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SAMUDRA

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SEACARE LAUNCHES
PIONEER APPRECIATION SCHEME



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SISTER SHARON LI IS NEWLY ELECTED CO-CHAIR OF ITF YOUTH COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER

ITF 43RD CONGRESS IN SOFIA, BULGARIA

Global transport workers have hailed the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) 43rd Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria as the best ever. The four yearly world congress saw important decisions made, priorities for transport unions globally identified and ITF leaders elected for a new term.

SOS Assistant Director, Ms Sharon Li was newly elected as the Co-Chair of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Youth Committee and a member of the ITF Executive Board.

Since 2010, Ms Sharon proved her mettle, engaging with fellow youth affiliates from international and regional transport sectors (such as Seafarers, Civil Aviation and Road Transport), whom she actively served as an Asia Pacific representative in the ITF Youth Committee. Some of her engagements on the international front included annual workshops, summer camps and discussions with young transport workers from Asia, UK and the Arab region, where various aspects of solidarity on a global scale, such as supporting the labour movement in Palestine, enhancing communication efforts via social media and fighting climate change were dealt with.

About her involvement with young transport workers, Ms Sharon admitted that it is a good platform for learning about the different transport sectors in other parts of the world. She said, "learning about the issues faced by young unionists from different countries has broadened my horizon; it allows each of us to tap on one another's experience, which effectively resolve our own domestic issues."

The newly elected Co-chair of ITF Youth Committee and Executive Board Member aims to improve global youth outreach programme among other initiatives. In the next four years, Ms Sharon will be chairing meetings and discussions



Ms Sharon Li (second from left) with ITF General Secretary, Mr Stephen Cotton (third from right) and fellow unionists from the Singapore Organisation of Seamen at the ITF 43rd Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria.

for teams of dynamic young transport worker affiliates from across the globe including countries such as Australia, Brazil and India. She will likewise lead them to execute various work programmes to be completed by the next Congress. The committee's new work programme will now include a Global Engagement project to reach out to affiliates through various transport sections and regions, develop mentorship and leadership undertakings, and fight climate change.

Since its introduction, the ITF Young Transport Workers' programme has been popular among young unionists, receiving continuous support and endeavours all over the world.

Ms Sharon highlighted the effectiveness of having young workers organise other young workers as they think alike and can relate to issues that are specific to younger workers. "Many young transport workers today are not exposed to trade unionism being unaware of the relevance to them... what they fail to see is, the labour movement around the world would be weakened if there is no young transport workers' involvement," said Ms Sharon.

About ITF Young Transport Workers' Programme

The Young Transport Workers' programme was set up after the ITF Congress in South Africa in 2006. The project aims to make the work of the ITF more relevant to young people (those aged 35 and under) by involving them in its activities. Subsequently in 2010, at the 42nd Congress in Mexico, the ITF incorporated the Youth Committee, as a formal part of the ITF structure.

TRANSPORT WORKERS FIGHT BACK

ITF 43RD CONGRESS IN SOFIA, BULGARIA



The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) 43rd Congress in Sofia, Bulgaria has been praised as the best ITF Congress ever. From 10 to 16 August 2014, ITF held its first ever paperless Congress, changing the way future meetings would be held.

Over 1700 participants from 372 unions representing almost four million transport workers worldwide came together for a week to set out the course for the ITF for the next four years. The Singapore contingent was represented by 18 delegates and observers from Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS), Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), Singapore Port Workers' Union (SPWU), National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) and Port Officers' Union (POU).

SOS officials – General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat, Executive Secretary Mr Daniel Tan, Assistant Secretary Mr David Shoo, ExCo Member Ms Shena Foo and Assistant Director Ms Sharon Li, attended plenary sessions interspersed with section conferences covering seafarers, women transport workers, young transport workers, FOC campaign and ITF's Mexico Policy. SOS delegates also attended the fringe activities such as those relating to the Seafarers' Rights International and ITF seafarers trust and offshore taskforce meetings.

The ITF Congress adopted the theme, "From global crisis to global justice - transport workers fighting back" and set in motion an ambitious work programme for ITF and for the respective industrial sections. It focused on organising key hubs and corridors, leveraging key industry players, activating mass union membership and responding to geographic shifts. One of the key focuses of the conference was maintaining the right to strike as workers across the world continue to struggle for better rights and conditions. The adopted resolutions will form the basis of ITF work over the next four years.

Mr Paddy Crumlin from Maritime Union of Australia was unanimously re-elected as ITF President. Mr Crumlin said that "The ITF understands just how interconnected we all are and how powerful that can make us if we work hard together and build the solidarity between working men and women across supply chains, across industries and across borders."

Mr Stephen Cotton who has been Acting General Secretary for the last 18 months and previously held the position as ITF Maritime Coordinator was unanimously elected as General Secretary. Mr Cotton said that over the past four years, a new social consciousness had begun, with uprising all across the globe and that the trade union movement would continue to provide the answers. "We are all connected and across the globe it is transport workers who do the connecting. The mighty engine of globalised world trade – the defining symbol of our times – is powered by us: Transport workers the world over."

SOS would like to congratulate Mr Paddy Crumlin on his re-election as the President of ITF and Mr Stephen Cotton on his appointment as the new ITF General Secretary.



GAINING INSIGHTS INTO TAIWAN'S EXPERIENCE



SOS General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat and fellow members of the NTUC International Relations (IR) Committee visited Taiwan as part of their learning journey to uncover best practices from around the world and further workers' interest.

The IR Committee participated in a dialogue session with the Taiwan Ministry of Labour and the Chinese Federation of Labour to learn about their collaboration during the 2008/2009 economic crisis. Other topics brought up at the session included ageing population, growing foreign workforce and workers' training. Since both Singapore and Taiwan are facing similar workforce problems, it was a rewarding experience for all the delegates as they exchanged ideas and gained valuable insights.

The retreat, which was held in September, also gave Singaporean delegates an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit Taiwan Tobacco & Liquour Corporation, a state-owned enterprise. They saw how advanced automated processes help to increase productivity and remain competitive.

