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GLOBAL EXPOSURE MANAGER

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Supporting Women in Mining

Diversity and Inclusion, Reproductive Health, Birth Outcomes and Breastfeeding

Nancy Wilk, IOHA President, ACGIH IOHA Board Representative nancy.wilk@wsp.com

In 2024, the topic of supporting women in mining - diversity and inclusion, reproductive health, birth outcomes, and breastfeeding was addressed in several forums; two Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM) conferences CIM Connect 2024 (May 2024) and CIM HS 2024 (October 2024), AIHA Connect 2024 (May 2024), and IOHA2024 Scientific and International Conference (June 2024). Courtney Gendron, CIH and I chose to speak to this topic for several reasons; first, because we are women working in mining and have related life experiences, second, the mining sector is committed to diversity and inclusion and improving gender balance, and third, as Certified Industrial Hygienists we receive requests to complete reproductive health exposure assessments on behalf of our mining clients.

Traditionally, the mining sector has not been viewed as a leader in effectively managing diversity and inclusion. While numbers have improved, women continue to be underrepresented at every level within mining companies. Diversity and inclusion are important to mining as they promote creativity and strategic resilience - which mining companies need to successfully manage the complex challenges associated with community, environmental, social (including health and safety), and technical aspects of their industry.

The International Governmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) Report titled Women and the Mine of the Future is an excellent resource that summarizes current data and trends across twelve participating countries along with the challenges and

barriers and strategies for attracting and retaining women within the sector ([Women and the Mine of the Future - Intergovernmental Forum](#)).

The systemic barriers cited in the IGF report include the following: mining's boom and bust cyclical nature tends to impact women more than men; sexist biases and the masculinized mining culture keep women out; facilities, at mine sites, are not conducive to women's employment (e.g., the fly-in fly-out model for remote mines is not adapted to meet the needs of women, strategies and measures are lacking for personal protective equipment, and the lack of safe and separate sanitation facilities and gender-appropriate health services); women find it hard to obtain mining-specific skills and education, on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities; women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) prefer other industries over mining; women are leaving mining due to non-inclusive environments, unsupported parenting, and lack of growth; and despite having higher education, in mining, women earn lower wages than men. Mining has a long way to go to attract and retain women in its workforce.

In responding to the needs of today and tomorrow, strategies are needed to better support women in mining including their health, safety, and well-being, including reproductive health.

Research and policies to protect workers from workplace hazards have generally focused on the male experience, and particularly the non-pregnant and non-breastfeeding worker. There are differences in how exposure to workplace hazards affect a woman and the fetus as well as the infant child when breastfeeding.

These differences may put women and their children at higher risk of negative health outcomes. Supporting women's reproductive health is vital to providing decent work and advancing gender equality and can contribute to increased recruitment and retention of women in the mining industry. Improved guidance is needed to best support pregnancies, birth outcomes and breastfeeding.

Women in mining need to be included in occupational health research efforts. Presently, there is a significant void of research, standards and guidance on occupational health hazards and reproductive occupational hazards for women. A major reason behind this gap is that most of the occupational health research is based on "reference man", i.e., a male 25 to 30 yrs old, Caucasian, and weighing 70 kg. Note that a pregnant woman's body changes can make her more susceptible to potential hazardous exposure, as she deviates even more from the "reference man" and the related occupational exposure limits (OELs) and guidance. Also notable is that OELs and guidance do not normally account for the health of a fetus or breastfeeding mother or newborn.

In the body of work presented by Courtney Gendron and me, the reproductive hazards reviewed and presented included noise, whole body vibration (WBV), ionizing radiation, heat stress, lead, stress, scheduling, and ergonomics. The information included the hazard-related risks and suggested controls for risk mitigation. Helpful resources included the WorkSafeBC Table of Exposure Limits for Chemical and Biological Substances ([Table of Exposure Limits for Chemical and Biological Substances | WorkSafeBC](#)).

In this publication, WorkSafeBC provides a notation ('R') for "adverse reproductive effect" based on the ACGIH (American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists) published documentation that supports established TLVs (Threshold Limit Values).

Two other excellent resources used, especially for evaluation and control, included the Laurentian University & Workplace Safety North (WSN) publication, A Guide to Healthy Pregnancies in the Mining Workplace (Dorman and Boudreau-Lariviere, 2012), and the US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) "Pregnancy and Your Job" (NIOSH, last reviewed 2023). The Laurentian University / WSN tool is specific to mining and identifies a total of 34 reproductive hazards. The NIOSH resource is not mining specific, lists 17 reproductive hazards, and the user can search by exposure.

