

## In numbers

## Mexico

**100 & 200** This year is the centenary of the start of the Mexican Revolution, which ended the 37-year dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and culminated in the 1917 constitution guaranteeing civil rights, freedom of speech, a free press, an eight-hour working day and national ownership of all mineral rights. 2010 is also the bi-centenary of the beginning of the war of independence from Spain, although this was not achieved until 1821.

**66** The progressive Lázaro Cárdenas was elected president of Mexico in 1934. He redistributed land to the peasantry, nationalised the oil companies and created the Party of the Mexican Revolution, forerunner of the PRI Institutional Revolutionary Party that ruled Mexico for the next 66 years until 2000 when, with the PRI

by now corrupted by one-party rule, Vicente Fox won the presidential election for the right-leaning PAN National Action Party.

**92** The working week of a Mexican woman, including 54 hours of work in the home, averages 92 hours. That of a Mexican man is 67 hours, including 15 hours of work in



Made in Mexico: a VW Beetle "vocho" taxi in Mexico City. See "21,529,464".

the home. Mexican men earn on average 36 per cent more than women, according to the country's CILAS Centre for Labour Investigation and Union Consulting.

**3** Muralist art flourished in Mexico after the revolution, led by a trio of great artists: Diego Rivera (1885-1957), David Siqueiros (1896-1974) and José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949). Their work was overtly political and was inspired by Mexican history and indigenous culture.

**21,529,464** The last VW Beetle factory in the world was in Mexico and the last model was made in Puebla on 30 July 2003, ending 58 years of continuous mass production that began in Germany in 1945. A total of 21,529,464 cars were manufactured.

**52** The Mayans used parallel calendars, one based on a 260-day cycle, the other on the 365-day solar year. Together, they create a 52-year cycle before repeating themselves. The end of the cycle is thought to herald disasters and, afterwards, a new age. The current cycle expires on 23 December 2012.

## Promoting quality jobs and public services

From front page

companies and other businesses in the financial sector, the menu is set for more public spending cuts." But taxation should be an unavoidable alternative.

David Cockroft, ITF general secretary, stated that the ITF had committed considerable resources to the campaign.



Peter Waldorff.

"This is not just about people who work in public services. This is vital for improving the situation of many people around the world if they have access to affordable public services." Canjeevaram A Rajasridhar of the All India Railwaymen's Federation described a positive example of quality public transport. He told delegates that the Indian railways, which are state-owned, carry 10 million passengers every day. "It's highly subsidised – and the government wants to improve services," he said. New publicly run metro services were also planned and much of urban transport was also in the public sector. "These are all loss-making services, because people occupy centre-stage," he said.

He went on to tell the conference that there were forces lobbying for privatisation, for example, in southern India; however, union lobbying had prevented this. Seventy per cent of transport services in India were owned by the government.

## Mexico City Policy 'addresses long-standing concerns' Go-ahead given for flag of convenience policy update

Dockers and seafarers' unions have voted to accept an overhaul of the ITF's flag of convenience (FOC) policy in its first major update since 1998. It will be known as the Mexico City Policy if it is ratified by the plenary Congress later this week.

The new policy that was approved at yesterday's joint dockers' and seafarers' meeting sets out to create a better balance between unions in beneficial ownership and labour supply countries in order to provide improvements in the protection for seafarers.

ITF maritime coordinator Steve Cotton said the new policy would continue to establish closer relationships between seafarers and dockers and their unions and develop the methods that could be used to advance their interests.

He added: "The Mexico City Policy begins to address long-standing concerns about non-domiciled seafarers. It includes an understanding that the ITF's engagement with national flag vessels is in partnership and in consultation with unions in those countries and reflects their concerns about protecting their own members."

Cotton told the joint meeting that the policy drew on recent discussions on the ITF's organising strategy with the aim of building on the successes of the long-standing FOC campaign and of making it even more effective.

The meeting identified cabotage as an area where more work is needed, an initiative that received much support from unions in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Spain and the US.

The joint conference also elected members to the new governing bodies that the Mexico City Policy creates. With a wider remit, these groups are globally representative and draw on the considerable experience of ITF affiliates in the FOC and developing port of convenience campaigns.

Other updates to the ITF's policy reflect the increasingly important role of the new global pay bargaining arrangements with international maritime employers.

Also updated is the ITF's Seafarers' Charter, which seeks to ensure that seafarers covered by ITF agreements have democratic rights within their unions, within the ITF and on their ships.

