



14 October 2018

Historic 44th ITF Congress, the first in Southeast Asia - Singapore

The 44th Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) will be held in Singapore, 14-20 October 2018. This is the first time the ITF congress will be held in Southeast Asia in its 122-year history.

The ITF Congress will include participants from around 140 countries, representing over 600 transport unions with more than 19 million members. It is set to be the biggest to date, with over 2,000 participants.

The guest-of-honour for the opening ceremony is secretary-general of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), Singapore, and minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Ng Chee Meng.

The Congress aims to give transport workers a collective voice and set the agenda for the transport industry for the next five years. It will also discuss how digitisation is reshaping global transport, along with strategic policies.

ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton said: "This Congress is all about transport workers building power through innovative campaigns, growing membership and influencing policy. By uniting our efforts, we can ensure that the future of work provides good opportunities for all transport workers."

Mary Liew, chairperson of the ITF Singapore national coordinating committee (SNCC) and general secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers Union (SMOU), said: "It's no coincidence that this Congress is being held in Singapore as it focuses on the future of work in transport. We have shown here that by building partnerships across society and the economy we can create decent, sustainable jobs now and for the future."

Singapore unions

Five transport unions from Singapore make up the SNCC, which is assisting the ITF in organising the congress:

- National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU)
- Port Officers' Union (POU)
- Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)

- Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)
- Singapore Port Workers' Union (SPWU)

Media information

After the opening ceremony, official photographs will be available to download from the media area of the ITF Congress website: <https://www.itfcongress2018.org/en/press/>

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Congress opening ceremony

Speakers

Stephen Cotton

General secretary, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

Mr Cotton was elected ITF general secretary at the 43rd ITF Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria in 2014.

Under Mr Cotton's leadership the ITF has transformed into a proactive, campaigning organisation allowing the ITF and its affiliates to secure industry-leading contracts and protocols with key multinational companies in all transport sectors, including aviation, maritime and road transport.

In 2014, Mr Cotton received the United Seamen's Service Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award, the maritime industry's most prestigious award, in recognition of his work for defending the well-being and fair treatment of seafarers around the world.

Paddy Crumlin

President, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

Paddy Crumlin has been the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) national secretary since 2000 and ITF president since 2010.

Mr Crumlin is a delegate of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and vice chair of the Committee on Workers Capital.

In 2006, Mr Crumlin played a central role in bringing about the introduction and ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, which is widely known as the 'seafarers' bill of rights' because it establishes minimum working and living standards for all seafarers across the globe.

Mr Crumlin played a key role in establishing the International Bargaining Forum, which brings together every two years the ITF and the international maritime employers in shipping's largest industrial relations collective.

Sharan Burrow

General secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Sharan Burrow was elected general secretary of the ITUC in June 2010, and re-elected in 2014. Prior to this, she was ITUC president since its founding congress in Vienna, November 2006.

Ms Burrow was a teacher in Australia and became an organiser for the NSW Teachers' Federation in the 80s.

As a member of the governing body of the ILO, Ms Burrow chaired the workers' group of the sub-committee on Multinational Enterprises.

Ng Chee Meng

**Secretary-general, Singapore National Trades Union Congress (SNTUC)
Minister, Prime Minister's Office**

Mary Liew

**Chairperson, ITF Singapore National Coordinating Committee
General secretary, Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU)**

Excerpts from opening ceremony speeches

Paddy Crumlin, ITF president

"People make things happen. The introduction across our sectors of automation and new technology is a policy choice. We, the ITF, all our affiliates, our members, are here to build our capacity to shape that policy. And get ourselves ready for the coming months and years.

"They're calling it the 4th industrial revolution. Let's look at what happened during a previous industrial revolution – we built unions. And we're still here, two thousand of us in this one room in Singapore, saying 'no, we won't be dictated to, we won't be swept aside. You're going to listen to us. We'll tell you what the future will be. We're building trade union power again!'"

"Historically, we've fought corruption and greed and defended maritime workers, the cornerstone of the ITF. But we need that kind of influence everywhere. So we've changed the ITF. We've grown our membership. Women members, young people, leading like never before. We've actively campaigned, properly campaigned. We're out there, we're known, we're influencing. And we have to use all this, enhance it, shape the future in our changing world. If we can do that, the future looks good. It looks really good. On the docks, in the sky, in our cities, on the road, on the railways, at sea. Campaign, grow, shape the future."

Mary Liew, ITF Singapore National Coordinating Committee chairperson; SMOU general secretary

"We are very honoured to be the host country for the 44th ITF Congress, which is a historic and meaningful moment for us, for this is the very first time in ITF's 122 years of history that the Congress is held in South East Asia. I am pleased to note that we have a record-high of over 2,000 participants at this congress!"

"The 44th ITF Congress aims to aid transport workers from every sector to form a collective voice, build power and eventually pave the course to a more just transport industry for years to

come. As we come together, united here for the all-inclusive Congress, it is welcoming to learn that we have a good mix of men and women along with young workers. In the upcoming week, numerous section conferences will discuss the impact that technology has on transport workers and policies will be made, I am confident that the week will be a fruitful one for all of us."

"We have made some significant progress in the last four years. Four years on from the Sofia Congress, we have focused the work of the ITF, implementing campaigns and projects across sections, regions and departments that have resulted in the growth of the ITF's membership. The Singapore Congress will further refine our strategic framework as the basis for addressing our key challenges and I believed that under Stephen Cotton's continued leadership, he will lead the ITF to even greater heights.

"Under Stephen's far-sighted and resourceful stewardship, the ITF has established centres of excellence within the Asia Pacific region in Delhi, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Sydney and Singapore to strengthen and presence to support the workers."

FAQs

What is the ITF?

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) was founded in 1896 and creates borderless solidarity among transport workers around the world. It supports 670 affiliate trade unions in 140 countries, representing 19.7 million workers to grow and activate their membership. Through innovative campaigning, the ITF seeks to influence global and regional policy to promote respect for trade union and human rights worldwide.

What is the ITF Congress?

Congress is the ITF's decision-making event, at which its affiliated trade unions decide the course of the federation for the next five years. It elects the ITF's executive board, president, vice presidents and general secretary. Nearly 2000 people will attend the 44th ITF Congress in Singapore, 14-20 October 2018.

What is happening at Congress?

For those unable to attend, the event can be followed online at <https://www.itfcongress2018.org/>, on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ITFCongress2018/> and on Twitter <https://twitter.com/itfcongress2018>.