NORWEGIAN SEAFARERS UNION ELECTS NEW LEADERS



It was a paperless affair at the Norwegian Seafarers Union (NSU) Congress in Trondheim, Norway where 104 delegates elected a National Board, Executive Board, President, Vice President, and Elected Secretary by electronic voting.

Mr Johnny Hansen was elected as the new president, as former president Ms Jacqueline Smith would be taking on a new role at the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). The four-day congress which commenced from 22 to 25 September had delegates discussing about membership services, maritime policies, fishery, work programme for the next four years and collective bargaining. The Congress was attended by ITF General Secretary Mr Stephen Cotton and ITF President Mr Paddy Crumlin. Sixteen guests from ITF-affiliated unions also attended the event.

"We would like to congratulate Mr Johnny Hansen as the new President of NSU and thank Ms Jacqueline Smith for the good working relationship with SOS in the past 8 years. We also wish her all the best in her new role at ITF as Maritime Coordinator," said SOS Executive Secretary Mr Daniel Tan. Mr Tan also presented a memento to NSU for their warm hospitality at the Congress.



BIGGER BETTER SOS NETWORKING NIGHT

SOS Networking Night just got bigger and better this year. For the first time, union leaders from NTUC's Transport and Logistics cluster and trainees from the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme attended the event and mingled with other guests from shipping companies, maritime-related authorities at Club@52.

The gathering on 19 September was made all the more lively with the attendance of unionists from NTUC Transport and Logistic cluster, namely Amalgamated Union of Statutory Board Employees (AUSBE), National Taxi Association (NTA), National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU), Port Officers' Union (POU), Singapore Port Workers' Union (SPWU), Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union (SISEU), Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers' Union (SMMWU), Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) and Singapore Stevedores' Union (SSU).

In his welcome address, SOS General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat thanked all tripartite partners for the strong support over the years. He recounted some significant events that took place in the global maritime industry. Among the key milestones were the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train

Programme and the recently launched Citin Seacare Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. Congratulating the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme trainees for completing their first phase of training, Mr Kam highlighted that initiatives such as this greatly benefit Singaporean ships cooks and complement the government's and trade unions' effort to continually upgrade the skills of Singaporeans - to enhance their employment opportunities.

The networking night was a successful and fruitful one as bridges were built and relationships strengthened.



EYE-OPENING JOURNEY TO SEOUL FOR BORA RECIPIENTS



A tour around the beautiful Namsangol Hanok Village in the heart of Seoul

This 21 to 24 August was one of the most educational overseas trips for two SOS Standing Committee Members Mr Yusof Abdul Rahman and Mr Tang Teng Lung.

As the Branch Officials Recognition Award (BORA) 2014 recipients, they visited Korean organisations and unions in Seoul to learn about their unique labour system and activities.

“We now have a more globalised and clearer perspective of the workers and the labour movements in other countries. We learned about the functions, views and social engagements

of the Korean unions, as well as the important roles they play to help the workers,” said Brother Tang.

He felt that the trip was meaningful as it gave him an opportunity to experience labour relations and management in a different environment. Likewise, Brother Yusof said that there were much to learn from their visit to the Korean International Labour Foundation (KOILAF), Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) and LG Corporation. He was impressed by the hardworking spirit of the union members in South Korea. The delegates also had the opportunity to appreciate the architecture of Joseon Dynasty traditional houses at Namsangol Hanok Village and shop at skincare and cosmetics retailer The Face Shop.

This year, 71 union leaders from 43 unions were recognised at the 14th BORA Ceremony held on 12 August. The award honoured their contributions as union leaders in areas of membership, leadership, industrial relations and labour-management relations.



Mr Tang Teng Lung (centre), receiving his BORA Awards certificate from NTUC Assistant Secretary General Mr Yeo Guat Kwang (left) and NTUC President Ms Diana Chia



Mr Yusof Abdul Rahman (second from left), was joined by his wife on stage during the award presentation



Officials from Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) sharing their experiences with the Singaporean delegates during their learning visit

Picture credit: BORA Awards Ceremony 2014, OTC Institute

SEAFARING COOK TRAINEES READY FOR THE NEXT TRAINING PHASE!



The trainees celebrating in a graduation ceremony at SHATEC, together with the trainers and course coordinators from SOS, SHATEC and e2i

All 19 trainees from the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme have completed Phase 1 of the programme in August, after three months of intensive training at the Singapore Maritime Academy, Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (SHATEC) and Seacare Thrift.

Their next mission: a six-month On-Job-Training onboard ocean-bound vessels (Phase 2) starting October.

For many of these young trainees, who had past experience in the F&B industry, a sea-bound job opportunity is both an eye-opener and very much an adventure.

“I want to see new things and adapt to new cultures,” said trainee Mr Fairul, who would be embarking on his apprenticeship in early October. “I’ve heard a lot of colourful stories from seafarers and want to be in their shoes. In a way, the ship is like your home and the galley is like your kitchen.

We get to cook for the crew onboard and meet new people from different countries,” he added.

The 18-month Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme which includes a 9-month minimum service period (Phase 3), is a joint initiative between SOS and e2i to promote seafaring employment opportunities for Singaporeans through skills upgrading and training development.

“It is exciting to see the world while building my portfolio,” said trainee Mr Tan Ngee Chai. “During my apprenticeship, I want to learn as much as possible the job of the Chief Cook and the different duties as a professional seafarer.”

To celebrate their successful completion of the classroom training, SHATEC and SOS each held a graduation ceremony for the trainees.



Attending the Certified Cooks Training Course at Seacare Thrift



▲ ▼ Trainees receiving their graduation certificates from SHATEC Chief Executive, Ms Margaret Heng (top right) and SOS President Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim (bottom left)



◀ SOS staff presenting the benefits that the trainees will enjoy as SOS members

The professional and specialised skills the trainees have acquired – coupled with the apprenticeship and practical experience onboard – will give them a competitive edge in the global maritime employment market. Initiatives like these add value to employers and raise the overall standards of Singaporean registries. It is the government's and trade union's way to continually upgrade the skills of Singaporeans to enhance their employment opportunities.

– **Mr Kam Soon Huat, SOS General Secretary**

The celebration at SHATEC on 6 August was joined by the programme's trainers, as well as Chief Executive, Ms Margaret Heng and Development Director, Ms Juliana Soh. The function was also attended by staff from the e2i and SOS.

