



**International Occupational  
Hygiene Association**

Dear Presidents and board members of our member associations

November 2018

I am writing to you on behalf of the IOHA board to report on the progress IOHA has made in the last year on the work plan 2016-2020. In this letter I would like to highlight some of the issues that have been achieved in 2018 and the work that needs to continue in 2019. The achievement will be presented in line with our 4 goals, which are:

1. Promote occupational hygiene
2. Improve occupational hygiene capabilities and practice
3. Effective networking and knowledge management
4. Robust governance

## **1. Promotion of occupational hygiene**

In this year a lot of attention was focussed on improving our network. As mentioned in our strategy a strong network of individuals and governmental and non-governmental organizations should lead to:

- Global outreach to the worldwide worker community
- New and innovative solutions
- Better public awareness
- A stimulation of new initiatives conducted by our members.

The Activities IOHA developed with ILO, ICOH-IEA, WHO, ISRP, WHWB and ENETOSH will be presented in this report.

### **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Contact with ILO was mostly focussed on progress in the flagship programme OSH-GAP. This programme promotes a culture of prevention in occupational safety & health and works to realise the fundamental right of all workers to safe and healthy work.

Nancy Leppink was invited to the 11<sup>th</sup> IOHA conference in Washington DC as a key note speaker. She led us through the position and work of ILO. In the panel discussion which followed we discussed possible fields of collaboration. ILO mentioned several projects in the world in which IOHA could participate. As a follow-up for these ideas, a visit to the ILO is planned on 2<sup>nd</sup> November.



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As an NGO we were invited to be present as an observer at meetings to discuss a Code of Practice on Open Cast Mining and on Safety and Health in Shipbuilding and Ship Repair. Based on the experience of Thomas Fuller (representative AIHA) visiting one of these meetings we are still investigating how IOHA can contribute more to this ILO process. In 2019 different sectoral meetings are planned.

We will keep you informed about these new opportunities (project and meetings), in the hope that your organisation can help identify experts on the different topics, who can (on a voluntary basis) help to represent IOHA.

### **International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH)**

On 29th and 30th April IOHA held its first board meeting of 2018. The meeting was held in Dublin just before the [ICOH](#) conference. The reason for holding the meeting in Dublin was to improve our contacts with our sister organisation ICOH. IOHA has had a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ICOH and IEA since 2002, so from that perspective it seemed like a good idea to bring the board to this meeting and to see if contacts and collaboration could be developed and expanded to a more practical level.

During this meeting we discussed the item on Tuberculosis (TB). For this topic Perry Gottesfeld and Sophia Kisting of ICOH were present. Later that year we visited the United Nations General Assembly first high-level meeting on TB with the aim of accelerating efforts to end TB and reach all affected people with prevention and care. ICOH drew up two [TB statements](#) for this purpose. By supporting these two statements, we want to encourage governments, companies and health financiers worldwide to invest in better control measures to prevent TB in workers exposed to silica and health workers.

On 4th June 2018 at the United Nations in New York, an interactive civil society hearing was held as part of the preparatory process for the UN high-level meeting on TB (UN HLM) on 26<sup>th</sup> September. This meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June was followed by two days of lobbying and visiting different country missions.

I am happy to inform you that thanks to an intense year of effort by ICOH, IOHA and other partners, the suggested language related to workers is successfully included in this endorsed [Declaration](#). It identifies "health care workers, miners and others exposed to silica" as high-risk vulnerable groups. And is "Committed to... implement primary prevention in high-risk occupations by reducing silica dust exposures in mining, construction and other dusty



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workplaces, and worker tuberculosis surveillance and infection prevention and control in healthcare settings”.

Our next steps will include the development of work plans to facilitate assistance to countries and organizations to implement workplace practices to reduce silica in workplaces and to protect health workers. These efforts will take place via the ICOH subcommittee - MinOSH TB-Silica subcommittee, and the OH Health Workers TB-Health Worker subcommittee. IOHA would like to contribute to these work plans. To streamline these activities, we would like to form two IOHA subcommittees; one specializing in silica (mining & construction) and one specializing in the health care sector.