So what are the next steps for mining and the occupational hygiene profession, to best support women in mining? Mining needs to drive research into occupational health hazards for women including those specific to the topics addressed here and push to establish appropriate standards and guidance to attract, support, and retain women in their workforce. The mining sector needs to establish written programs and guidance to address the anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of reproductive hazards and effective mitigation of reproductive risk.

These efforts must include leadership support, training and awareness, improved site and workplace facilities to accommodate women (including pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, and post-pregnancy needs), accessible medical and emergency services, integration of requirements in organizational management systems, and implementation of a systemic approach to reproductive risk management and the application of the Deming Cycle. As occupational hygienists we can work with and support the mining sector in these efforts and continue to focus on this topic in the forums that we lead and in which we participate. For more information, please contact either Nancy Wilk at nancy.wilk@wsp.com or Courtney Gendron at Courtney.gendron@wsp.com.

Commentary on Eye Health and the World of Work – A Monograph of the International Labour Organization (ILO)

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It is a given that all occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) professionals are trained in the prevention and control of workplace hazards that result in eye disease and injuries. Our primary training, based on anatomy & physiology, allows us to conduct hazard identifications, assess the qualitative and quantitative risks, then develop the controls and safe work procedures to prevent vision loss in the workplace.

Expanding on this knowledge, the ILO published a report titled *Eye Health and the World of Work*¹ in September 2023 – a comprehensive review of the global burden of occupational vision impairment, written by a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH). The monograph makes it clear that vision impairment is not inevitable, that workers have a right to eye health, and that interdisciplinary collaboration is a key method of protecting and enhancing the vision of workers. The monograph thoroughly discusses the concept of an OEHS program to protect and enhance the vision of workers. Two technical appendices discuss hazards to the eyes (including non-ionizing radiation, mechanical trauma, chemical and biological exposures, and ergonomic hazards) and the Hierarchy of Controls.

This document examines eye health not just from workplace hazards, but also its relation to functioning in society, including the promotion of gender equity, the distinction between developing countries and developed countries, and between city and rural situations, and the importance of universal access to quality eye-care.

Good vision enables and enhances almost every aspect of our daily lives.

Without good vision it can be exceedingly difficult to orient oneself in space and time. The simple act of walking from place to place is guided by autonomic peripheral vision, which gives the cues of objects, terrain, and other people. Face-to-face communication is not conveyed through speech alone but is also interpreted by non-verbal cues, such as gestures, smiles and facial expressions. The ability to drive vehicles, to fly aircraft, and transport goods safely is vision dependent.

In this commentary for the Global Exposure Manager, we especially examine a previously unexplored angle contained in *Eye Health and the World of Work*: how the aging process profoundly affects occupational eye health. We propose that natural causes of vision loss must be included in the OEHS program, as indispensable parts of protecting the right to workers' eye health. These phenomena include age-related macular degeneration, cataract, and presbyopia. Macular degeneration refers to damage to the central part of the retina responsible for detailed vision leads to dark patches, shadows or distortion of the central vision. Cataract refers to cloudiness in the lens of the eye, leading to increasingly blurred vision. Presbyopia refers to difficulty seeing objects at near distance.

We live in a world in which the working population is both aging and remaining in the work force for longer periods.² Accurate vision, disease- and trauma-free vision, are essential to workers making a living and for employers to maintain business integrity with experienced workers.

Each of these conditions and multiple others are treatable through ophthalmological and optometry interventions, including spectacles (glasses) and surgery. Instead of considering age-related vision loss as normal, as phenomena signifies gradual withdrawal from productive life, what if they were considered as preventable diseases that allow workers to maintain or expand their level of income? What if employers, in conjunction with ophthalmological and optometric professionals, conducted regular examinations, starting with workers in their late thirties (30s)?

The ILO monograph, *Eye Health and the World of Work*, contains an example of the relationship between conditions usually considered as inevitable facts of life, and the ability to expand income and dignity in aging workers. In a study titled *Direct Ophthalmic Intervention to Treat Mild Age-Related Presbyopia and Cataracts in Tea Pickers in India*,³ researchers identified female workers with a median age of 47 years. Picking tea leaves at their prime requires high visual acuity from experienced workers. Most of them had modest presbyopia and none wore glasses. The income of tea pickers is determined by the weight they pick.