"The trainees have shown competency in preparing a variety of cuisines and pastries. We have given them many recipes, so I'm confident they will do well onboard," said SHATEC trainer Chef Prateep during the celebration.

"I believe they will have a lot more exposure during their apprenticeship onboard ships," said fellow trainer Chef Adrian. "Overall, they have picked up the skills very quickly and I am proud of their achievements," he added.

The trainees celebrated another graduation in SOS on the evening of 13 August, after completing the Seacare Thrift Certified Cooks Training Course – an important MLC-compliant certification, which they must attain to work in a galley.

SOS President Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim, Vice President Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar, and IR Assistant Manager Mr Maximilian Theodore (Former Cruise Ship Executive Chef and Course Trainer) took the opportunity to share their years of seafaring experience with the trainees.

"Our trainees are very fortunate to receive the finest training to prepare them for a seafaring job. This is something we did not have in the early days. I'm sure they will do well in the programme and enjoy their time on the ship," said Brother Mohamad.

WIN'S FORMULA: "FOLLOW YOUR HEART, DO WHAT YOU REALLY LIKE"



Samudra speaks to Win, one of the trainees from the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme, who is preparing to embark on his maiden seafaring journey as an apprentice galley steward in October.

Mr Win, one of the 19 trainees from the first batch of the Seafaring Cook Place-and-Train Programme, considered himself a very lucky man.

To have discovered his innate passion for both cooking and seafaring - by chance, and at the age of 35 - was something he could never have imagined, until a few months ago.

In April, Win came upon an advertisement of the Place-and-Train Programme on the website of e2i – the day before a job screening for suitable candidates would be held. Instinctively and with much curiosity, he called and registered himself into the programme. Since then, Win has never looked back.

"Now that I found my passion, I could possibly be spending my next 30 years at sea," he said, laughing. "This is going to be my career."

Interestingly, a few months back, Win was working as an administrative officer in his former company. The dramatic change in industry, in his words, was 'a risk I embraced with surprising gusto' as he had no culinary or seafaring experience.

"I've always kept my options open as I have not found my dream career. I didn't know such a job exist and it didn't cross my mind to look up for such a position," he said, while flipping through the piles of recipes given by the chefs at SHATEC.

"The training is not difficult, provided you work hard and try to learn fast," he said, adding, "Follow your heart, do what you really like."

Like some of the trainees who had neither culinary nor seafaring background, Win worked hard to turn his inadequacy to his advantage. "I asked more questions, I practiced harder and I ended up learning more," he explained.

The programme's multi-disciplinary classroom training has equipped the trainees with basic fire-fighting, first-aid and watch-keeping knowledge – all of which are indispensable for seafarers. Most importantly, it included an intensive theoretical and practical culinary curriculum at SHATEC, which taught the trainees to whip up a medley of Asian/Western cuisines and pastries.

Under the guidance and tutelage of experienced chefs, the 19 trainees were molded into skilful and versatile Seafaring Cook apprentices, who could now perform multiple tasks onboard vessels.

Win was also grateful for the assistance from his fellow trainees, who are culinary-trained. "They helped me a great deal and showed me the tricks of the trade. The chefs at SHATEC were also approachable and professional. They kept encouraging us to learn more and do even better. I'm glad that they shared many recipes with us. We learned a lot from them."

Win swiftly turned to look at Mr Maximillian Theodore, trainer of the Seacare Thrift Certified Cooks Training Course.

"Brother Max shared the most up-to-date information with us during the course. I enjoyed his lessons very much. They are very relevant and practical," Win said. "He shared the regulations in the MLC, the best equipments to use, gave us many recipes and advised us on the different scenarios to expect onboard the ship, such as different lifestyles and cultures."

"The programme prepared us well for a life and career at sea. I'm sure this journey will be an adventure for me," he said.

CELEBRATING MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL WITH SEAFARERS



SOS members sailing onboard vessels that called at Singapore in the month of September received a pleasant mooncake surprise when SOS Industrial Relations team dropped by for a visit.

In celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival, SOS Vice President Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar and IR Assistant Manager Mr Maximilian Theodore thoughtfully lugged along boxes of mooncakes during their routine ship visits.

“Though the boxes are heavy to carry up the gangway, the effort is worth it and we are happy to share the festive joy with our members. They are very happy to receive the mooncakes and gifts,” says Brother Mohamad.

Along with the mooncakes, SOS officials also distributed towels, magnetic wristbands and thumbdrives pre-loaded with the digital version of the MLC 2006 to help members familiarise with the regulations of the Convention.

As with all SOS ship visit procedures, the Union made sure all members had duly submitted their withdrawals for their SPF accounts. Those who had not were briefed on the most efficient process of SPF withdrawal. Time was spent connecting with crew members, allowing opportunity to share welfare concerns.





REWARDING THE HARD WORK OF OUR CHILDREN



“It takes a village to raise a child,” said Mr Steve Tan, director of NTUC Youth Development Unit and Executive Secretary of Young NTUC. Mr Tan addressed the audience at the SOS Study Grant Presentation Ceremony held at NTUC Centre on 20 September, where he was invited as the special guest. He highlighted that SOS has been actively working with the Labour Movement with schemes like U-Stretch and Back-to-School vouchers for school children. Rewarding children for their hard work would propel them to do even better and contribute to the development of our society in the future.





child's unique talents and supporting his or her educational pursuit. "We should practice a virtuous cycle of skills building, value creation, good rewards and improving living standards. Rewards are given to recognise achievements and help children reach their fullest potential," said Brother David.

This year's SOS Study Grant Presentation Ceremony saw 114 children of SOS members receiving grants worth a total of \$42,850. The grants were awarded to students in primary schools, secondary schools, polytechnics, ITE and universities. In addition, 12 students received the SOS Best Awards in recognition of their scholastic performances. SOS

President Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim and Mr Steve Tan presented the grants and awards, which were supported by NTUC U Care Education Co-Funding Scheme.