### **World Health Organisation (WHO)**

The 71st WHO World Health Assembly 2018, 21–26 May 2018, was visited by a joint team of ICOH, IEA and IOHA members. The representatives were Prof. J Rantanen (ICOH), Prof. M. Robertson (IEA), Ms. A. Hiddinga and Prof D. Vernez. (IOHA).

The main themes of the 71st WHA were – in addition to the “regular” agenda items – the following priority items relevant for the ICOH, IOHA and IEA:

- The 13th General Programme of Work 2019–2023, the cyclic plan of the organization containing the main priorities for the next 5 year period\*;
- Health, environment and climate change;
- Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and preparing the UN high-level meeting in UN General Assembly, September 2018;
- Health systems and Universal health coverage, UHC;
- Public health preparedness and response in health emergencies;
- WHO global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030;
- Ending TB and preparing the UN high-level meeting in the UN General Assembly, September 2018.

The joint interventions by the three occupational health organisations were found to be useful. Tactically, for the future, instead of one common presentation, it would for reasons of visibility, be better to present, for example three tandem presentations.

The meeting also gave us insight that occupational hygiene, occupational health and ergonomics/ human factors are still too invisible in the WHO Priorities and consequently also in the WHA, which at least indirectly affects the priority position of these substance areas in the WHO policies and programmes. “Integrating” with the wider substance areas,



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such as environmental health or NCDs, seems to shadow the invisibility.

Policy, substantive and technical efforts should be enhanced to get occupational health/hygiene a more independent role and priority position within the WHO policies and programmes on its own justification. To achieve this the three organisations should more frequently join forces.

From WHO we received the comment that it was the first time they had seen the three NGOs present together at a World Health Assembly. They supported and appreciated our presence. Afterwards we started to receive invitations to participate in several meetings.

At the end of October we will be again in Geneva sitting at the table of WHO to participate at the First [WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health: Improving air quality, combatting climate change – saving lives](#), and the round table session the day before. In my opinion the visibility and presence at these meetings help IOHA to obtain a place at the discussion tables; and give more visibility to the importance of occupational hygiene in respect to workers' health. It should be mentioned that we are always looking for volunteers who might be able to visit these meetings.

### **International Ergonomics Association (IEA)**

IOHA was invited to attend the [IEA](#) conference in Florence. Sadly due to unforeseen circumstances I was not able to be in Florence in time for the meeting.

During the Washington DC board meeting, IEA was represented by Prof. M. Robertson. Prof Robertson provided an overview of IEA. IEA is like IOHA an organisation for organisations (52 members) with 28 technical committee on different subjects. Non-members of IEA may also join the technical committees and IOHA and its members were encouraged to do so. IEA is keen to develop global relationships, looking to its partners for international examples of case studies, and hopes to build on the collaboration that resulted in the joint statement at the 71st World Health Assembly. On this moment IEA is working on different projects (WHO and ILO) and IOHA was asked to join the team with two experts. One project is on delivering ergonomics guidelines for service workers and there is also a WHO project for the informal sector and healthcare workers to bring together international examples of case studies. In the meeting there was considerable discussion about ways to collaborate. Different paths were identified. These pathways need to be explored and organisations are asked to help on this.

### **International Society for Respiratory Protection (ISRP)**

In the last year we asked for assistance from [ISRP](#) in relation to the TB event in New York. ISRP endorsed the ICOH statement. Michael Parham, vice president of ISRP, was able to attend our board meeting in Washington, and gave a presentation on ISRP and the projects they are working on. For example, ISRP is currently working on educational projects on the use of respirators. ISRP has provided training materials and experts for training on the effective use of respiratory protection during volcanic ash events. But ISRP is also working on other topics such as first responders, TB in health care setting and the GAPS in

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guidance (sensitive groups). Michael also told the board that ISRP is working on projects to develop respirators for children. ISRP works closely with NISOH and WHWB.

The most recent activity is that we have asked ISRP to give their input for the WHO meeting on Air Pollution and Health: Improving air quality, combatting climate change – saving lives. We hope that we can also bring their ideas to the round table meeting on air pollution in Geneva.

### **Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB)**

[Workplace Health Without Borders](#) is an organisation which has the goal of engaging volunteers in improving workplace health in those regions of the world with under-served worker populations. Their focus is to provide workers and employers with technical assistance, training and skills development to help them develop capacity and infrastructure to manage and improve the health conditions in their workplaces.

