

## **MEDELLÍN MANIFESTO ON THE CHALLENGES OF WORKERS' HEALTH**

As part of the 22nd Occupational Health Week, and to mark the completion of the plenary session “The Challenges and Opportunities for Ergonomics in a Global Context”, the following individuals met in Medellín, Colombia:

**Yushi Fujita PhD**, President of the International Ergonomics Association(IEA)

**Julietta Rodríguez Guzmán**, Medical Doctor, Regional Advisor on Workers' Health, Sustainable Development and Health Equity, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization – PAHO/WHO

**Andy Imada PhD**, Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Business; Master's and Doctorate in Industrial and Organizational Psychology

**Elías Apud Simón PhD**, Director of Ergonomics at the University of Concepción.

**Andrew Thatcher PhD**, current Coordinator of the Human Factors Technical Committee for Sustainable Development at the International Ergonomics Association, and President of the Ergonomics Society of South Africa

**Juan Carlos Hiba**, Mechanical Engineer, Industrial Designer, Academic Director and Professor of three disciplines in Occupational Health and Safety Postgraduate Specialization degrees at Rosario National University

**Sara Albolino PhD**, Director of Safety at the Center for Patient Safety in Tuscany Region, Italy.

**Emilio Cadavid Guzmán**, Medical Doctor, Master's in Ergonomics, President of the Colombian Society of Ergonomics; Chairman of the Board at the Corporación de Salud Ocupacional y Ambiental.

Based on their proposals, as well as concerns and comments from participants, the following conclusions were drawn during the session:



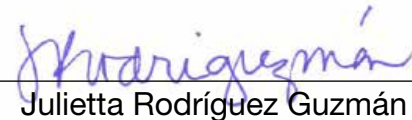
1. The growth of the working age population on a global and regional level is creating enormous demand for health-related services aimed at preventing and managing risks that arise in conditions of work and employment. To address this, disciplines associated with workers' health – occupational medicine, occupational hygiene, ergonomics and industrial safety – must be strengthened, while the involvement of professionals in human and social sciences to help resolve problems and provide support must be encouraged.
2. Present-day conditions of work and employment have led to sizeable equity gaps that have affected workers' health. Moreover, the complexity and diversity of work complicates the provision of ergonomic solutions that can help deal with health-related problems in the workplace. Specific examples include the rising informal sector in economies, casual employment, the often-invisible farming sector and the way that information technology encroaches on all areas of contemporary life. Furthermore, lifestyle and individual behavior contribute to the disease burden of workers, affecting their performance at work due to chronic non-communicable diseases.
3. Ergonomic solutions using both collaborative and systemic approaches provide huge opportunities that allow the subject of workers' health to be tackled creatively and innovatively. This stretches beyond the way that companies would normally implement solutions to health-related problems. However, the shortage of ergonomists around the world creates an enormous gulf between the demand for these services and their available supply. For these reasons, the academy is urged to create training programs in the area of ergonomics, as well as in occupational hygiene, industrial safety and occupational medicine – fundamental sciences in the area of occupational health. Encouraging internships, experience and other educational opportunities will also be required to strengthen the skills and competences of young people who embark in formal and informal work.
4. There are usually multiple reasons that workers are exposed to hazardous working conditions. This often requires a multi-disciplinary approach with different analytical viewpoints and varied and complex solutions. Networks of knowledge that in past times simply did not exist can now provide us with an opportunity to exchange experiences, opinions and solutions that stretch beyond geographical barriers, time and distance. For this reason, it is also crucial that these networks of knowledge are strengthened through the commitment of their members, the value of their exchanges and the applications that information technology can provide.



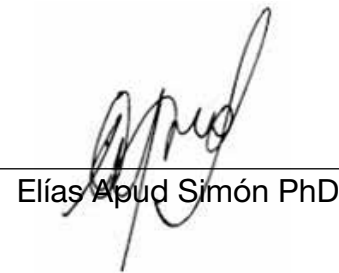
5. With the above in mind, those participating in the 22nd Occupational Health Week from the 1st to the 4th November 2016 have agreed to work together to address, articulate and put these issues into practice in their places of origin in Colombia, the Americas and around the world.

Medellín, Colombia, 1st November 2016

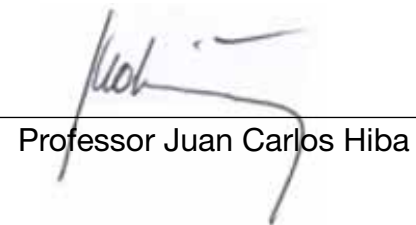
  
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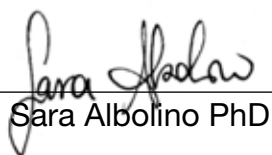
  
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