Prior to the presentation ceremony, U Care for Singapore – Celebrating SG50 and NTUC 'Nobody Enjoys Being Ordinary' (nEbo) booths were set up. Attendees penned their wishes for Singapore's 50th birthday next year and gained a better understanding of nEbo's programmes. p.L.a.Y! by Young NTUC also entertained the guests with their energetic performance.

I feel very happy and proud to receive the study grant and award. It is an honour to be recognised for my academic achievements. I hope this will motivate my brothers and friends to do well in their studies.

– **Mr Muhamad Efendy Jamhar**
Bachelor of Business Management (Hons.) International Business, Recipient of Best Award (University)





LEARNING JOURNEY TO TAIWAN POINTS TO EMPLOYABILITY



SOS Assistant Treasurer Mr Loh Suan Hin and staff Ms Mariana Amad embarked on a learning journey to Taiwan together with 67 other union representatives from various industries. Organised biennially by the NTUC Employment and Employability Committee (EEC), the learning journey overseas allowed participants to learn about employment issues faced by the host country and gain insights on initiatives implemented by their local organisations.

From 19 to 22 August, the delegation visited three organisations, namely White Wood House Foods Co. Ltd (bakery chain), Formosa Optical Technology Group (optical retail chain) and China Productivity Centre (management consultancy). The delegation saw how Taiwanese enterprises invest heavily in ways to boost profitability and workers' productivity. Other key takeaways from the trip included:

- Using business profits to implement further productivity enhancements, upgrade workers' skills, and offer appealing salary and benefits to attract and retain workers
- Utilising advanced machinery and technology to enhance productivity
- Using career progression models like NTUC's Progressive Wage Model (PWM) to motivate workers
- Recognising how the lack of government training subsidy can cause companies to compromise on training.

"It was an enriching trip which reinforces the need for unions, unionised companies and e2i to work together to ensure that Singapore workers have the skills to be employable," said Brother Loh.

ENGAGING LEADERS, CREATING POSITIVE IMPACT

With the central theme 'Engaging Leaders, Creating Positive Impact', 45 women representatives from NTUC, e2i and 23 unions came together to take stock of the past year's hard work and achievements, and plans for the coming year.

Among the participants were SOS ExCo Member Ms Shena Foo and Assistant Director Ms Sharon Li who deliberated on pertinent women's issues, community engagement activities and leadership development at the seminar held from 19 to 21 September in Johor Bahru. It was organised by the Women's Development Secretariat.



WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY, A TOP PRIORITY

“Every worker can return home safe and sound at the end of every work day!” the Workplace Safety Health (WHS) Committee emphasised during the learning journey in Malacca from 4 to 6 September.

At the workplan seminar, some 40 committee members and representatives addressed effective ways to ensure workplace safety for all workers. WHS Secretariat and NTUC Learning Hub presented the objectives and functions of the WHS committee and highlighted that all members have the power to investigate any accident, dangerous occurrence or occupational disease that happened in their workplace.

Together with fellow representatives, SOS Vice Presidents Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar and Mr Bon Sheun Ping, discussed the three main components for a holistic Workplace Safety and Health: Wellbeing (improving contentment and quality of life), Health (managing and preventing work-related and lifestyle diseases) and Safety (preventing injuries and death from accidents).

The participants also discussed various strategies for workplace safety procedures, such as risk management, certification and control measures.



One of the highlights was the NTUC Family Development Unit's presentation on Project Liquid Gold; a programme that advocates and raises awareness that returning to work should not be a key barrier to breastfeeding. In order to make breastfeeding more convenient for working mothers, NTUC U Family has been actively approaching office building owners and employers to provide nursing rooms spaces at the workplace.

Another noteworthy discussion centered on U Flex, a movement launched by NTUC Women Development Secretariat (WDS) that encourages employers and employees

to exercise flexibility at the workplace. U Flex ambassadors, who are women union leaders, help to convince employees to implement flexibility work arrangements for the benefit of working mothers.

Other highlights included discussion topics on International Women's Day Celebration 2015; SG50 and the plenary session with NTUC President and NTUC Women's Committee Advisor Ms Diana Chia, NTUC Vice President and NTUC Women's Committee Chairperson Ms Nora Kang, Director of NTUC Family Development Unit Ms Toh Hwee Tin and NTUC WDS Alignment Director Ms Sylvia Choo.

PIONEER GENERATION PACKAGE TALK FOR SOS MEMBERS



SOS held a Pioneer Generation Package Lunch Talk for members as part of the World Maritime Day 2014 Celebration on 29 September

“Singapore is set to be the world’s third fastest ageing nation and by 2030, one in five Singaporeans will be 65 years old and above,” said Ms Anna Koh Sock Meng, Industrial Relations Officer from NTUC IR Department, as she kicked off the ‘Pioneer Generation Package Talk’ held in conjunction with the World Maritime Day 2014 lunch celebration on 29 September.

Presenting the information to 80 SOS members, majority of whom are retired seamen aged 50 and above, Sister Anna highlighted that the combined efforts of the tripartite partners have resulted in a steady increase of the employment of individuals over the years, particularly those aged between 55 to 65 years old.



Some of our pioneer members who have received their PGP



SOS President Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim (left) presenting a token of appreciation for NTUC IRO and invited speaker Ms Anna Koh

She also touched on the eligibility criteria for re-employment, Employment Assistance Payment (EAP), as well as the objectives of NTUC ULive@Work – advocating for fair employment and equal opportunities for mature workers in Singapore. The response from the floor was especially lively when she gave an overview of the Pioneer Generation Package (PGP) and some of the entitlements for Singapore’s pioneer generation.

Throughout the talk, Sister Anna’s dynamic presence and light-hearted humour drew applause and cheers from the audience, who had a common interest in Singapore’s re-employment policies. Through, eye-catching graphics, videos and Q & A session, the members had a clearer picture of their benefits as PGP recipients, such as additional subsidies for outpatient care and Medisave top-ups. It was overall an enjoyable and memorable lunch talk presentation for our members.

BETTER SKILLS, BETTER JOBS, BETTER LIVES!

For four days, three SOS members attended an intensive Port Limit Steersman Course organised by STET Maritime to prepare themselves for the Port Limit Steersman License Examination. All three had one objective in mind – to upgrade their skills for a better life.