During the ICOH conference in Dublin (May 2018), a session took place with the title 'Workplace Health Without Borders – Methods and strategies: prevention of work-related non-communicable diseases in economically developing countries'. It was organised and chaired by Dr Dave Zalk and Jackie Morton (WHWB-UK), and included presentations by members of global organisations such as IOHA and OHTA ((Jakes) Jacobs, President Elect of IOHA, presented 'Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) and IOHA: growing occupational hygiene where most needed'). The WHWB meeting (International and US and UK branches) followed the two WHWB special sessions. The fact that the (vice) presidents of ICOH and IOHA were present at this meeting was well appreciated.

During the preparations for the above session, the idea developed to work on an MOU between WHWB and IOHA. In the last month before the meeting in Washington, the MOU was drafted, and during the Washington conference the MOU was signed.

### **Network organisations**

These platform organisations are important for the development of the IOHA worldwide network. It is these kind of platforms that give people working in a country without an OH association a possibility to become more actively involved in their region. This has in some situations already led to new OH organisations.

#### *OSH Africa*

There are some promising developments in the African region. OSH Africa has been established. Occupational Safety and Health Africa Foundation with the trademark [OSHAfrica](#) is a Pan-African OSH organisation with the principal aim of bringing together Occupational Safety and Health professionals across Africa, creating an atmosphere for collaborative work, sharing knowledge and OSH data across different countries and sub-regions of Africa. They aspire to be the African information agency on Occupational Safety and Health.

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We will follow the developments of this organisation closely; IOHA president Jakes Jacobs will be one of the speakers at the OSHAfrica conference taking place in 2019 in South Africa.

#### *IOHA Committee for the Promotion of Occupational Hygiene in Latin America.*

In the board meeting in Washington DC 2018 the Argentinian association presented this new idea. They would like to form an IOHA Committee with specific focus on:

- Collaboration in the formal formation of the Latin American Associations in those countries without a presence in IOHA;
- Establishment of a free exchange platform between associations in Latin America;
- Creation of a database of Occupational Hygiene professionals;
- Creation of a list of certified Spanish-speaking Hygienists willing to participate in volunteering and training in the topics defined by the Education Committee;
- Development of the web pages of each country without a current presence in IOHA.

The Argentinian organisation has for this reason invited the IOHA board to their next IV Pan American Congress, to be held in April 2019 in Buenos Aires.

#### *Asian Network of Occupational Hygiene (ANOH)*

ANOH is proving successful in engaging occupational hygienists in countries which have no national OH/IH organisation. ANOH is holding its third ANOH Conference, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at the National Yang-Ming University, Taipei, Taiwan. The theme of this year's conference is explore the Asian ways.

#### *European Platform*

After having agreed that priority should be given to chemical hazards, in the context of the "Healthy Workplaces Manage Dangerous Substances" campaign driven by EU OSH Agency, for 2018-2020, the platform identified three technical topics and one strategic topic needing attention and further development:

- Hazard and Control banding strategies
- Carcinogenic and Mutagenic agents and skin exposure control
- Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals (REACH)
- Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Harmonization of education and training

Promising developments are also there in the Turkish region. IOHA was invited to speak at their conference. The organisation was established in 2017 and hopefully in 2019 they will be able to join IOHA.

From an IOHA viewpoint, these are wonderful and valuable initiatives with which we try to stay connected, and work together on important topics.

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## 2. Improve occupational hygiene capabilities and practice

### *Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA)*

IOHA promotes and encourages the further development and promotion of OH/IH as a profession. We hope that people in the world can be professionally trained as OH/IH. We support the Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) qualifications framework as one of the options for modular, internationally recognised training. Our IOHA liaison stepped down (Hans Thore Smedbold) and we had to choose a new IOHA liaison. Thomas Fuller is chosen to serve as our new IOHA-OHTA liaison. We thank Hans Thore Smedbold for the several years he represented IOHA on the OHTA board.