After standard optometric testing, workers were offered free corrective lenses. In addition, workers with cataracts were referred for free surgery. The results showed a substantial productivity increase of 20 percent among middle-aged women. Instead of gradually having to retire from their trade, their income and hence their dignity increased through simple and cost-effective interventions.

This study also demonstrated some weaknesses that the OEHS professions should consider in a broad context. Namely, the limitations of one-disease interventions of public health.

Consider that the Assam tea pickers work in high sunlight and for cultural reasons, do not use broad brim hats as barriers to chronic solar UV non-ionizing radiation exposure. This exposure factor was not considered in the published study, nor were the lenses provided to workers documented as meeting international standards for UV NIR protection. Other hazards not mentioned include repetitive-motion strain injuries from throwing tea leaves over the shoulders into baskets on the back.

A study such as the Assam Tea Pickers quite naturally raises questions of strategy. Eye health is not confined to the workplace. There exists a profound crossover between public health and occupational health. At least 2.2 billion people worldwide have vision impairment or blindness, with more than 1.1 billion suffering from preventable or untreated impairments, mainly concentrated in low- and middle-income countries. Even in wealthier parts of the world, many people lack access to quality eye health services due to long-distance travel, especially among Indigenous Peoples. Workers with vision impairment are 30.2 percent less likely to be in employment. Women are proportionally more affected than men. Approximately 13 million working-age people are living with vision impairment of occupational origin.¹

In the face of such profound numbers, and the fact that workplace hazards, including age-related vision decline, can be controlled, *Eye Health and the World of Work* proposes:

- Preventing hazardous exposures by using the Hierarchy of Controls
- Protecting the existing health of workers' eyes
- Preserve and enhance workers' naturally occurring sight to counter naturally occurring age-related vision loss.

How to start on these noble objectives? Andrea Hiddinga, former IOHA President (2018) and international OEHS consultant, looks at it this way: “As a consultant, I inspect workplaces not only in my own country but also throughout the developing world. Before this ILO report, I never thought to actively collaborate with the professional optometry community, to jointly inspect workplaces and focus on eye health of workers. It’s a good idea to collaborate with the professional optometry community, including identifying and treating age-related vision loss. For the optometry community, it would also be of value to carry out these inspections together with an occupational hygienist. In addition to personal treatment interventions, we can also implement management measures at other levels to have a preventive impact on eye health.”.

The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness⁴ (IAPB), co-sponsor of the report, consistently advocates for employment opportunities for the sight-impaired and the blind. Laurence Svirchev notes: “I buy my computer-related equipment from a local store in Vancouver Canada. I couldn’t help but notice a worker with her guide dog, and that almost no one talked to her except co-employees. I made a decision to ask for her help. To my delight, with the aid of ergonomically designed electronic devices, she proved as competent and helpful as any sighted employee. When I spoke of this experience to the store manager, I was told many customers have an innate bias against blind persons. This singular experience helped me realize we OEHS professionals have a special privilege to consider that lack of vision should not be an obstacle to dignified work in a safe work environment.”.

The report quotes the Lancet Global Health Commission on Global Eye Health (2021): “Opportunities have been missed because the eye health sector has traditionally focused on treatment. Health promotion campaigns and prevention strategies are underused.”. This finding of “missed opportunities” is an important distinction, for as OEHS professionals, we try to prevent vision loss, but we also have much in common with those who diagnose and treat diseases. We therefore recommend that IOHA member associations revive the longstanding tradition of Health Promotion Campaigns based in multi-disciplinary collaborations to obtain specific worker and population-based health goals.

The ILO monograph stresses that to promote good eye health in workers throughout their working lives, it is necessary to ensure a strong collaboration with public health organizations. Administratively, OEHS, environmental, and public health are administered by different government agencies, but our population health goals are the same. A proactive approach in the form of Eye Health Promotion Campaigns, with key players acting in harmony, such as government agencies, medical professions, non-governmental organizations, and community and international organizations, can achieve a real paradigm shift for eye health in the workplace, reducing and eliminating workplace vision impairment and loss. For example, in Canada, EyeSafeBC, a part of the Optometrists Association, works in conjunction with the OEHS regulatory agency to promote eye safety programs.

In summary, a proactive approach to preserving eye health is a prerequisite to a safe and healthy workforce. Finally, we recommend that OEHS professionals reflect on this and set the pace by example. One of the great recommendations of Eye Health and the World of Work is the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break and looking at something 20 feet (or 6 meters) away.

