

2009 ITMF ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Dr. Christian P. Schindler started his work with ITMF as an economist and was elected director general effective Jan. 1, 2007.

Serving The Global Textile Industry

International Textile Manufacturers Federation Director General Dr. Christian P. Schindler discusses ITMF and its activities.

By Jürg Rupp, Executive Editor

For more than 100 years, the Zürich, Switzerland-based International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) has served the entire textile industry around the world. ITMF organizes an annual conference and publishes much-appreciated statistics on shipments and stocks from the entire textile production chain. The conference is considered to be the most important gathering of the global textile industry. In an exclusive interview with *Textile World*, ITMF Director General Dr. Christian P. Schindler explained ITMF's activities and the reasons Shanghai was chosen as the host city for this year's conference.

ITMF — one of the oldest non-governmental organizations and probably the most important and highest-ranking textile association around the world — was founded in 1904 at a meeting convened in Zürich at the initiative of the British cotton

spinning industry. Initially, it established its headquarters in Manchester, England, and for many years, ITMF represented and promoted the interests of the cotton spinning and manufacturing industries around the world. The rapid development of man-made fibers broadened the range of membership. At the same time, vertical integration in textile enterprises changed the structure of the industry, and the federation enlarged its scope and became a multi-fiber and multi-process industry association.

Move To Switzerland

ITMF was directed for many years by Dr. Herwig Strolz, who appointed Schindler as ITMF's economist on Oct. 1, 2004. Schindler was promoted to the position of director in 2006, and at the federation's annual conference in Dubai in September 2006, he was elected director general effective Jan. 1, 2007.

TW: Dr. Schindler, in 1963, the federation's headquarters were moved from Manchester, England, to Zürich, Switzerland. Why was that done?

Schindler: Well, this was for the purpose of facilitating international contacts and improving administrative services and communications. On top of that, Switzerland was and is a neutral country and therefore an ideal place for an international association.

Since 1960, ITMF's membership has expanded significantly and today embraces most of the world's textile production. The location of global textile industry capacities has undergone far-reaching changes, and the readjustment process has also affected the structure of industry trade associations. The former fragmentation of those organizations has shifted gradually as their framework of representation has become more concentrated and integrated.

In 1978, the federation changed its name to International Textile Manufacturers Federation. With its current structure and scope, ITMF is eligible to represent the broadest possible range of the world's textile industries, and it does.

Membership

Like every association, the body of ITMF is composed of its members — associations and other constituted organizations of textile manufacturers. There can be only one member association from each country. The members have access to all annual statistics as well as other important data and committee papers. It is also possible to become an associate member. These are associations and other constituted organizations of textile manufacturers in countries in which there is already a member association, as well as associations allied to the textile industry.

In recent years, corporate memberships have been made available to manufacturers of textiles or of products allied to the textile industry, such as textile machinery.

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TW: Is it easy to become a corporate member of ITMF? What are the costs of the membership?

Schindler: The main purpose of offering corporate membership is to offer companies that are not represented already by a national textile association access to our international platform. It is a fairly easy procedure to become a corporate member. An interested company applies in writing for corporate membership. Afterwards, the existing membership is informed and asked to approve the application. The cost for corporate membership is between 5,000 and 10,000 Swiss francs, depending on the turnover.

Main Objectives

TW: What are the main objectives of ITMF?

Schindler: First of all, we provide a neutral forum and platform for discussions of matters appropriately within the common interest and concern of textile companies. The ITMF conferences offer an ideal forum to discuss and exchange views and opinions in a relaxed atmosphere outside the day-to-day business. Furthermore, we act as a central

ITMF Conferences 1996-2009

Year	Host City	Country
1996	Washington	United States
1997	Marrakech	Morocco
1998	Melbourne	Australia
1999	Venice	Italy
2000	Cape Town	South Africa
2001	Budapest	Hungary
2002	New Delhi	India
2003	Dresden	Germany
2004	Lucerne	Switzerland
2005	Istanbul	Turkey
2006	Dubai	UAE
2007	Cairo	Egypt
2008	Mauritius	Mauritius
2009	Shanghai	China

Table 1



On April 17, 2008, the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) officially joined ITMF as a new member association in an official ceremony at ITMA Asia + CINTE 2008. Former ITMF president Walter Simeoni (sixth from left) and CNTAC President Du Yuzhou (seventh from left) were at the center of attention.

agency of the textile industries for the collection of information, statistical and otherwise, on textile manufacturing developments in all countries of the world. Another important point is the role as a voice for the world textile industry in issues relating to raw materials. Different committees serve as a forum for the industry and its partners as a platform like the Spinners Committee, the Joint Cotton Committee and others. The federation also acts as a kind of liaison agent among the textile industries and governments and intergovernmental organizations interested in the textile industry.

Meeting Point

ITMF is without any doubt the most important global meeting point for networking. The highlight of ITMF is the annual conference, held in different locations around the world. The conference provides an opportunity for the most important top-ranking people to meet — to attend an excellent conference, but also to exchange and strengthen contacts with the leaders of the global textile machinery and textile industries and, last but not least, with governmental officials.