### *ENETOSH*

The Education committee has, led by Thomas Fuller (AIHA), written a new plan with goals and objectives for the next few years. The idea is that the Education Committee will, among other goals and objectives, work with external education and training organizations such as OHTA and the European Network Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health (ENETOSH) to develop training and educational programs and approaches on occupational hygiene to reach students in technical colleges, secondary schools, and primary schools.

The Education committee will work to make various educational materials available on the IOHA website for members and individuals and organizations external to IOHA as a means of advancing awareness and understanding of the OH profession, and advancing OH approaches to worker injury and illness prevention.

For that reason an MOU was developed by the Education committee together with [ENETOSH](#). This new MOU was signed during the IOHA board meeting in Washington. At the 22 ENETOSH Network Meeting, which will take place on 25 – 26 October 2018 in Dresden, Germany, IOHA will be represented by Christian Schumacher (DGAH).



During the 11th IOHA scientific conference in Washington DC a session Let's Talk with the World about the World of OH was held in a World café setting. This session was focussed on interacting with participants to provide input/generate ideas on four important topic areas impacting the IH/OH/OESH profession:

- Retaining emeritus members of associations.
- Addressing the shortage of IH/OH/OESH capability and capacity in specific regions (e.g. Asia in general, or Indonesia specifically).
- Providing IH/OH/OESH training to specific categories of workers (e.g. teenagers and young adults, gig workers in developed economies, informal sector workers in Africa and other developing regions).
- Bringing more young people into the IH/OH professions.



The ideas generated in this session will be compiled into a White paper which will be made available for all member organisations through the new IOHA website.

### **National Accreditation Recognition Committee (NAR)**

IOHA members are able to obtain an accreditation through the IOHA National Accreditation Recognition (NAR) process. At this moment there are 15 countries with a NAR accreditation. And in the last year The Netherlands and Canada received their recertification for a period of five years.

During the last full day workshop of the NAR, we discussed how to make the NAR governance documents and procedures more transparent, and the way to move forward. To ensure that there is always a facilitator present to evaluate an application, a year schedule will be made and for every application two facilitators will be appointed. The topic of reciprocity - the meaning of full reciprocity - was discussed in the NAR committee meeting in depth, and also possible strategies for how to proceed with this topic. We also chose a new Chair for the NAR committee: Philip Hibbs will take over from Bengt Stahlbom. We thank Bengt Stahlbom for all the work he has done for the NAR and IOHA.



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### 3. Effective networking and knowledge management

#### *Global Exposure Manager*

Being an international organisation, IOHA knows how important it is to share ideas and communicate achievements within the community of occupational hygienists. Looking at the figures, we have noticed that the number of people reading the Global Exposure Manager is growing; but it still does not have the full potential we would like it to have. We need to keep encouraging associations to bring Global Exposure Manager to the attention of your members. Members of organisations can register themselves to receive the IOHA Newsletter on the website <http://ioha.net/newsletter-signup/>. Links to the new newsletter will be sent to the ones who have registered themselves through the website.



A group of volunteers have translated articles into Spanish for posting on the website. The September and December issues of 2017 and the March and June issues of 2018 have been translated. We hope that the new platform that is formed in Latin America will use Global Exposure Manager as one of their sources for communication. We also hope that you will keep motivating your members to write articles about OH/IH, important developments or studies that are carried out in your countries. So, the newsletter will truly represent all member associations in a good way.

Due to the costs of making Global Exposure Manager, it will be necessary to find new financial resources for the next year. In the next few months special attention will be given to advertisements. A media pack is available through the secretariat, for all those members who think they might know companies/parties interested in advertising in Global Exposure Manager.

#### *Website*

The most important goal for 2018 was the development of our new website. After collecting information from the different associations on how the website should look and what our member associations consider to be important functions, the Communications committee drafted a document with all the specifications needed for the redesign of the website. A Request for Proposal was sent out and five parties applied. At the end of August a decision was reached. DSI - Dreamstate Interactive has been chosen to restyle the website. They have already started their work. Hopefully by the beginning of 2019 we will have a new revised website, so we can use the possibilities of this website to become the world's clearing house on occupational hygiene.

