOH website. The NS Virtual Office has received positive feedback as it has made the work of the NSs easier to implement. New microsites have been proposed, such as a template for the NSs for passing on information to their own members in their country, and a webinar led by an ICOH expert.

Improving communication with Scientific Committees

The NS reports contained several requests to intensify communication regarding SC-organized symposia and conferences to National/Area Secretaries. The National/Area Secretaries would appreciate being informed of all ICOH scientific symposia and meetings organized in their respective countries. This would allow them to prepare an ICOH stand for relevant meetings to attract new members.

Information on most of the symposia organized by ICOH Scientific Committees is available on the ICOH website. Direct communication of information from the Scientific Committees to the NS concerned still has room for improvement. In all SC symposia and meetings, the organizers are encouraged to establish, in collaboration with the relevant NSs, a session on ICOH activities in general, for promoting ICOH and recruiting new members.

NSs constantly request that the Abstracts and Proceedings of ICOH symposia be available on the ICOH website. In this way, they could further transmit the relevant messages to their own colleagues in their countries.

Improving communication among National/Area Secretaries

Another topic of continuous interest is how to develop communications among the ICOH National/Area Secretaries. A platform for this could be established within the ICOH NS Virtual Office.

Information from NSs in ICOH Newsletter

National/Area Secretaries were asked to report on their activities in the ICOH Newsletter in a similar manner as the Scientific Committee Chairs and Secretaries. This was agreed on with the Editor of the Newsletter, and has been implemented as follows:

Issue	Pages	News from NS
1/2012	32	1
2-3/2012	40	1
1/2013	34	2
2-3/2013	36	4
1/2014	40	-
2-3/2014	40	5

Improving communication from National/Area Secretaries to country members

The reports contained a request to develop a '*writing to national members*' function on the NS Virtual Office website, so that each NS could easily obtain the e-mail distribution list of all ICOH members in the country.

5. National Secretaries' regional meetings

During the Triennium, at least one regional meeting of ICOH NSs was planned in connection with an International Conference in each continent, organized by one of the countries in the Region.

Cancun, Mexico

A meeting of the ICOH National/Area Secretaries was held during the 2012 ICOH Congress in Cancun to discuss their activities during the previous term and to preliminarily plan activities for the 2012–2015 Triennium. The meeting gathered a total of 58 participants. The participants agreed to strengthen the membership campaign and actively promote ICOH and its activities in their countries. Meeting report is available at:

http://www.ichoweb.org/site_new/multimedia/reports/pdf/national_secretaries/NS%20Meeting%20Minutes%2019mar12.pdf

2012–2014

During the period of 2012–2014, the Officers held meetings with National/Area Secretaries on separate occasions to discuss the membership campaign, the promotion of ICOH activities and other issues of interest.

The regional meetings of the National/Area Secretaries were held as follows:

- **27 August 2013, Helsinki, Finland** (Suvi Lehtinen)
An informal meeting of ICOH NSs was arranged in connection with the International Conference on 'Work, Well-being and Wealth, Active Aging at Work', in Helsinki, Finland. Four ICOH National/Area Secretaries, VP, one Board member and three ICOH members participated in the meeting. The meeting report is accessible at:

http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/multimedia/reports/pdf/national_secretaries/Meeting%20of%20ICOH%20National%20Secretaries%20Helsinki%20August%202013%20PM.pdf

- **3 October 2013, Buenos Aires, Argentina** (Claudio Taboadela and Cristina Pantano)
The Latin American regional meeting of National/Area Secretaries was held on 3 October 2013 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in connection with the 13th ALSO Congress. A total of nine NSs attended, together with the ICOH VP, Past President and one ICOH Board member. The wide participation of NSs from the Region and other experts was made possible by an exceptional arrangement of financial support by the Local Organizers of the Congress, and this was gratefully acknowledged. The meeting report is accessible at:
http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/multimedia/reports/pdf/national_secretaries/Meeting%20of%20ICOH%20National%20Secretaries%20Buenos%20Aires%20Oct%202013%20PM.pdf
- **2 August 2014, Johannesburg, South Africa** (Adriaan Combrinck, Claudina Nogueira)
The African regional meeting of National/Area Secretaries was organized in connection with the ARAOH Conference, scheduled for 1–3 August 2014 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting was attended by four NSs, the ICOH President, one Board Member, and the ICOH VP via Skype from Finland. The meeting report is accessible at:
http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/multimedia/reports/pdf/national_secretaries/Meeting%20of%20ICOH%20National%20Secretaries%20Johannesburg%20August%202014%20PM.pdf
- **2 September 2014, Fukuoka, Japan** (Seichi Horie)
The Asian regional meeting of National/Area Secretaries was organized in connection with the Asian Conference on Occupational Health on 2–4 September 2014 in Fukuoka, Japan. Three ICOH National/Area Secretaries were present, in addition to the ICOH President, the ICOH Past President, the ICOH Vice-President, and one ICOH Board Member.
The meeting report is accessible at:
http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/multimedia/reports/pdf/national_secretaries/Meeting%20of%20ICOH%20National%20Secretaries%20Fukuoka%202014%20Sep%202014%20PM.pdf