1 Eye health and the world of work, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2023. Retrieved 2024-27-01.

2 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2023). World Population Ageing 2023: Challenges and opportunities of population ageing in the least developed countries. UN DESA/ POP/2023/TR/NO.5. Retrieved 2024-07-05

3 Reddy, et al. Effect of providing near glasses on productivity among rural Indian tea workers with presbyopia (PROSPER): a randomised trial. Retrieved 2024-06-01.

4 International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness <https://www.iapb.org>. Retrieved 2024-06-01

IOHA NEWS

IOHA welcomes two new members to the Executive Committee

Samantha Connell, IOHA Immediate Past President, SSOH IOHA Board Representative, samantha.connell.cih@outlook.com

At the October board meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the IOHA board welcomed two new members to the Executive Committee, as they also thanked and bid goodbye to two long serving and hardworking members, Maharshi Mehta and Nathalie Argentin. The new members' bios are noted below.

Matthew Olota, IOHA President-Elect, IOHA Executive Committee 2024 - 2027, matthewolota@gmail.com

Matthew is a Chartered Occupational Hygienist with over 15 years' experience. His experience spans the upstream oil and gas industry, manufacturing, aviation and downstream oil and gas industry. He has supported various businesses in the control of a wide range of health hazards; noise, vibration, a variety of chemicals, thermal hazards, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation and others. He is highly experienced in Exposure Assessment and Control with special interest in Industrial Ventilation. He is highly skilled in Health Risk Assessment. His experience spans projects, routine operations and small to large scale turnaround maintenance.

He also has very good experience in managing the full scope of occupational health i.e., leading other health professionals (e.g., occupational health nurses and physicians) in defining deployment requirements for employees, medical surveillance programs and occupational evaluation programs like fit testing, audiometry, lung function test, etc.

Matthew is a Certified member of the Association of Industrial Hygienists in Nigeria (AIHN). He has been a Chartered member of the British Occupational Hygiene Society since December 2014. He is a Certified Industrial Hygienist (ABIH) and a Certified Safety Professional (BCSP). He has been in the leadership position of AIHN for over 10 years; he is the immediate past president and is currently the AIHN IOHA board representative. He is a member of the IOHA Governance Committee and as announced, IOHA President Elect (2024 -2025).

Matthew has a Bachelor degree in engineering from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria and a Master in Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Management from the University of Portsmouth, UK.

Matthew is a people person, he loves working in teams and collaborating. When he is not working, he enjoys travelling with his family. He also loves watching soccer.

"My vision for IOHA is for it to remain a leading platform for fostering collaboration and advancing education on worker health protection, transcending borders, cultures, and languages. It is essential that all member organizations work together to ensure the protection of the workforce across the entire value chain, both in emerging economies and in more regulated environments."



**Andre Winkes, IOHA Secretary
Treasurer, IOHA Executive Committee
2024 - 2026, andre.winkes@arbounie.nl**

Andre works as a consultant at the Expert Centre of Chemical Risk Management at ArboUnie OHS in the Netherlands. He is specialised in the relation between industrial chemical exposure and health effects and holds the title of Exposure Expert LEXCIS, Dutch compensation program for work related diseases. He also works for different international occupational hygiene projects in countries like Vietnam and Madagascar. He is co-organiser of the annual Dutch Occupational Hygiene Conference. Since October 2018, he is NVVA IOHA board representative and Chair of the IOHA Stakeholder Relations Committee.



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IOHA Welcomes New Member Organization

Samantha Connell, IOHA Immediate Past President, SSOH IOHA Board Representative, samantha.connell.cih@outlook.com

Aristides Medard, Chairman OHST, ohstz.office@gmail.com

IOHA is honored and thrilled to announce the joining of the Occupational Hygiene Society of Tanzania (OHST) as its 43rd member organization and the third association in an African country after South Africa & Nigeria.

OHST was formally registered and officially became an IOHA member in November 2024. According to OHST founding member Aristides Medard, the purpose of establishing the society is to raise the profession's standards, giving industrial hygiene recognition as a profession and support ongoing national and global initiatives to protect worker health and wellbeing.

Aristides says: "As a newly established society, we are looking forward to build a strong and mutual collaboration with IOHA and other global professional associations and societies with a focus to raise professional practice, protecting worker health and providing a recognized credential for Tanzanian Industrial Hygienists on the global scale through the IOHA National Accreditation and Recognition program."