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### *11th Scientific Conference in Washington DC*

From 24-26 September 2018 the 11th IOHA International Scientific Conference (IOHA 2018), hosted by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) was held in Washington DC. It was an interesting conference which focussed on the IOHA strategy in all its elements. We would like to thank AIHA for organising this wonderful event in the heart of the American Capital. The scientific content of conference was prepared by the International [Scientific Committee](#) under the inspiring leadership of Dr. Gurumurthy Ramachandran. Abstracts were read by the 66 [international abstract reviewers](#).



#### Some conference statistics:

- 57 Education Sessions, all with an international focus
- 198 Speakers, representing 25 countries
- Conference attendees 536 (from 36 countries)
- PDCs: 259 registrations and 2 Technical Tours being offered at the US Capital
- 26 Exhibitors; 4 Silver Level Sponsors
- Life time Achievement Award (Roger Alesbury (OHTA))
- Collaboration Award Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) and Global Fairness Initiative (GFI)
- 8th International Control Banding Workshop

The conference gave occupational hygienists from 36 countries the possibility to exchange ideas, follow professional development courses and meet occupational hygienists from around the globe.



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### *Life time Achievement Award*

The IOHA Lifetime Achievement Award honours individuals who have made significant contributions to the promotion and development of occupational hygiene practice that improve the health and welfare of working men and women.

Roger Alesbury MSc, Dip OH, CFFOH is the recipient of the 9th IOHA Lifetime Achievement Award.



Roger is well known in the global occupational hygiene community as a champion of worker health protection, particularly in the field of training and education as a founding director of OHTA. Roger gave a wonderful and inspiring presentation during the 11th IOHA International Scientific Conference.

### *Collaboration Award*

The Collaboration Award was bestowed for the first time during the conference. The first recipients of the IOHA Collaboration Award are the Brick Kiln Committee of Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) and Global Fairness Initiative (GFI).

This new Award honours collaboration between an occupational/industrial hygiene organisation and other countries or organisations to share ideas and technologies to improve the calibre of occupational/industrial hygiene worldwide.

The winning project, chosen by an independent judging panel, was one of five excellent nominations submitted by IOHA member associations, highlighting the diverse and innovative approaches to



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collaboration within the global occupational hygiene community. Two representatives from both organisations, Dr. Sanjel and Mr. Acharya, presented their project at a special session at the conference.

The Collaboration Award was sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, Shell International Ltd and the Dutch Occupational Hygiene Society (NVvA). It was the first time IOHA actively sought sponsorship for an award. We would really like to thank these organisations for their generous sponsorship of the IOHA Collaboration Award.

#### **4. Robust governance**

##### *Finances*

In 2018 there will be no income from the IOHA 2018 conference. For that reason we have to be very careful regarding our expenses for the next two years. During the board meeting we extensively discussed new sources of income. Besides a raise in the capitation fee, we think that new resources might come from advertising. The building of the website is for that reason a high priority. The primary reason behind this action is to achieve our full potential for the role we want to have, but also to provide a solid basis for the organisation. Over the next couple of months we will keep you informed on the website and options for advertisements.

##### *Secretariat services*

After 26 years of being the IOHA secretariat, this year BOHS will end its services. Looking back at those 26 years, I think Pamela Blythe, Sandi Atkinson and Roz Philips as being the first point of contact for the IOHA organization have done an outstanding job. I think I can speak on behalf of all the board members and several past presidents, that we have felt enormous support from the BOHS and the officers behind the scene, in doing our administrative services, in answering questions from member organisations, arranging the board meetings and board dinners etc. It is something for which we want to express our enormous appreciation. Thank you BOHS. At this moment we are looking for a new partner to take over the secretariat services.

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## Final remarks

I hope that with this president's report I have given you a little bit of insight into the achievements of the IOHA board in the last year and our plans for next year. There are several items mentioned in this letter for which we hope you can provide support. The items are summarized below:

- Identify volunteers for silica and health care subcommittee (collaboration ICOH);
- Identify experts - evaluate sectoral ILO documents;
- Promote Global Exposure Manager amongst your members, and encourage them to write articles;
- Support for building the website;
- Identify potential sponsors (advertisement) for the website and Global Exposure Manager.

I sincerely hope you will support our work in the next year; as mentioned before, with the launch of the website it will be a very important year for IOHA.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Hiddinga-Schipper MSc  
President 2017-2018

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