The course covered a series of lessons on:

- *Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea*
- *Life Saving and Fire Fighting Equipment*
- *Port Regulations Applicable to Harbour Craft*
- *Emergencies at Sea*
- *Boat Handling and Seamanship*
- *Anchorage and Aids to Navigation within the Port Limits*
- *Pollution Prevention*
- *Tidal Information in Port Limits.*



The steersman course is very relevant and it benefits seafarers like us who have years of sailing experience. Learning the skills of a steersman gives us something to fall back on if we happen to stop seafaring in the future. The trainer was professional and clear in his lectures and the coursework were detailed and informative. I would recommend former seafarers to take up this course.

– **Mr Mohamad Tahar Hussain, 51 years old**
(formerly a Bosun with AET)

I clock 12 hours of work per day as a night shift driver now. Even though the long working hours is exhausting, I have no choice because I need to support my family. I want to be a steersman, so I joined this course. I could understand the nautical terms used in the course and the different mechanical parts and operations of a boat. It is a great course for former seafarers who are looking to upgrade their skills.

– **Mr Haris Omar, 45 years old**
(formerly an AB with Wallenius Marine)

TRAINING UPDATE: SCHEDULE 2

ADDITIONAL COURSE	UPDATE OF TRAINING PROVIDER
Course Title : Training for Seafarers with Designated Security Duties STCW 2010 Code Section A-VI/6-2	Course Title : TBOSST Security Awareness - STCW 2010 Code Section A-VI/6-1 (Forms part of BOSST Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities - STCW 2010 Code Section A-VI/1-4, 6-1)
Training Provider <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STET Maritime Pte Ltd 2. STEi Institute Pte Ltd 3. Wavelink Maritime Institute Pte Ltd 4. Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) 5. Institute of Maritime Education and Training Pte Ltd 	

For the list of supported courses under Schedule 2 and 3 or more information about the SOS training grants for members, visit www.sosea.org.sg

SOS WELCOMES NEW STAFF TO THE FAMILY



In October, SOS welcomed two new staff who join the Union's Schemes Administration Division. Previously an auditor, Ms Tan Zhong Hui now serves as Accounts Manager, in charge of financial management and helping the team ensure that resources are utilised optimally while Mr Chang Kai Jie takes care of billing matters as the Schemes Administration Executive.

Why do you like the job and how is it a great fit for you?

Zhong Hui : I like the noble cause of SOS in ensuring seafarers' welfare and safety. I enjoy working with numbers and have a background in accountancy. I also have an interest in helping people in the community, hence the job matches me very well.

Kai Jie : I am very interested in embarking on a service and finance-related career. Being an Account and Finance graduate, I hope that I can utilise and apply my knowledge when performing my job duties.

How can you contribute to the union?

Zhong Hui : I hope to further enhance the union's operations by contributing ideas that can help to improve and streamline our processes.

Kai Jie : I hope to grow with the union and provide assistance across different departments.

What are your interests?

Zhong Hui : I love to read and I believe that knowledge acquired from reading can help me tackle challenges.

Kai Jie : I like to run marathons. Completing marathons gives me great satisfaction. It helps to strengthen my perseverance and keeps my body in optimal fitness. Hopefully, I will be able to complete my first full 42km marathon next year!





SEACAREFOCUS

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SEACARE LAUNCHES PIONEER APPRECIATION SCHEME



In a heartwarming move to honour and thank the 803 co-operative ordinary members, Seacare Co-operative Ltd launched a unique pioneer appreciation scheme at the Co-operative's Annual General Meeting. The announcement on 29 September 2014 was greeted with loud applause and approval from the floor.

"In conjunction with Seacare's 21st Anniversary next year, we want to appreciate the core group of loyal Ordinary Members for showing their unwavering support since the very early and uncertain days of the Co-operative. It is the right thing to do – to plough back to them their fruits of labour," said Seacare Executive Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan.

As a one-off gesture to show the Co-operative's gratitude, the Seacare Pioneer Ordinary Members who have been with the Co-operative for at least 18 years will be entitled to \$1.50 gift vouchers per share, made up of \$1 NTUC FairPrice voucher and \$0.50 CapitaVoucher. The total value of the gift vouchers will be rounded up to the nearest \$5.

"We wanted to give something tangible that most benefit the members and the feedback was, besides household products,



they would like to shop for lifestyle products as well. With over 2,000 stores across 18 CapitaMalls, our members will be spoilt for choice," Mr Leow pointed out.

This is not the first time that Seacare ordinary members were awarded with gift vouchers. At SOS 40th and Seacare's 17th joint anniversaries celebration, the Co-operative's ordinary members received \$1 NTUC FairPrice gift voucher per share. In the Seacare Pioneer Appreciation Scheme, there is a significant 50% increase from the last issuance.

As an illustration, Mr Leow highlighted that for an ordinary member holding 400 shares, \$600 worth of vouchers will be awarded to him in the Seacare Pioneer Appreciation Scheme. With the \$400 gift voucher he received as a loyalty incentive in 2011, the member will gain a total of \$1,000 worth of vouchers. This works out to \$50 or 12.5% incentive per year over a 20-year period.

"So don't sell your Seacare shares," Mr Leow hinted and the members responded with a strong "Aye Aye".



Illustrative Example (Ordinary Member Holding 400 Shares)		Value of Gift Voucher
Loyalty Incentive 2011 (1x)		\$400
Seacare Pioneer Appreciation Scheme 2015 (1.5x)		\$600
Total		\$1,000
Incentive per year (20yrs)		\$50 / 12.5 %



What a nice surprise that all the pioneer ordinary members will be getting this gift. I am thankful that SOS and Seacare have taken such good care of the members; and I am very proud of the progress of Seacare.

– **Mr Gomes John Joyceline**

The vouchers will come in very handy for a semi-retiree like me. As a Seacare member, I have nothing to lose knowing that the Co-operative will look out for the members' interest. The Seacare management are doing a very good job and making good investments. They always have my support.

