

International Commission on Occupational Health Meeting of the Officers and Board of ICOH

Time Saturday, 17 June 2006, 09.00–14.00
Venue Fiera Milano, Turquoise Room 1

Participants Separate list

1. Opening of the Meeting

The President of ICOH, Professor Jorma Rantanen opened the Meeting of the new Board of ICOH for 2006–2009 and bid everybody warmly welcome. He analysed the results of the election, and noted that no French-speaking person was elected to the Board. The Board President of ICOH has a right, on proposal of the President, to co-opt two persons in addition to the 16 elected to the Board. He mentioned that he is ready to select one person from the French-speaking community in order to ensure that the French language is represented in the Board.

The President of ICOH2006 Congress, Professor Vito Foa joined the meeting for a short moment. The President of ICOH welcomed Professor Foa and invited him to speak on behalf of the ICOH2006 Organizing Committee. Professor Foa summarized that the Congress was a success and the ICOH Centennial history was intensively celebrated in Milan. The President of ICOH and Officers of ICOH as well as the whole ICOH Board expressed their warmest thanks and appreciation to the Italian Organizers of the ICOH2006 Congress for the most successful and scientifically high-level Congress.

Decision: The agenda of the Meeting was accepted.

2. Introduction of the new Board Members

The members of the Board and Officers >>introduced themselves and briefly described their professional backgrounds and previous ICOH activities.

The President informed the meeting participants that the ICOH Secretariat is in the process of organizing an information package for the new members of the Board which would include the Triennial Report, ICOH brochure, and core documents of ICOH.

The Secretary general, Sergio Iavicoli, informed the members of the Board of the various documents that were distributed during the meeting. The contact details, including e-mail address and mobile phone numbers were requested from every Officer and Board member. Also, the Declaration of Conflict of Interest forms were distributed and participants were asked to fill them in

Decisions:

1. All Officers and Members of the Board presented their contact information. All Officers and Members of the Board were asked to fill in the Declaration of Conflict of Interest and return it to the Secretary General.
2. .

3. ICOH 2009

It was decided that item 6 on the agenda be discussed as the third item in order to save time of the representatives of the South African ICOH2009 Congress Organizers, Professor Dan Kocks and his colleagues.

Professor Dan Kocks informed the participants of the advances and progress of the organization of the ICOH2009 Congress.

According to Secretary general a joint meeting among the ICOH Officers and the ICOH2009 Organizing Committee to discuss the organization of ICOH2009 was arranged last September in Cape Town. To facilitate the organisation Professor Dan Kocks will be provided with various checklists that have been compiled on the basis of the previous ICOH Congresses.

An Advisory Group for supporting the organization of the Congress will be appointed by the President. The proposed Committee consisting of the presidents of previous ICOH Congresses can advise the current organizers in various practical issues.

Decisions:

1. The report by Professor Dan Kocks was noted down for information.
2. The ICOH policy principles need to be followed in the organization of the Congress.
3. In order to involve the 33 Scientific Committees of ICOH, the invitation of the ICOH Vice-President in charge of the Scientific Committees in the Scientific Committee of ICOH2009 was deemed important.
4. Close contacts between the ICOH Officers and ICOH2009 Organizing Committee were emphasized.

4. Strategy 2006–2008

The President presented the current situation of the ICOH strategic priorities. He referred to priorities of the 2003–2005 Triennial Report and concluded the achievement of the objectives for the previous triennium for most parts satisfactory.

The President also informed that the division of work between the Vice-Presidents will be the following: Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut will be responsible on the Scientific Committees and Professor Kazutaka Kogi will be responsible on National Secretaries' Network as well as training issues. It was noted that Professor Frank van Dijk will contribute to the planning and implementation of training activities as regards academic education and training.

The President also informed >>that three Scientific Committees are to be merged (Scientific Committees on Pesticides, Agriculture and Organic Dusts). The name of the new Committee is the Scientific Committee on Rural Health: Agriculture, Pesticides and Organic Dusts.

Concerning the priorities for the years 2006–2008, the President proposed the following priorities.