To date, the society has a total of 37 full registered members. Their focus is to establish and join local and international professional working groups and chapters, that aim to promote and engage in activities and projects that improve workplace health and safety.



Photo of WHWB training in Tanzania.
Courtesy of WHWB.



PARTNERSHIPS CORNER

Partnerships Overview

Nancy Wilk, IOHA President, ACGIH IOHA Board Representative nancy.wilk@wsp.com

Since assuming the role of IOHA President in October 2024, “partnerships” has been a defining term for the opportunities to date. Some had similar themes, while every opportunity emphasized partnerships. Some of these opportunities are noted below.

OSH Pro Services

From October 31 to November 1, 2024, OSH Pro Services based in Mombasa, Kenya hosted the 7th Annual International OSH Conference with the theme of protecting workers and creating healthy workplaces. On behalf of IOHA, I delivered a virtual keynote on the topic of “occupational hygiene and creating sustainable, healthy workplaces – a global perspective”. The focus was on the need for disease prevention and improved worker wellbeing and addressed the fact that the classical approaches to OSH are not effectively preventing disease or related fatalities. The intersection of integrated and holistic approaches to OSH and improved worker well-being (e.g., *Total Worker Health*[®] or TWH) with aspects of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) were explored. Partnerships were identified as potential pathways to improvement and opportunities to collaborate, pool resources, and advance both areas. Attendees were encouraged to lean into potential partnerships and continue to champion occupational health and hygiene, as more than ever there is need for worker and environmental protection and promotion of health, hygiene and improved worker well-being. Thank you, OSH Pro.

Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation (CAOHC)

At the invitation of CAOHC, a virtual presentation was provided on behalf of IOHA during their Council meeting on November 14, 2024. Information was provided on our IOHA mission, structure and strategy, and some strategic activities including IOHA committee work. As CAOHC and IOHA jointly signed a memo of understanding in 2024, partnership and collaboration were emphasized and discussed following the presentation. Thank you, CAOHC.

United Nations University (UNU) Institute for Water, Environment, and Health (INWEH) - UNU-INWEH

On November 9, 2024, I had the privilege of attending the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations University (UNU) Institute for Water, Environment, and Health (INWEH) and the City of Richmond Hill in Ontario, Canada, on behalf of my employer, WSP Canada. During this event, I was introduced to the Director of UNU-INWEH, Professor Kaveh Madani. Seeing potential opportunities for partnership and collaboration, on December 10, 2024, Marianne Levitsky (Workplace Health Without Borders, WHWB) and I met with Sogol Jafarzadeh, UN and Government Relations Coordinator UNU-INWEH to introduce IOHA and WHWB and the Global Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) Coalition (a coalition focused on raising the global awareness of OSH and in which IOHA and WHWB are both active participants). In meeting with UNU-INWEH we discussed the intent and aims of the

GOSH Coalition and potential opportunities to partner with UNU-INWEH. As members of organizations working to rectify the lack of attention to occupational health, we recognized that the UNU-INWEH three pillars of research and innovation, education and capacity building, and outreach, advocacy and impact align very much with the interests and aims of IOHA, WHWB and the Coalition. UNU-INWEH wants to expand its focus to include more on health. We suggested that exploring potential opportunities with our respective organizations could provide UNU-INWEH with resources and information to accomplish this expanded focus and a good place to start is with the area of occupational health and hygiene. Detailed communications have taken place since this meeting, and we are excited to bring further news of opportunities for improvement and advancing occupational health and hygiene in the coming months. Thank you, UNU-INWEH, GOSH Coalition, and WHWB.

Australian Institute of Occupational Hygiene (AIOH)

At the invitation of the AIOH and with AIOH's support, on behalf of IOHA, I attended in-person the AIOH2024 conference on December 2 to 4, 2024, in Perth, Australia. The AIOH annual conference themed "Scientific Storytelling" was a great success, being reportedly the largest to date and providing timely, relevant content and messaging from keynotes, speakers and panels along with personal and inclusive networking sessions and events. A highlight of AIOH2024 were the many opportunities to connect with practitioners, researchers, and leaders in our discipline of occupational hygiene.

Many of these leaders are interested in providing IOHA webinars for our members. The first of whom is Sally North, WorkSafe Commissioner, WorkSafe Western Australia, a leader that is making a difference through collaboration with stakeholders and within communities and workplaces. Please stay tuned for more details and offerings! Thank you, AIOH.

Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) Update

Samantha Connell, IOHA Immediate Past President, SSOH IOHA Board Representative, samantha.connell.cih@outlook.com

IOHA and WHWB are longstanding partners. Many IOHA members are WHWB members (or vice versa) and many members of IOHA national member organizations want to become more active in the global OH community. Therefore, IOHA is sharing some of WHWB's work for member interest. The value of sharing each other's contributions to the profession and further strengthening our partnership will help expand our networks and amplify our global reach. It will also enhance knowledge and resource sharing within and outside of our profession. Together, we can bring more value, working together toward advocacy of worker health at the global and grassroots levels.

You can also find the WHWB Progress Report for 2024 at this link:

<https://app.box.com/s/t10a2jade21o4ovtwst93qkr70lv9a8b>

Be on the lookout for more WHWB updates in the future!



Workplace Health Without Borders
Imagine a world where workers do not get sick because of their work



WHWB Project: Brick Kilns in Nepal

EXPO2025 Global Initiative for Safety, Health and Wellbeing (GISHW) in Osaka, Japan from July 16 - 19, 2025 - Registration Information Released

Samantha Connell, IOHA Immediate Past President, SSOH IOHA Board Representative, samantha.connell.cih@outlook.com

The GISHW Organizing Committee has released information on registering for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Days at IOHA member rates. To register, please click the PDF icon and follow the instructions. The IOHA Organization Code is: H7RMF.

PDF

[How to enter discount code for MOU partners](#)

Please note: LMIC (low- and middle-income countries) and Student rates are less expensive than the IOHA discounted rate, so use those to your advantage, if applicable.

Practical information for registration is included in a PDF at the following link: [Registration fees - GISHW](#). In the PDF is a link to an accommodation platform.

IOHA will be present at the World Assembly in Workshops 3 and 8 as co-leaders, participants, and rapporteurs. IOHA will also facilitate, moderate and present at sessions during the International Symposium Policy and Practice Tracks. The EXPO2025 program for the Safety, Health and Wellbeing Days will be continuously updated at this link: [Outline - GISHW](#)

For inquiries, please e-mail Retha van Niekerk, IOHA Executive Secretary at admin@ioha.net and she will direct any requests further.

IOHA MEMBER NEWS

AIHN's 3rd Annual Conference

Oghoin-olem Oruene, Public Relations Officer, Association of Industrial Hygienists, Nigeria (AIHN), oruene.oc@gmail.com

2024 was indeed an eventful calendar year, characterized by notable accomplishments and strategic progress. We successfully hosted our third (3rd) Annual Scientific Conference tagged: "Addressing Occupational Health Risk in Nigeria: Strengthening the Role of Industrial Hygiene."

The conference was a whirlwind of knowledge sharing, networking, and inspiration. We had three (3) insightful professional development courses focusing on Ergonomics, Sustainability, and Leadership, two (2) keynote addresses on Leadership and Career and Strategic Resources to Advance Your Career in IH/OEHS, a deeply insightful panel discussion on Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms for Existing Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, and twelve (12) technical presentations covered a wide range of topics, including chemical exposure control, legislation and policy advocacy, exposure control and technology, indoor air quality, toxicology, and radioactive material management. Attendees also visited a welding yard in Port Harcourt. This facility visit provided firsthand insights into the hazards associated with welding and offered the opportunity for an awareness session, and a presentation of personal protective equipment for welding fumes and noise exposure control. We're also elated about the 92% pass rate of our inaugural OHTA training on the Basic Principles of Occupational Hygiene (OHTA 201).

Before the panel session, IOHA President Nancy Wilk delivered a virtual message. Regional occupational disease risks for mining along with published global data on the work-related burden of disease were reviewed as part of the message. The need for different approaches to realize improved occupational disease prevention and worker wellbeing in the workplaces of today and tomorrow was highlighted. Partnerships were emphasized as relevant to effectively managing occupational health risk and strengthening the role of industrial hygiene. It was noted that when we partner and collaborate with one another, we set ourselves up to best resolve the most complex and difficult issues of today and of tomorrow.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to continue our journey of information dissemination and expert advice on protecting workers from health hazards in the workplace and to explore new horizons.