– **Mr Chen Soh Har**



It is a wonderful gesture from Seacare. My family certainly appreciates having the vouchers. I was one of those who suggested issuing CapitaVouchers and I am glad that Seacare thought it was a good idea. This pair of jeans I am wearing is 11 years old. With the vouchers, I will be buying a new pair of jeans which will last me many years."

– **Mr Mohd Sharizal**



I am very happy and contented with the gift. I will be giving the vouchers to my mother and will be buying the necessities for my brother's baby.

– **Mr Samsudin Hamid**



SEACARE RECORDS STEADY AND SMOOTH PROGRESS

“The Seacare Group has been able to maintain a steady and smooth progress in all its operations. We have performed satisfactorily well through a sharpened focusing and a better harnessing of the strength of the various investments.”

Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Seacare Co-operative Executive Chairman, said this at the Co-operative’s 20th Annual General Meeting held at the Maritime Hall, Seacare Building.



In his report, he cited the advances and progress the Seacare Group made in the year of review. Below are some of the highlights:

- *Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd appointed by Ministry of Finance Vital as a contract agency for providing temporary contract for services, effecting temporary employee conversion to public officer and sourcing for public officers.*
- *Seacare i-Connecz Pte Ltd carried out renovation works to Club@52 which resulted in an increase in floor area and higher seating capacity.*
- *The opening of the newly refurbished Citin Seacare Hotel in March 2014 marking the full operation of the second hotel under the Seacare portfolio.*
- *Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd given the Cleaning Business License by the National Environment Agency in June 2014. The company is now serving 170 of childcare and eldercare centres that are operated by the PAP Community Foundation, NTUC First Campus and NTUC Eldercare.*
- *Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd is actively participating in international conferences and symposiums and marketing of maritime medical services for MLC compliance.*
- *Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd coordinated the first Seafaring Cook Place and Train Programme’ which was initiated by the SOS and will continue to expand its operations in the service of SOS.*
- *The 30% Seacare owned Connect Centre Pte Ltd, the first call centre operating within prison premises in South East Asia, expanded its operation with a new call centre with a capacity of 50 seats outside a prison.*
- *Watertech Pte Ltd, a Seacare associate company, expanded its scope of business to cover water, environmental engineering and clean technology. Its successful execution of the wastewater treatment plant project in Shandong province, China, gave the group an impetus to leap frog to even larger Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) projects.*

“Whatever progress our Seacare Group has made in the review year has been the result of the team effort of various persons in their respective capacities in our Group. For that, I am thankful,” Mr Leow said.



SEACARE MANPOWER PROVIDES STAFFING SERVICES TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Seacare Co-operative's human resource arm, Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd has recently been selected by Vital Shared Services to provide temporary manpower services to designated Ministries, Departments, Organs of State and Statutory Boards. The tender was offered based on several criteria such as price competitiveness, proposed methodology to provide the services and good track record of tenders and project team. Seacare Manpower Services will render services such as end-to-end recruitment and remuneration administration and conversion of temporary employee to public officer.

One of the biggest and most reputable suppliers of manpower in Singapore, Seacare Manpower Services started as a human resource agency for placement workers for both maritime and

non-maritime personnel in 1995. Throughout the years, Seacare Manpower Services has built and secured an extensive network of clientele, from Government schools, Ministry of Education, statutory boards, NTUC related companies, GLCs, Subordinate Court as well as private companies. Its pool of manpower ranges from professionals such as AV/IT technician, ICT Executive, Teacher's Aid, Certification Officer, and Membership Service Recruiters, to general workers such as Receptionists, Operation Support Officers and Event Helpers.

Going beyond providing recruitment solutions, Seacare Manpower Services is setting itself apart from the pack, as it continues to deliver cost savings and efficiency gains for all its clients.



Formed under the Ministry of Finance in 2006, Vital Shared Services aggregates common services within the public sector to leverage economies of scale, improve efficiency and effectiveness. It provides services to 40 government agencies and non-government organisations.

CELEBRATING MID-AUTUMN WITH THE SENIORS



Clapping their hands and tapping their feet to the rhythm of Chinese and Hokkien folk numbers, the senior residents of Jalan Kukoh were all smiles on the night of 5 September during the celebration of the Mid Autumn Festival at Club@52.

For these 100 seniors, some of whom are wheelchair-bound and living alone, a reunion with old friends and caring community partners under a moonlit night was especially nostalgic and memorable.

Jointly organised by SOS, Seacare Co-operative and Seacare Seafarers' Club (SSC), the annual event invited the residents to savour sumptuous buffet spreads, perform duets with celebrity folk singers and participate in lucky draw games. It was also joined by Jalan Kukoh Resident Committee Chairperson Mdm Yeo Gak Nai and her fellow committee members.



That evening, the organising staff had volunteered to serve the residents at their tables, which lined the club's alfresco dining area, under a canopy of colourful lanterns.

In between lively performances by veteran singers, the event's special guest, Capt Say Eng Sin, Chairman of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre, went around every table to shake hands with the seniors. Capt Say also presented each of them with a bag of mooncakes as a traditional symbol of 'abundance' and 'harmony'.

The residents participated in an attractive lucky draw, with prizes sponsored by Sheng Siong Supermarket. Among the lucky winners that night, an exuberant resident walked away with the first prize consisting \$200 worth of Sheng Siong Supermarket vouchers. It was a heart-warming and enjoyable evening for the residents.





EXPERIENCE THE NEW CLUB@52 AND CLUB777



Members and guests of the Seacare Seafarers' Club (SSC) and Seacare i-Connecz are full of praises for the newly revamped Club@52, which was unveiled in early September after a month-long renovation.

Club@52 now spots a futuristic-styled centerpiece partition wall by the bar counter, a new KTV system, a bigger interior and a custom-made recessed glass wine display, among its lists of newly installed features.



"I like the new look, it looks more spacious now and it can accommodate more guests," said Mr Chen, an SSC member and a regular patron of Club@52.

As part of the face-lift, Club@52 has shifted its main entrance next to its service lift to allow a more convenient and direct access to SSC's Jackpot room - which was recently renamed Club777.

Since the revamp, members have received their new membership cards that bear the new Club777 logo. The card will entitle them to a list of privileges as SSC members, such as

access to Club 777 with 10 Jackpot machines and discounts at Club@52 and The Seacare Hotel.