Steve Cotton stressed that the Mexico City Policy was the outcome of an almost four-year, union-driven exercise to enable the ITF's FOC campaign to be run effectively, accountably and efficiently in the fast changing world of modern shipping.

**“The Mexico City Policy includes an understanding that the ITF's engagement with national flag vessels is in partnership and in consultation with unions in those countries.”**



ITF 42ND CONGRESS  
MEXICO CITY 2010

## What's on today

**Women's transport workers' conference:** Don Alberto, 9.30am-5.30pm.

**Film: A Storytelling Project to Combat HIV/AIDS Stigma and Secrecy:** Don Alberto, 1.15pm-1.45pm.

**Organising Globally workshop (German):** Don Americo, 6pm-8.30pm.

**Organising Globally workshop (Japanese):** Don Alberto, 6pm-8.30pm.

**HIV/AIDS workshop (French):** Don Diego 3 & 4, 6pm-8.30pm.



Still from the ITF-produced film about challenging stigma against HIV/AIDS carriers, which will be screened today (see details above) and introduced by the ITF's AIDS/HIV coordinator Asif Altaf.

## Congress Daily News

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## Congress website

Visit the ITF's Congress website – www.itfcongress2010.org – for all the news and background to proceedings in Mexico City, plus links to the Congress blog and ITF Flickr and YouTube sites.

## DAILY NEWS

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Faces at the trade union rights symposium held at Congress on Thursday evening. Left: some of the many Mexican trade unionists and their families who attended the event. Above: A caricature of Mexico's minister of labour Javier Lozano Alarcón adorns a poster. An ITF film about the exploitation of Mexican offshore workers was screened and among the speakers were representatives of the beleaguered unions for miners and metalworkers and electrical workers.

## Uniting to promote quality jobs and public services

Transport unions are being urged to unite to defend "quality public services", which are facing swingeing cuts worldwide.

Speaking at Congress yesterday, Peter Waldorff, general secretary of Public Services International (PSI), outlined how global unions were working together to draw up a charter for a global agenda for quality public services (QPS). The charter is part of a campaign by global unions on the issue, set to be launched at a

conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in October. It will focus on key strategic cities and involve civil society organisations.

Waldorff said: "I see this QPS conference as a landmark for cooperation among the 10 global union federations."

He went on: "The ITF and PSI are both representing people who work in public sector jobs – but we also represent the citizens who see a clear interest in defending quality education, health services, public transportation, water, sanitation and more."

He added: "The funding of public services is under attack – after the western world, with USA in the leading role, bailed out the banks and insurance

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**“This is not just about people who work in public services. This is vital for improving the situation of many people around the world.”**

## My Congress

Takako Uchida is a Japanese interpreter.



**Is this your first Congress?** No, this is my third Congress and my second as an interpreter. I'm more experienced this time so it's easier. I'm more comfortable with the work now. When I started, it was very difficult.

**What do you like best about Congress?** The best bit about Congress is that I can meet a lot of people, like ITF staff members working in London. I usually email and phone people. But it's different when you meet them. It's good to talk to people face to face.

**What is the worst part?** Sometimes I get together with people that I haven't seen for a long time. The worst bit about Congress is that I don't have much time to spend with them because I'm so busy.

**What do you think about this Congress?** The report on activities sessions were more interactive, with music, colour and film. That was really good.

**Are there particular difficulties in being an interpreter?** Sometimes it can be very difficult to follow the logic of the speaker. I find this hard even in my own language at times. But if you get the logic, the translation flows quite easily.

**Are there any special problems at this Congress?** Normally you go to a meeting with just one theme in mind, like rail. But at this Congress there are so many themes with their own terminology. I had to study up on climate change to make sure I knew the jargon. This Congress lasts nine days, and it seems nine times more complex than a normal meeting.

*“There are so many themes with their own terminology. I had to study up on climate change to make sure I knew the jargon.”*

## Section conferences

## Thai railway workers' struggle wins greater investment

The struggle of Thai railway workers employed by a state-owned company has led to greater investment and recruitment in the railways, delegates at the railway workers' section conference heard yesterday.

Pinyo Ruennpetch of the State Railway Union of Thailand (STUT) highlighted the fight of his members to defend rail safety and noted how progress had been made on investment and recruitment.

He told delegates that six railway workers had been dismissed by the State Railway of Thailand (SRT) for participating in industrial action in October 2009. The action followed a fatal accident in which seven people lost their lives and many were injured. A tripartite panel voted against the dismissals in January 2010, however, the SRT took the case to court; it is still being heard. If the case is lost, a further seven workers could lose their jobs.