Seoul, Republic of Korea, Meeting of National Secretaries in ICOH2015

The next meeting of all ICOH NSs will be organized in ICOH2015. Approximately half of the current ICOH NSs will have served two terms by this time, and new NSs will have to be elected. In the remaining countries, the current NS will be eligible for a second term.

6. OHS questionnaire survey

In the 2009–2012 Triennium, ICOH conducted a survey in the 61 countries in which ICOH had a NS. The aim of the survey was to collect information on the occupational safety and health (OSH) organizations in the countries, as well as on the status of occupational health services (OHS). In addition, the possibility that the ICOH NSs could act as key informants in surveys concerning national occupational health capacities was looked into. The results were reported in the regional meetings and published in the Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health (http://www.sjweh.fi/show_abstract.php?abstract_id=3317). The survey will be repeated in 2015.

Annex 1. List of ICOH National/Area Secretaries (As of 31 Dec 2014)

Country/area	National Secretary		
North America		Montenegro	Ljiljana Kezunovic ljiljakez@hotmail.com
Canada	Nicola Cherry nicola.cherry@ualberta.ca	The Netherlands	Jufith Sluiter j.sluiter@amc.nl
Mexico	Arturo Juarez Garcia arturojuarezq@hotmail.com	Norway	Merete Bugge mdb@stami.no
USA	William Bunn wbbunn@gmail.com	Portugal	Alvaro Durao adurao@netcabo.pt
Latin America		Romania	Liliana Rapas liliana.rapas@gmail.com
Argentina	Claudio Taboada CTaboada@asociart.com.ar	Serbia	Martin Popevic martindr@eunet.rs
Brazil	Jose Carneiro jccarneiro@esame.com.br	Slovakia	Marek Varga marek.varga@upis.sk
Chile	Veronica Herrera veherreram@gmail.com	Spain	Luis Mazon luis.mazon@salud.madrid.org
Colombia	Gloria Villalobos villalobosfajard@hotmail.com	Turkey	Alp Ergor alp.ergor@deu.edu.tr
Costa Rica	Marco A Garcia Saenz marco.garcia@recope.go.cr	Eastern Mediterranean	
Ecuador	Homero Harari homeroharari@gmail.com	Egypt	Mohamed Omaira moh_safety55@hotmail.com
Panama	Orlando Pitti orlopitti@hotmail.com	Lebanon	Rima Habib rima.habib@aub.edu.lb
Paraguay	Laura Flores floreslaurapy@yahoo.com	Morocco	Abdeljalil El Kholti abdeljalil.elkholti@incvt.ma
Peru	Raul Gomero rgomero@peru.com , rgomero@barrick.com	Africa	
Uruguay	Paula Viapiana paulavia@yahoo.com	Ghana	Edith Clarke essieclarke@yahoo.com
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Bosnia Herzeg.	Nurka Pranjic pranicnurka@hotmail.com	Nigeria	Akiba Okon akibaokon@gmail.com ;
Bulgaria	Karolina Lyubomirova carol_lub@dir.bg	Senegal	Cheikh A.K.A Cisse cisseosh@orange.sn
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Finland	Ari Kaukiainen ari.kaukiainen@tapiola.fi	Zimbabwe	Dingani Moyo midlandsohc@gmail.com
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France	Alexis Descatha Alexis.Descatha@inserm.fr	China	Zhijun Zhou zizhou@fudan.edu.cn
Germany	Hans-Martin Hasselhorn Hasselhorn.Hans-Martin@baua.bund.de	India	R. Rajesh r.rajesh@ril.com
Hungary	Barnabas Biró biroarnabas@medicinabm.hu	Indonesia	Muchtaruddin Mansyur m0mansyur@yahoo.co.uk
Ireland	Thomas Donnelly DrTom.Donnelly@cmo.gov.ie	Japan	Seichi Horie horie@med.uoeh-u.ac.jp
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