

Spotlight

Report back on the ITA 2015 general assembly Forty-first annual meeting held in Dubrovnik, Croatia

The International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA) held its forty-first annual meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia from 22 to 28 May 2015, in conjunction with the World Tunnel Congress 2015 'Promoting Tunnelling in South East European Region' organized by the ITA and the Croatian Association for Tunnelling and Underground Space. More than 1550 persons participated in the conference. The Association registered two new member nations, Guatemala and Qatar, and 21 new Affiliate Members in the preceding year, which resulted in a total of 73 Member Nations and 282 Affiliate members (taking into account some resignations). 57 of the 73 Member Nations were represented in the General Assembly. Ron Tluczek, chairman of SANCOT, represented South Africa on behalf of the SANCOT Committee.

The Open Session, which took place on 26 May, was dedicated to 'Underground Space and Natural Resources' with a special focus on hydro. A panel of seven experts made presentations and a floor discussion was held on three main themes, namely sustainability, constructability, finance, and insurance. At the end of the session it was very clear that hydro power tunnels have proven to be a very sustainable solution, especially when due attention is given to constructability by utilizing advanced technology and contractual practices. Financial models should be based on long-term revenues. With the current market development of renewable energy, hydro tunnels and related structures have proven to provide the most reliable, and most economical long-term solutions for the supply of energy for our planet. Underground space can make hydro power schemes more sustainable with respect to environmental, social, and economic aspects, when used in suitable settings and with a clear understanding of all risks, particularly geotechnical risk. Other risks to be aware of include; financial challenges, construction risk, hydrological risk, off-taker risk, regulatory risk, life-cycle risk, and changes in climate and technology.

The ITA has produced a video of the Open Session, which can be seen on the ITA Youtube Channel [<https://youtu.be/47fcyz9pyg>].

The ITA Young Member Group has been very active during the year, strengthening the international network between young members and participating in two major events in Greece and the UAE. The ITA YM group has also created a new magazine, 'Breakthrough'.

South African representatives participated in four Working Groups. Ron Tluczek participated in WG 2 (Research), Tony Boniface in WG 5 (Health and Safety in Works), Chris Viljoen in WG 12 (Sprayed Concrete Use), and Monica Walnstein participated in WG 21 (Life Cycle Asset Management). Chris Viljoen made a presentation to Working Group 12 on the status of a guideline for sprayed concrete.

Eight reports were published in the previous year: three from ITA Working Groups, four from ITAtech Activity Groups, and one from the ITA COSUF Committee, namely:

- ✦ 'Strategy for Site Investigation on Tunnelling Projects'
- ✦ 'Guidelines for Good Working Practice in High Pressure Compressed Air (HPCA)'
- ✦ 'An Owners Guide to Immersed Tunnels'
- ✦ 'Rebuilt Equipment – Guidelines on Rebuilds of Machinery for Mechanised Tunnel Excavation'
- ✦ 'Guideline for Good Practice of Fibre Reinforced Concrete Precast Segments'
- ✦ 'Guidelines on Measurement Frequencies'
- ✦ 'Remote Measurement'
- ✦ 'Survey of Existing Regulations and Recognised Recommendations (on Operation and Safety of Road Tunnels)'.

All these documents are available free of charge on the ITA website and available for comments.

The next annual meetings of the ITA General Assembly will be held at the following venues:

- ✦ San Francisco, USA, from 22 to 28 April 2016, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2016 'Uniting our Industry'.
- ✦ Bergen, Norway, from 9 to 16 June 2017, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2017 'Surface Problems – Underground Solutions'.
- ✦ Dubai, UAE, from 20 to 26 April 2018, during the ITA-AITES WTC 2018 'Smart Cities: Managing the Use of Underground Space to Enhance Quality of Life'.



From left to right: Moroke Nteene (Lesotho Tunnelling Association), Tony Boniface, Monique Walnstein, Veronica Boniface, Lucky Nene (Chairman, SANCOT Young Professional Group), Soren Eskesen (ITA President), Janie Viljoen, Chris Viljoen (SANCOT Vice Chairman), Merryn Scott-Tluczek, Ron Tluczek (SANCOT Chairman), Jim McKelvey (past SANCOT Chairman).

R. Tluczek