Ruennpetch explained: "Immediately after the accident, the government blamed the workers. They didn't accept the fact that safety devices weren't working properly. These dismissals are union-busting."

Mac Urata, ITF inland transport sections secretary, described the ITF delegation visit to Thailand in support of the Thai railway workers. The ITF also protested to the Thai embassy in London and to the International Labour Organization "to send a strong message to say unions are on the watch to see what is happening".

Despite the refusal of the company to reinstate the workers, there are reasons for optimism. "Out of this struggle, we have some positive outcomes; after the industrial action, the company has recruited 171 workers and 200 billion baht (US\$6.2 billion) has been invested in the railways," explained Ruennpetch. There were also plans to recruit a further 2000 workers.

Although privatisation is set to go ahead, the



Wilma Clement of the Barbados Workers' Union addresses the tourism services section conference on Sunday. Also pictured (from right) are section chair Bengt Olsson (Unionen, Sweden) and section secretary Gabriel Mocho.

government will have to consult the union on any plans to restructure the industry.

Ruennpetch promised: "We will continue our fight for the benefit of railway workers."

Conference also heard from Francisco Torrealba, chair of the Venezuelan Railway Workers' Union, who described how 1,073 kilometres of track was being built in the country, with the cooperation of the Brazilian, Italian and Chinese governments. Four urban metro systems were also being constructed. As a result, the sector had grown considerably, with the number of railway workers increasing; this had in turn led to a rise in trade union membership.

Meanwhile, Alex Gordon from the RMT (Great Britain) spoke in favour of a motion on a trade union response to transport privatisation and liberalisation. He said: "The ITF must stand for a social railway, an inclusive railway and a democratically accountable railway."

He added: "The ambitions of the neo-liberals are boundless – they aim not only to privatise our transport networks, but to make it impossible or illegal to return them to public ownership."

"Comrades, it is time to take our railways back," he concluded.

## Dockers demand worldwide lobby on health and safety

**Calls by dockers' unions for a global union response to growing health and safety concerns in ports following several fatalities over the past year were renewed at the dockers' section conference on Saturday.**

Section chair Paddy Crumlin, national secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia, reported that there had been three deaths on the docks in the past six months in Australia. Employers, he explained, had not been taking the issue seriously or responding adequately. The union had taken protest action stopping port activities for 24 hours.

Crumlin said: "Which ever employer it is, we should respond in the global movement and show that we won't tolerate this. We must act as one."

He added: "There should be comprehensive standards in occupational health and safety and minimum standards of training for dockworkers. And global network terminal operators must have minimum standards in all their operations worldwide."

Ryosuke Kitahata from the National Federation of Dockworkers' Unions of Japan explained how the union's work with the ministry of land, transport and infrastructure had led to the introduction of a bill on container safety. It contains a number of provisions, such as control over the contents and weight of containers and guidelines on packing.

Kitahata said: "The ITF should create a movement



The ITF's organising globally coordinator Ingo Marowsky (standing) addresses one of the Organising Globally workshops currently being held at Congress. Marowsky also spoke at all the section conferences over the weekend. He explained the Organising Globally project and how it links with the Strong Unions – Sustainable Transport theme document of Congress.

**for the safe transport of marine containers and policy for international standards on safe transport of countries."**

**Frank Leys, ITF dockers' section secretary, gave a presentation on the ports of convenience campaign. Several unions commented on the implementation of the campaign and stated that it was vital to increase dockworker power worldwide. They also suggested that more resources be allocated towards these efforts and that links between the flag of convenience and ports of convenience campaigns be strengthened. This would ensure that material benefits for dockers could be delivered more effectively and the issue of cargo handling by seafarers resolved.**

Delegates observed a minute's silence to remember Pedro Zamora, the Guatemalan dockworkers' leader, murdered in 2007 in the port of Quetzal, and all other dockers who had lost their lives in the course of their work.

## Argentine fishers hail victory in organising drive

Delegates at the fisheries section conference on Saturday heard how the SOMU maritime union in Argentina had been waging a successful organising campaign on fishing boats in Mar del Plata.

Union general secretary Omar Suárez reported to the conference on Saturday that union recognition agreements were torn up by the military junta in the 1970s and 80s. But in recent years, the union had used strikes – lasting up to five months – and its membership and influence in the docks and seafaring sectors to force the employers to return to collective bargaining.

The union's actions included blockades of fish exports and shipments. The final agreement was concluded in the week before Congress.

Suárez offered to support organising efforts by other unions. "We want to use this model tirelessly in other fisheries," he declared.