"The revamp of our lounge and the renaming of our Jackpot room have dramatically increased the awareness of SSC's facilities and the attractive privileges that we are providing. We will continue to create enjoyable clubbing and gaming experience for members," said SSC General Manager, Ms Jacquelyn Lam.

CONNECT CENTRE TURNS 10



It was a special night filled with exuberant joy as Connect Centre celebrated its 10th Anniversary bash in style at Club@52.

With open buffets, exciting stage games and celebration toasts that lasted throughout the night, the club exuded a warm and euphoric vibe that was infectious amongst the large turnout of investors, partners, business associates and clients. The celebration came to a high when Guest-of-Honour Mr Chua Chin Kiat, Chairman Mr Peter Boo and other directors went on stage for the cake-cutting ceremony.

The anniversary celebration on 12 September marked a major milestone in Connect Centre Pte Ltd's history, giving its team - its engine of growth and a large part of its success - every reason to let their hair down and bask in the spotlight. Every staff onboard has given his/her best and has never looked back since the young start-up defied convention to run its first call centre inside Changi Women's Prison. The business model had proven to be so successful that the centre replicated its setup in the Men's Prison.

For the man who conceived the idea, former Director of Prison Service Mr Chua Chin Kiat, the celebration was especially meaningful. "This is truly a remarkable development. The process of building a life after you leave prison can be a difficult

one. By creating a mirror industry concept for the inmates, we are providing them with an end-to-end platform in terms of their rehabilitation process and re-integration back into society."

"In the process, we managed to train cohorts of prisoners on communication skills over the telephone," he said, adding that if they had chosen not to pursue a career in this industry, "the training would still help them in whatever venture they undertake after their release, as communication skills are fundamental to any decent paying job."

The Yellow Ribbon project launched in 2004 to advocate the acceptance and support for ex-offenders in their reintegration into society had offered a diverse range of jobs for participating inmates. It was also an excellent starting point for Connect Centre.

There was, however, a small hurdle to navigate. While many felt it was socially innovative, the venture also seemed challenging with its core operations run largely by the inmates. The worry, nevertheless, would be short-lived - the concept worked, stood the test of time and exceeded the expectations of many.

Today, Connect Centre has trained over 1,000 inmates and offered them the opportunity to work as Contact Agents upon their release. Inspired and motivated to strive for excellence, many had proven to be worthy employees; taking heavier responsibilities as team leaders, managers and senior officers at several new external contact centres.

“The success of Connect Centre today is no small part due to the men and women who have been working for very hard with us both inside and outside the prison,” said Chief Executive Officer Mr Andrew Leo.

“They are the reasons why Connect Centre has been profitable and sustainable in the last 4 years despite having done some massive expansions at the same time,” he added, highlighting the company’s core values – teamwork, respect, integrity, flexibility, fairness and sincerity – as the foundation of its Culture of Excellence.

That night, Mr Leo also presented three Long Service Awards to staff in recognition of their hard work and enduring commitment to the company they called their ‘second home’. There could be more to come for these employees, as Connect Centre aims to expand its presence in the region with other socially-innovative projects, in the near future.

At present, the centre operates three 24-hour call centres in Singapore, serving a list of clients from the Transportation to Health industries. Headquartered in Henderson Industrial Park with training and staffing capacity of over 50, its centres are equipped with the latest call centre technology for delivering quality services with finesse.

Milestones

- 2004** Sets up the first contact centre within the Changi Women’s Prison
- 2008** Replicates the setup from the Women’s Prison into the Men’s Prison of Cluster B at Changi Prisons
- 2009** Opens its first external 24/7 call centre (10 seats).
- 2011** Opens a 24/7 telemarketing centre (8 seats)
- 2013** Opens its HQ and 24/7 Corporate Office in Henderson Road (50 seats)
- 2014** Reaches its 10-year mark
Staff comprises of 70% ex-offenders



Connect Centre’s Chairman, Mr Peter Boo gives a year end review and shares his vision for 2015.

How do you assess Connect Centre’s performance in year 2014? Did it end the year where it wanted to be?

Due to a weaker economy and a more competitive environment, we were not able to achieve as much as we would have hoped to in 2014. We will still be profitable despite having a much bigger headquarter operation compared to previous years. After a year of consolidation, we hope to continue our growth plan in the year 2015.

Having achieved these milestones, what is next for Connect Centre?

After expanding its capacity, Connect Centre will have to acquire more businesses by enlarging its customer base and improving its productivity. This can be achieved by providing more and better training for our people in order to deliver the best services to our customers. Connect Centre is also looking into new, higher value-added business opportunities and applying multi modes technologies. Some of the areas include Internet commerce, 24 Hours Response Centre for healthcare monitoring and back room support for SMEs. We are also looking into going regional in partnership with strategic partners in these regions.

Looking ahead, what do you see as some of the key challenges?

Key challenges will include:

1. Sustaining our social objective of supporting the Yellow Ribbon Project. That is to continue training and providing jobs to offenders in our prison call centers.
2. Developing a management team to go into the new businesses that are technology-based to meet the changing business environment.
3. Our ability to have strategic partners for the new growth areas.

What do you value most about Connect Centre employees?

We value the work and passion that the employees have shown. It is not just about their abilities to deliver product or service that is comparable to our competitors but also a measure of how far they have come since then. This is especially true for those who have joined us since their release from prison. Without any faith or passion, it would be impossible for them to come this far. We hope that we will continue in our effort to help the underprivileged in the years to come.



THREE WINS FOR CONNECT CENTRE AT CONTACT CENTRE AWARDS



Staff of Connect Centre Pte Ltd (CCPL) celebrated the fruits of their labour after bagging three awards at the prestigious Contact Centre Awards 2014, organised by the Contact Centre Association of Singapore (CCAS), on 19 September 2014.

The centre scooped the Gold and Silver awards, won by Ms Cheryl Loo Xue Le and Mr Mohamed Fariq Abbas, respectively in the 'Individual Category: Best Contact Centre Team Leader of the Year (Under 20 Seats).'

"It was a fantastic feeling to be acknowledged for the hard work and effort from our staff. They have gone the extra mile to make a difference and they definitely deserved the honour," said CEO Mr Andrew Leo.