Substantive priorities

1. Training and education of experts
 - development of curricula
 - development of training materials
 - training of trainers
 - organization of courses.
2. Developing occupational health services throughout the world, including the development and dissemination of BOHS
 - Global survey

- BOHS guidelines and tools
 - BOHS training and pilots
3. Responding to challenges from the changing world of work
 - Analysis of globalization
 - Global survey
 - Risk Observatory
 4. Developing good occupational health practices, GOHP
 - General GOHP guides
 - Format for a guideline in good practice in occupational health
 - Production of a sample of guidelines
 5. Developing and strengthening induction, guidance and conduct in ethics

Organizational priorities

1. Organizational development of ICOH
2. Developing collaboration with the Allies
 - WHO and ILO
 - Sister NGOs
3. Strengthening the information activities of ICOH
 - External information
 - ICOH Newsletter
 - Website
 - Slide show
 - Documents in national languages
4. Development of membership

Discussion:

The proposed strategic priorities aroused much enthusiasm and discussion. The reaction was positive. Some new topics were proposed as reported below.

Suvi Lehtinen proposed that a more detailed description of the substantive and organizational priorities should be prepared by the President in due course. This would allow the contributions from various Scientific Committees to be inserted into the Work Plan for the years 2006–2008.

There was a lively discussion on the development of occupational health services. The pilot projects on BOHS being implemented in China and the German employer model described by Brigitte Froneberg were also discussed: the latter was reported as successful in a well-organized industrialized country, but other models and options are needed for countries in other phases of development. For example, in China public sector intervention is needed in the development of occupational health service system.

In the discussion concerning the production of guidelines, the American Thoracic Society Guidelines and the Helsinki Criteria for diagnosis and attribution of asbestos-related diseases in particular was taken up. Dr. Jorge Morales confirmed that they are being utilized in Mexico.

Ken Takahashi supported the need for producing guidelines on various topics. He said, however, that in some cases guidelines may not be the most appropriate form of product. For example, the guidelines on occupational infectious agents, are not feasible at this time, but may be so at a later date. Instead, he proposed that a fact sheet could be developed providing information on the risks of occupational infectious agents and ways in which to prevent exposures.

A guideline on good practice in science and research was taken up by Antonio Mutti. The President has participated in the work of CIOMS and will provide the CIOMS guidelines on

ethics in epidemiological research. The CIOMS guide can be used to complete the ICOH Code of Ethics. Antonio Mutti was asked to draft a proposal on this issue.

Petter Kristensen said that ethics are of the utmost importance for ICOH. There is a need for legal expertise, ethicist, in the Group. It was discussed whether it would be possible to get some expert service in this area if needed. He also reminded the participants of the need for a guide on good association practice.

René Mendes put forward a proposal to prepare a brief chapter on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and see how the ICOH priorities contribute to the MDGs. The President commented that MDGs are included in several ICOH activities as a mainstreaming principle. It would be in any case good to make a document of ICOH and MDGs.

Hua Fu emphasized the need that ICOH also needs to allocate some activities for facilitating the work of the enterprises in the field of occupational health and safety. The President stated that the political support comes from ILO and WHO; ICOH contributes to this objective through the International Organizations. The development and sustainability of infrastructures was emphasized as a key to continuous improvement of occupational health services.

Richard Ennals had left a brief PM concerning the topic of child labour on the ICOH agenda. Suvi Lehtinen put forward the proposal. It was concluded that this topic will be developed in collaboration with the ILO IPEC Programme.

Marco Maroni proposed a new topic for ICOH agenda: the recognition and diagnosis of occupational diseases was discussed in one of the sessions of the ICOH2006. The establishment of a working group was proposed, consisting of clinicians, epidemiologists, and occupational hygienists. If the work of the group is successful, it might be possible to consider establishing a new scientific committee in Cape Town in 2009. It was concluded that new methods for diagnosis should also be monitored. René Mendes commented on the ILO concept of occupational diseases, and considered it important to also take into account work-related diseases. He was willing to work in the group to be established. The President found the initiative important and fitting well to the previous proposals of WHO and ILO.

Sergio Iavicoli proposed the preparation of a WHO-ILO-ICOH declaration on a global ban of asbestos. The President supported the idea of ICOH preparing a call of its own for a global ban of asbestos. This was supported.