Delegates agreed that more efforts were needed to persuade governments to ratify International Labour Organization Work in Fishing Convention 188. The convention incorporates and updates most of the existing ILO fishing instruments on working conditions, mainly on large fishing craft. It needs to be ratified by 10 countries, including eight coastal states, before beginning the process of coming into force. So far, only one country has ratified it.

The conference also endorsed the "Mexico Declaration" signed by Argentine, Brazilian, Panamanian and Uruguayan unions denouncing the

Dutch marine salvage company Smit for its anti-union and social dumping activities.

Concern was expressed about the growth of piracy affecting, above all, tuna fishers in the Indian Ocean. Three vessels with more than 75 crew were currently being held.

## Cross-border solidarity wins justice for river crews in Brazil

Reports of a highly effective example of cross-border solidarity were well received at the inland navigation section conference on Saturday. Delegates heard how sympathy action by Argentine workers helped secure pay increases of up to 24 per cent for Brazilian crews on vessels operated by Cinco Bacias.

The success came following a 22-day strike led by the Brazilian CONTTMAF transport federation in April this year. It was called to secure €2 million (US\$2.65) in back pay and turned nasty, with the multinational company sacking many strikers.

After 15 days of the stoppage, the Brazilians contacted the Argentine seafarers' union SOMU for assistance. The Argentinians immediately called a three-day solidarity strike in support of their Brazilian colleagues.

This shut down all traffic on the Paraná river.

Cinco Bacias returned to the negotiating table and CONTTMAF won a new collective agreement giving rises ranging from 24 per cent for an AB to 10 per cent for masters. In addition, a one-off 4 per cent

pay increase was applied for this year to compensate for the previous lack of a collective agreement.

CONTTMAF president Severino Almeida Filho applauded the solidarity action taken by SOMU. "The stoppage by the Argentinians was important because it demonstrated to the company that it had much more to lose than just its Brazilian operations."

For SOMU, general secretary Omar Suárez said his union was happy to provide support to CONTTMAF. "We are trade union brothers in the region, in the industry and in the ITF, so it is natural that we would want to act in solidarity," he said.



Severino Almeida Filho (left) and Omar Suárez.

## In brief

### Plans for Year of the Seafarer



The ITF seafarers' section is handing out campaign action packs to mark 2010 as Year of the Seafarer. Affiliated unions are also being asked what activities they plan for the International Maritime Organization-designated year, which culminates in the week of World Maritime Day on 23 September. Questionnaires about activities by affiliates are available from the Congress information desk in the Don Alberto lobby. If you are interested in being filmed for the YouTube site, contact llwellyn\_anna@itf.org.uk. For the ITF toolkit for the Year of the Seafarer and a link to videos, go to: [www.itfglobal.org/seafarers/2010-YOS.cfm](http://www.itfglobal.org/seafarers/2010-YOS.cfm)

### From our blog...

**Bob Crow, general secretary of Great Britain's RMT rail and maritime union:** "We must move away from a conference style that is resolutions based to one based on offensive action. Privatisation is the most urgent question facing rail unions today. My question to other unions here is this: What are we going to do to defend rail as a social service that is publicly owned and under democratic control? There are a couple of things we can do straight away. Every document presented at ITF conferences should include a clear plan of action. It is essential to have quality information, but sometimes I find myself thinking: 'This is all very well, but what are we going to do now?'... We should look at a task force that will co-ordinate practical support for any union in a serious dispute."

– For more Congress blogs, see [www.itfglobal.org/congress2001blog/](http://www.itfglobal.org/congress2001blog/) If you want to write a blog, contact [anderson\\_jeremy@itf.org.uk](mailto:anderson_jeremy@itf.org.uk)

### Sign the piracy petition

Congress participants are being asked to support the ITF's piracy petition campaign. The aim to get half a million names by 23 September, World Maritime Day. So far there are about 250,000 signatures. To back up the campaign, the ITF has produced a short video of seafarers and their families talking about the reality of piracy. In the past two years over 1,800 seafarers have been kidnapped. There are currently 348 of them being held hostage. The ITF is insisting that piracy is a workers' rights issue and is urging all trade unionists to sign the petition and to forward the link (see below) to contacts and networks and to publicise the campaign at union meetings and in the workplace. A hardcopy of the petition (in English, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish is available to download and print at [www.endpiracypetition.org.uk](http://www.endpiracypetition.org.uk) See the ITF video at: [www.youtube.com/user/itfvideos](http://www.youtube.com/user/itfvideos)