**AIHN
Members
and
Conference
attendees.**

MIHA.ICE'24 & 7th ANOH Conference - A Landmark Event in IH/OH in Asia

Marina Zainal Farid, CIH, CPIH, MIHA President and MIHA IOHA board representative, admin@miha2u.org

The Malaysian Industrial Hygiene Association (MIHA) International Conference and Exhibition and the 7th Asian Network of Occupational Hygiene (ANOH) Conference, collectively known as MIHA.ICE'24 & 7th ANOH Conference, stand as the premier event for the Industrial Hygiene (IH) / Occupational Hygiene (OH) and Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) fraternities in the Asian region. The event that was held from October 21-22 2024 at the prestigious Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre with the theme 'Connect for Innovative Change – The Asian Way', marked a significant milestone. Co-hosted by ANOH and strongly supported by the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), the conference reaffirmed its role as a vital platform for advancing IH & OH practices in the region.

This year's theme highlighted the importance of partnerships between IH/OH practitioners and OSH professionals. It emphasized a unified approach to strengthening IH/OH practices across Asia aiming for protection of workers' health, addressing unique regional challenges in an evolving business landscape.

Aligned with MIHA's strategic goal of enhancing IH and OH knowledge, MIHA.ICE'24 & 7th ANOH conference provided an exceptional platform for knowledge exchange and sharing on best practices, insights, and the latest advancements. Moreover, the conference offered professional IH/OH training through cutting-edge courses designed to meet the evolving needs of the industry. Thus, this event served as an exceptional opportunity for collaborative engagement, fostering connections and building bridges between IH/OH practitioners, experts, and OSH fraternities.

The pre-conference program ran from October 17 - 20, followed by the main conference on October 21 - 22 and finally the technical tours on October 23 2024. These activities offered participants extensive learning and networking opportunities, reinforcing the conference's commitment to professional IH/OH development and innovation.

The pre-conference program commenced with two comprehensive British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) 4-day training courses on M502: Thermal Environment and M503: Noise Measurements and Its Effects. Both courses included exams, providing attendees with in-depth learning opportunities. Additionally, the pre-conference program also featured six Professional Development Courses (PDCs) namely; Lead (Pb) Master Class, Acoustic in Design Principle for Noise Reduction, General Ventilation in Confined Space, Ethics in IH/OH, Real time and Remote Monitoring System and lastly, Understanding of Engineering Design and Installation of LEV. With these specially curated Professional Development Courses (PDCs) offered, the pre-conference program focused on advanced knowledge transfer and practical techniques within specific areas of IH/OH. An International Student Symposium (ISS) was also concurrently running; a platform dedicated for local and international IH/OH university students to engage in cross-cultural dialogue while showcasing their academic research and connecting with professionals and peers globally.

It was also a great pleasure for the Organizing Committee to proudly host both the IOHA and ANOH Board meetings, along with an exclusive dinner prior to the main conference. These sessions highlighted the importance of global collaboration and unity in advancing and protecting workers' health.

On the final day post-conference, two engaging technical tours to the 3M Innovation Centre in Shah Alam, Selangor and the SOCSO Rehab Centre in Malacca were organized for the interested participants.

The conference was officially inaugurated by The Honourable Dr. Kelvin Yii, Political Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia. The event welcomed close to 300 delegates from 19 countries, achieving a balanced representation of 52% local and 48% international participants. We were deeply honoured by the presence of 40 distinguished guests, including representatives from the Malaysian Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), seven prominent sponsors, esteemed local and international associations, and 20 top-tier exhibitors, who graced the opening ceremony.

Dr. Yuka Ujita, Senior OSH Specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO), delivered an inspiring keynote address that set the tone for an impactful two-day event. The agenda featured six plenary sessions, bringing together thought leaders from DOSH, IOHA, ANOH, Malaysia's Social Security Organization (SOCSO), BOHS, and the ANOH Founder, who shared invaluable insights on advancing IH/OH practices aiming to create a greater impact. The conference also included 12 concurrent sessions with the presenting of 46 technical papers that addressed critical challenges and championed sustainable progress in the IH/OH field. Furthermore, 32 poster presentations showcased innovative research and best practices, fostering robust knowledge exchange and driving professional growth within the IH/OH community.

The event reached its pinnacle with the spectacular Gala Dinner, themed 'Bridges of Culture: A Night of Global Unity'. This unforgettable evening fostered meaningful connections, celebrated diversity, and created lasting memories. It also served as a dynamic platform for networking, honouring the MIHA 20th anniversary and ANOH 10th anniversary and recognizing outstanding MIHA-ANOH remarkable contributions to the field of IH & OH in the region.

