

## THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, MALAYSIA

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# PRESS STATEMENT

7 September 2020

## **WORLD TUNNEL CONGRESS 2020 HAVE NOW MOVED TO A DIGITAL PLATFORM!**

Kuala Lumpur, 7 September 2020- True to its commitment to innovation while embracing the “new norm”, the World Tunnel Congress 2020 will now be held fully digital, paving the way for tunnelling academicians and industry players alike to be a part of the world’s greatest meeting of tunnellers, regardless of where they are.

Short for ITA-AITES World Tunnel Congress 2020, WTC2020 was initially due to be held in September at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC). Recent circumstances set off by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to many cancellations of major events around the world and drove the need to move the World Tunnel Congress 2020 (WTC2020) into a digital platform as a result of global border control, restrictions on mass gathering and the requirement for physical distancing.

After much deliberation with the official organizer — The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM) and the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA-AITES), decided to take the Congress virtual by streaming the programs on various dates from 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 via a secured digital platform.

WTC2020 will kick start with opening speeches on 14 September 2020 by industry giants such as long-time IEM backers, WTC2020 Organising Chairman, Ir. Dr Teik Aun Ooi, IEM President Ir. Ong Ching Loon plus ITA President, Prof. Jenny Yan. Themed “Innovation and Sustainable Underground Serving Global Connectivity”, the Congress will feature up to 300 technical presentations and talks focusing on these areas.

The main highlight will be a cross-discipline initiative at WTC, a Landmark Lecture given by Professor Charles W. W. Ng, Chair Professor of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and also President of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering. An illustrious speaker that has given keynote speeches worldwide, his talk on tunnel to tunnel and tunnel to pile foundation interactions is bound to liven the virtual Congress.

There will also be interactive sessions throughout as participants will get to pose their questions and engage with speakers and presenters. In fact, although now fully digital, WTC2020 makes no compromise in what it offers, as there will still be up to 80 exhibitors present showcasing the latest in tunnelling trends via a digital gallery, complete with attendants ready to attend to visitors to via chatrooms throughout the tunnelling event.

The WTC2020 will also feature two general assemblies at the end of the Congress, namely the ITA young members (ITAYM) General Assembly and 46<sup>th</sup> ITA General Assembly.

WTC2020 is a golden opportunity for the engineering fraternities in Malaysia as it brings our ingenuity and capacity in tunnelling to a global stage. Malaysia's tunnelling icons includes the 9.7 km, two-storey SMART Tunnel the longest dual function highway and storm water drainage tunnel in South East Asia and the impressive Mass Rapid Transit lines, Kajang and Putrajaya line respectively. These projects have given birth to many tunnelling innovations such as the Variable Density Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) and the autonomous TBM.

Although the format of the Congress is now virtual, conference objectives will still be met if not exceeded as technology removes the geographical and physical limitations of knowledge transactions. While it is disheartening that the Congress could not be held physically in the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia continues to wait for delegates everywhere, as we battle the Covid-19 pandemic in unison.

WTC2020 Digital is still open for registrations but filling up fast. For more details and updates on upcoming programs, check out the official homepage [www.wtc2020.my](http://www.wtc2020.my).

For Congress details please connect with Dr Ooi Teik Aun at [drtaooi@gmail.com](mailto:drtaooi@gmail.com)

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### **Ir. Ong Ching Loon**

President

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at 03-7968 4001/ fax to 03-7957 7678 or email to [sec@iem.org.my](mailto:sec@iem.org.my).*

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### **About the WTC**

*WTC is owned by the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA) which is founded in 1974 and is the leading international organization which aims to encourage the use of the subsurface for the benefit of public, environment and sustainable development and to promote advances in planning, design, construction, maintenance and safety of tunnels and underground space, by knowledge sharing and application of technology. Presently, ITA gathers 78 Member Nations and 266 corporate or individual Affiliate Members.*

*ITA holds, at once, its General Assembly and the World Tunnel Congress (WTC) in a different Member Nation, each year.*

### **About the IEM**

*The Institution of Engineers of Malaysia (IEM) is a civil society organisation established to promote the science and profession of engineering in any of its disciplines and to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas related to engineering. Founded in 1959 and with a membership of over 50,000 today, IEM constitutes one of the largest professional organisations in the country. Amongst its many roles, the Institution plays an active part in supporting various sustainable socio-economic development of the country and in nation building. It represents the aspirations of its members, acts in the best interests of the public of whom its members serve whilst upholding the standing and image of the profession.*