Decisions:

1. After discussion in the Board, the President will prepare a more detailed description of the contents and objectives of the priorities.
2. The Task Group on Transparency was renamed to Task Group on Ethics. Its task is to renew the guidelines, and the ethical part of the good association practice guide. Petter Kristensen will continue as Chair.
3. The Task Group on Information will continue its activity, and Suvi Lehtinen will continue as Chair.
4. The recognition and diagnosis of occupational diseases was deemed important. Marco Maroni will prepare a one-page term of reference, on which the President and Board Members will comment. The President will then assess how the group can best start its work. Mid-term meeting and Cape Town will expect a progress report. WHO-ILO collaboration will be sought.
5. Concerning the call for a global ban of new use of asbestos, the President will prepare an ICOH Board Resolution which will be circulated to the Board for comments.

5. Scientific Committees

Vice-President Marilyn Fingerhut will invite all Chairs and Secretaries of the Scientific Committees to comment on the Work Plan of the Scientific Committees and make recommendations as to the further development of the working methods. The President informed the participants that the plan is that as soon as the names of the Officers of the Scientific Committees are available, he and the Vice-President will send a joint letter to the Chairs on the appointment of the Chairs, on approval of Secretaries and on expected outputs during the tenure 2006-2009.

Decisions:

1. The Scientific Committees will be approached to give their input to the Work Plan.

6. National Secretaries' Network

Vice-President Kazutaka Kogi informed the participants that the aim is to give more support to the National Secretaries and coordinate their activities. In addition, the purpose is to explore the possibilities of establishing regional secretaries for ICOH. He invited ideas and recommendations from the Board Members for National Secretary activities that need development.

Decisions:

1. Countries that do not have National Secretaries will be identified.
2. The possibility for establishing Regional Secretaries will be explored.
3. Information support and other appropriate support to the National Secretaries will be provided.

7. Mid-term Meeting

The Mid-term Meeting is scheduled to be organized in October –November 2007. The potential venue for the meeting was discussed. Two proposals were made, one to be held in Dortmund in connection of the A+A Messe (proposal made by Brigitte Froneberg) and another to organize the Mid-term meeting in Mumbai, India in connection with a National Conference scheduled for January-February 2008. The latter proposal was made by Dr. Shyam Pingle and presented by Suvi Lehtinen. Two other possibilities were also mentioned: US NIOSH and Rome.

It was stated by the ICOH Secretariat that half of the members of the Board come from the European Region. In order to save costs, the Mid-term meeting in Europe would be the cheapest option.

Decision:

The Mid-term Meeting would possibly be arranged in Europe. Brigitte Froneberg will contact Dr. Walter Eigendorf on the possibility to organize the Mid-term Meeting in connection with A+A messe.

8. Budget 2006–2008

The Secretary General presented the provisional budget for June 2006–31 December 2008 (Annex 1). An interim budget for 1 January 2009–27 March 2009 will then also be prepared.

Decisions:

1. The budget was approved.
2. The idea of interim budget January–March 2009 was approved.

9. Any other issues

Appointing several Task Groups and other Working Groups

The President will appoint several Task Groups to carry out ICOH activities in practice. He will invite Board Members to these Task groups. The invitation letters will be sent after the summer vacations period.

The Officers of ICOH meet twice a year. The Board is kept informed of the decisions made.

Information on WHO Collaborating Centres' Declaration on Workers' Health

The Declaration on Workers' Health, signed in Stresa on 9 June 2006, will be also linked to ICOH website.

Similarly, a link to ICOH Centennial Declaration will be provided on the WHO/OCH website.

10. Closing of the Meeting

The President expressed his thanks to the new Vice-Presidents and the Board, the previous Board, as well as the Secretariat, and closed the Meeting.

Many thanks to Dr. Suvi Lehtinen, Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut and Ms. Daniela Fano for their cooperation in the drafting of the minutes.

Annex 1 – Participants list

Officers:

Prof. Jorma Rantanen (Finland) - ICOH President
Prof. Kazutaka Kogi (Japan) - ICOH Vice-President
Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut (USA) - ICOH Vice-President
Prof. Sergio Iavicoli (Italy) - ICOH Secretary General

Board Members:

Mr. Ian Eddington (Australia)
Dr. Brigitte Froneberg (Germany)
Prof. Hua FU (China)
Dr. Petter Kristensen (Norway)
Ms. Suvi Lehtinen (Finland)
Prof. Marco Maroni (Italy)
Prof. Renè Mendes (Brazil)
Dr. Jorge Morales (Mexico)
Prof. Antonio Mutti (Italy)
Prof. Ken Takahashi (Japan)
Prof. Frank Van Dijk (The Netherlands)