The conference concluded with a vibrant dialogue session, moderated by MIHA President, Marina Zainal Farid, CIH, CPIH, featuring panellists from ILO, IOHA, Taiwan Occupational Hygiene Association (TOHA), Japan Society for Occupational Health (JSOH) and Korean Industrial Hygiene Association (KIHA). The event concluded with remarks by ANOH President, Philip Hibbs, COH reflecting on the conference's success and vision for the future. In short, MIHA.ICE'24 & 7th ANOH Conference successfully embodied its theme of innovation and collaboration. By bringing together thought leaders, industry professionals, and practitioners, the event reaffirmed its status as a cornerstone for advancing IH/OH practices in Asia and beyond.

A heartfelt thank you to all our supporters, sponsors, the organizing committee, and everyone who played a role in making this event an outstanding success! Your dedication, hard work, and commitment have left a lasting impact on the community. We look forward to seeing you at the 8th ANOH Conference 2025 in Taiwan, proudly hosted by TOHA. Stay connected for more updates, and let's continue our journey to drive innovative change together!



Conference Day 1: Inauguration Moment



Group Photo: Gala Dinner with themed 'Bridges of Culture: A Night of Global Unity'



Dialogue Session with the theme “Connect for Innovative Change – Asian Way” moderated by Marina Zainal Farid, CIH, CPIH, Malaysian Industrial Hygiene Association (MIHA). The panellist are; Dr. Yuka Ujita, International Labour Organization (ILO), Samantha Connell, CIH, International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA), Assoc. Prof. Ro-Ting Lin, Taiwan Occupational Hygiene Association (TOHA), Hirohiko Nakahara, Japan Society for Occupational Health (JSOH) and Prof. Jeongim Park, Korean Industrial Hygiene Association (KIHA)



Group photo capturing all delegates and invited speakers

Joint Workshop and Presentation session on Occupational Hygiene and Working Environment Measurement 2024, Kitakyushu, Japan.

Shigeru Asuka, vice-president JAWE, JAWE IOHA board representative, sit_as101@jawe.or.jp

The Japan Association for Working Environment Measurement (JAWE) and the Japan Occupational Hygiene Association (JOHA), both members of IOHA, held their “Joint Workshop and Presentation session on Occupational Hygiene and Working Environment Measurement 2024” in Kitakyushu International Conference Center, located in the northern part of the Kyusyu region, from October 16 - 18 2024. This event marked the 45th Congress for JAWE and 63th for JOHA.

This annual event was hybrid, was 270 in-person attendees and 115 online participants. The conference provided a good opportunity for discussion and exchange for researchers and technical experts on their daily technical issues in working environment control. Participants included around 80 JAWE-certified occupational hygienists (JAWE-COH), manufacturers and vendors of measuring equipment, and other interested people.

There were 58 presentations on research and case studies by researchers and experts, among which were 26 presentations on work environment measurement and analysis, seven on work environment improvement measures, seven on case studies of risk assessment for specific works dealing hazardous chemicals, and seven on personal protective equipment.

An exhibition of measurement-related equipment was held concurrently with this event, in which 16 manufacturers participated. The exhibition covered a wide range of equipment such as respiratory protection, fit-testing equipment, protective clothing, real-time dust monitors, air-samplers, and mini air sampling pumps.

A panel discussion from JAWE on the theme of “the expected role of work environment control experts amid ongoing new regulatory system of chemicals management in Japan” enticed many of the participants. The new regulation requires employers to exercise risk assessment and take appropriate measures to keep workers’ exposure minimal for the handling of some 2,900 chemicals defined as hazardous by GHS classification.

One challenge that will potentially hinder the regulation’s success is applicable within small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), where occupational safety and health staff are often scarce or nonexistent. In the 90-minute panel discussion, all speakers stressed the importance of roles played by occupational hygienists, as well as working environment measurement experts to help SMEs comply with the new policy.

The three-day event was preceded by a one-day hybrid educational program for JAWE-COH, in which there were approximately 90 participants online and in-person. The highlight was a two and a half-hour lecture by Akihiko Seo, PhD and professor-emeritus of Tokyo Metropolitan University, on human engineering and its implication in occupational hygiene.

The next Joint Workshop and Presentation session will be held in October 2025 in Asahikawa City, Hokkaido.