The work has officially begun for the next congress of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) – the 34th International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH2024 Congress). The first face-to-face planning meeting for the ICOH2024 Congress was held between ICOH officers and members of the Secretariat (onsite and online) and members of the Moroccan local Congress organisers, including the ICOH2024 Congress President, Prof. Abdeljalil El Kholti, in Marrakesh, on 27 and 28 June 2022. Discussion points included Congress logistics, scientific programme, content for the announcements, the constitution of the various Congress committees, key deadlines, and the official Congress website. The meeting included an audience and question-and-answer session with the conference centre management and a virtual tour of the venue. The ICOH officers took this opportunity to hold their officers’ meeting prior to the meeting with the local Congress organisers.

The ICOH2024 Congress will be held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 28 April to 3 May 2024, at the Movenpick Palais des Congrès, with the theme, Enhancing Occupational Health Research and Practices: Closing the Gaps! The Congress will be hosted by the Moroccan Occupational Health Association (MOHA) and the Occupational Health Unit of the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy of University Hassan II of Casablanca, in collaboration with ICOH.

Marrakesh is one of the most visited and popular cities in Morocco. Although Marrakesh is not the capital (Rabat), largest (Casablanca), or oldest (Fes) city in Morocco, it is certainly the country’s most intriguing one and the cultural capital. Its famous sights, which include historic medinas (old parts of the city) and ornate palaces, bustling traditional marketplaces (‘souks’), and labyrinthine alleyways, have given the city this designation. Known as ‘The Pearl of the South’ and ‘The Red City’, Marrakesh offers visitors the perfect blend of a rich culture, delicious cuisine, historic wonders, unique scenery, famous traditional Arabic architecture, and a myriad of places of interest.

Please access the official Congress website to register your interest for the ICOH2024 Congress (click on the ‘Interest’ button in the menu at the top of the website) and subscribe to the Congress newsletter to receive updated information as it becomes available (https://www.icoh2024.ma/).

SASOM National Office
The Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL) has circulated, for review, the ‘Requirements for Registration as an Occupational Health Service Provider (OHSP)’ with the main aim of developing a databank and standardising the recognition of OHSPs. The document was developed before the COVID-19 lockdown by the sister organisations in occupational health that are part of the DoEL Forum – the South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM), the South African Occupational Health Network (SAOHN), and the South African Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics (SASEB).

Although Marrakesh is not the capital (Rabat), largest (Casablanca), or oldest (Fes) city in Morocco, it is certainly the country’s most intriguing one and the cultural capital. Its famous sights, which include historic medinas (old parts of the city) and ornate palaces, bustling traditional marketplaces (‘souks’), and labyrinthine alleyways, have given the city this designation. Known as ‘The Pearl of the South’ and ‘The Red City’, Marrakesh offers visitors the perfect blend of a rich culture, delicious cuisine, historic wonders, unique scenery, famous traditional Arabic architecture, and a myriad of places of interest.

Please access the official Congress website to register your interest for the ICOH2024 Congress (click on the ‘Interest’ button in the menu at the top of the website) and subscribe to the Congress newsletter to receive updated information as it becomes available (https://www.icoh2024.ma/).

SASOM National Office
The Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL) has circulated, for review, the ‘Requirements for Registration as an Occupational Health Service Provider (OHSP)’ with the main aim of developing a databank and standardising the recognition of OHSPs. The document was developed before the COVID-19 lockdown by the sister organisations in occupational health that are part of the DoEL Forum – the South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM), the South
Hats off to traditional crafts – The sights and sounds of Marrakesh were evident at a street market selling hats, baskets, and other woven goods.

Photograph: Dr Diana Gagliardi, ICOH Secretary General, Rome, Italy

Prepare to be a-maze-d – The Marrakesh medina (old part of the city) is famous for its souks (marketplaces), winding alleyways, mosques, traditional houses, peaceful inner courtyards, a tangle of tunnels, and hidden treasures down dead-end streets. It is enclosed by 19 kilometres of pink walls built circa 1122.