These high-level gatherings are probably even more important than the statistics. Venues from 1996 to the present are shown in Table 1.

TW: How do you organize the annual conference, and who is responsible for the program?

Schindler: As you know, the conference moves around the world every year. Members of the federation are usually hosting the conference and are therefore assisting in organizing the event. It really is a joint effort. The special feature of an ITMF Annual Conference is its truly international character with regard to speakers and attendees combined with the possibility for the national host association to direct broad attention to its textile industry.

China, 2009 ITMF Annual Conference Host Country

On April 17, 2008, the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) officially joined ITMF as a member association. This membership is considered to be very important for both organizations. CNTAC represents the largest textile-producing, -consuming and -exporting country in the world and strengthens ITMF's international representation. On the other hand, ITMF offers an ideal international platform for the Chinese textile industry.

TW: This year's conference is something special for ITMF. For the first time in its long history, the ITMF

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Annual Conference takes place in Shanghai, Oct. 23-25, 2009. What does it mean for ITMF to hold its annual conference in China?

Schindler: It is indeed special to hold this year's ITMF Annual Conference in Shanghai, one of the most booming cities in the world, with a huge textile cluster in and around the city. As the world's biggest producer of textiles with the largest domestic market and one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, China is and will be of great importance as a production site and increasingly also as an export market. The conference is therefore an ideal opportunity for everybody who is interested to learn more about China and its future role in the global textile arena.

Committees

TW: *How do you cover the different areas within ITMF?*

Schindler: We offer these groups different committees in which they can meet and work. All member associations and associate and corporate members are entitled to be represented, as appropriate, on these sub-committees and to take an active part in their work.

The Spinners Committee's main objectives are to support the development of quality cotton fiber based on modern spinning requirements; to provide advice relating to the harvesting, handling and ginning of cotton; and to promote the mechanical testing of raw cotton.

The Joint Cotton Committee is composed of delegates who represent sellers and buyers of raw cotton. It is concerned with any matters pertaining to raw cotton production and marketing, including international cotton marketing policies.

ITMF deals with governments, international organizations and trade associations interested in raw cotton production, trading and marketing through the Joint Cotton and the Spinners Committee.

The task of the Statistical Com-

mittee is to supervise, improve and extend ITMF's statistical services; and to keep member associations and associate members informed of relevant statistics that are compiled by other international organizations.

The International Committee on Cotton Testing Methods is mainly concerned with matters related to cotton fiber testing and standardization.

The Man-Made Fibres Committee

Dr. Christian P. Schindler, ITMF Director General

German-born ITMF Director General Dr. Christian P. Schindler studied economics at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, graduating in 1994. Between 1995 and 1998, he served as personal assistant to two members of Parliament in Germany's Bundestag. In 1998, he joined the Federation of German Wholesale and Foreign Trade as personal assistant and speechwriter for the association's president. Between 2001 and 2004, he studied at the Institute for Economic Policy at the University of Cologne, Germany, where he wrote his dissertation and earned a doctorate in 2004.

deals with specific matters in the production, distribution and processing of man-made fibers on an ad-hoc basis.

The Future Of ITMF

TW: *The ITMF statistics are very much appreciated among the members and recipients for their high value. Are you pleased with the content, or is there a way to further enhance the results?*

Schindler: Well, among our various publications, ITMF's International Textile Machinery Shipment Statistics is certainly the most renowned. It is unique in the world and serves the entire industry as basic information on ongoing structural changes in the scale and scope of textile production capacities around the world. To readers of these statistics, it wasn't a surprise that the investment boom in new textile machinery during the past

six years was not sustainable. The statistics have been collected for 30 years, and its coverage was expanded constantly. We now cover the different segments of spinning, texturing, weaving, and circular and flat knitting as well as finishing machinery. In the future, we also intend to include the segment of printing machinery. The world's most important textile machinery manufacturers are participating in this statistics already, but we are, of course, always welcoming any new participants. In general, the compilation of statistical information on textile production has become more difficult these days due to a lack of official data being available in many countries.

TW: *Are you happy so far with how ITMF is presenting itself today?*

Schindler: The global textile industry has been undergoing tremendous structural changes in the past 10 to 15 years and is now affected by the most severe global economic crisis the industry has seen since the Great Depression in the last century. These structural changes ask for continuous adaptations of the federation's activities and services. Despite the current crisis, we will continue to work hard on offering enhanced and new services.

TW: *And what are the next targets of the federation?*

Schindler: Our target is always to provide our members an attractive international and neutral platform where they can meet, learn and exchange their views. The value of our conference lies in the opportunity to get a feeling for the international development and changes as well as an outlook of the global textile industry, and to build an international network with partners from the entire textile value chain including scientists and other experts from the industry. Additionally, we are always trying to improve our existing publications and to develop new ones.

TW: *We wish you all the best to achieve your targets.* 