Photograph: Dr Diana Gagliardi, ICOH Secretary General, Rome, Italy
African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN), and the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH). The National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), as the ‘service facilitator’, edited the final draft for review and comments from the three societies; this process is underway.

Prof. Daan Kocks, Chair of SASOM, attended the most recent meeting of the Editorial Board of Occupational Health Southern Africa (OHSA). One of the points of discussion was the declining income for the journal over a number of years. The yearly membership fees for occupational health and safety professionals to belong to SASOM, SASOHN, SAIOH, or the Mine Medical Professionals Association (MMPA) include a subscription to OHSA (six issues per year). Even though the costs associated with the journal have increased over the past few years, SASOM remains of the opinion that the journal is an occupational health asset for members of the four aforementioned societies and for southern Africa, more broadly. SASOM continues to support the publication of the journal and will endeavour to contribute in any feasible way that will facilitate the sustainability of OHSA.

SASOM Annual Congress 2022 – A virtual event in four sessions

After not holding an annual congress in 2020 and 2021, due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, SASOM will hold its continuing professional development (CPD)-accredited virtual Annual Congress over four months in 2022 – on the last Fridays of the months of July, August and October, and on 16 September 2022 (13:00–17:00 South Africa Standard Time) – to offer its members four Congress sessions with individual themes, and four presentations in each session.

The programme for ‘Session 1 – Updates on chemical exposures and medical surveillance’, to be held on 29 July 2022, is as follows:

- Dr Haidee Williams (occupational medicine specialist and consultant, University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa) – ‘Manufacture of vaccines: Process and toxicology’
- Anna Fourie (Immunology Section, NIOH, South Africa) – ‘Occupational skin exposures and the immune response in the COVID-19 era and beyond: Skin reactions to personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand hygiene measures’
- Dr Taneshka Kruger (senior researcher and project manager, Institute for Sustainable Malaria Control (ISMTC), University of Pretoria (UP), South Africa) – ‘Understanding the malaria challenge: The ISMC’s perspective on attaining malaria elimination through transdisciplinary research, innovation, education, and capacity building’
- Dr Sashikala Chandrasekar (medical and occupational health consultant, Bangalore, India, and current Chair of the ICOH Scientific Committee on Rural Health) – ‘Pesticide issues and the need for action: A perspective from India’

The programme for ‘Session 2 – Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic’, scheduled for 26 August 2022, is under development; three of the four invited speakers have agreed to present papers:

- Prof. Veronica Ueckermann (Department of Internal Medicine, UP, South Africa) – ‘Clinical aspects of ‘long COVID’: What can we expect and for how long?’
- Dr Herina Grobler (Life Health Solutions at Ford Motor Company, South Africa) – ‘Occupational health management programmes and corporate pandemic preparedness in the post-COVID era’
- Dr Gwen Brachman (retired medical and occupational health consultant, New Jersey, USA, and current Chair of the ICOH Scientific Committee on Occupational Health for Health Workers) – ‘The global shortage of health workers: The peril for our health systems’

SASOM representation at the SAMA Annual Conference

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) invited SASOM to participate in its Annual Conference and allocated a SASOM-dedicated two-hour session in its programme, for Saturday, 13 August 2022. The following SASOM members will present at the virtual SAMA Annual Conference, and represent the society:

- Dr Jan Lapere (medico-legal practitioner and advisor to SASOM) – ‘Occupational health for medical practitioners: Sick certification – rights and duties of the doctor’
- Dr Haidee Williams (occupational medicine specialist and consultant, University of Cape Town (UCT)) – ‘Updates on medical surveillance in the workplace in the COVID-19 era’
- Dr Itumeleng Ntatamala (Chair of the SASOM Western Cape branch and occupational medicine specialist, UCT) – ‘Evaluating work ability and managing disability: A pragmatic approach’

Save the date to visit Marrakesh! – For only the second time in ICOH’s 118-year history, the ICOH Triennial Congress will be held in Africa. The ICOH2009 Congress was held in Cape Town, South Africa, in March 2009.