According to CCAS, the judging process this year was enhanced by incorporating a mystery shopper for the Corporate categories and a skills assessment for the Manager, Team Leader and Professional Individual categories.

"We have nominated Cheryl because she shines in her professionalism and ability to adapt quickly and take the lead. She is our Operations Manager, having joined us for a couple of years and now heads the operations of our three centres," said Mr Leo.

"Martin (Mohamad Fariq) likewise, is also one of our Connect Centre's success stories. He has transited from being an agent with us in the Men's Prison to become our Team Leader, handling our Outbound Team. This is an exceptional

guy with inexhaustible zest and passion in everything he does. We are very proud of him."

Connect Centre also clinched the Bronze award (the only winning entry - nominated and presented by General Manager, Ms Angel Ng - for the 'Special Category: Best Contact Centre Employee Recruitment &/or Retention Programme'.

"We showed them how we trained inmates in the prison and putting them to work as our call centre agents.

"Our success lies in having a pool of ready-trained group of agents whom we can hire upon their release. We also presented to the judges some of our staff retention initiatives, such as weekly lunches, monthly outing and team building exercises," Mr Leo said beaming with pride.

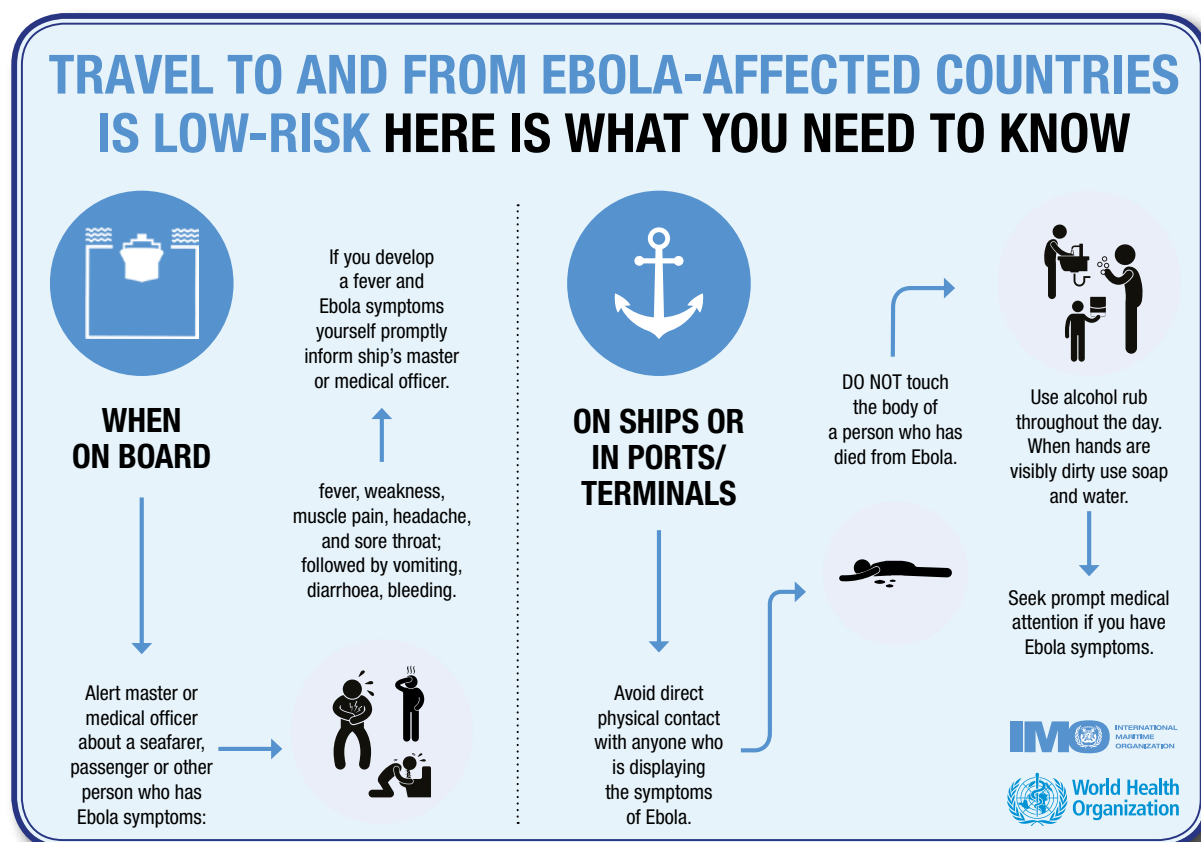
Connect Centre Chairman Mr Peter Boo and Directors Mr Patrick Tan, Ms Coni Tan, Ms Kathryn Ang and Mr Ong Zhiwei were present to cheer the award winners at the Awards Gala Dinner.

ADVICE TO SEAFARERS: EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE



In light of the recent outbreak of Ebola virus disease, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have issued an advice to all vessels:

- The Master should ensure that crew members are aware of the risks, how the virus can be spread and how to reduce the risk.
- The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) requirements on ensuring that unauthorised personnel do not board the vessel should be strictly enforced throughout the duration of the vessel being in port.
- The Master should give careful consideration to granting any shore leave whilst in impacted ports.
- The shipowner/operator should avoid making crew changes in the ports of an affected country.
- After departure the crew should be aware of the symptoms and report any occurring symptoms immediately to the person in charge of medical care.



What is Ebola virus disease?

Ebola virus is a severe, often fatal illness, with a death rate of up to 90%. It affects humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees).

How do people become infected with the virus?

Human-to-human transmission.

Direct contact with infected people:

- Broken skin or mucous membranes with the blood
- Bodily fluids or secretions (stool, urine, saliva, semen)

Contaminated Environment:

- Ebola patient's infectious fluids such as soiled clothing, bed linen or used needles.

Who is most at risk?

- health workers;
- family members or others in close contact with infected people;
- mourners who have direct contact with the bodies of the deceased as part of burial ceremonies.

What are the typical signs and symptoms of infection?

Fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. Followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding. The time interval from infection to onset of symptoms is from 2 to 21 days.

Ways to prevent infection and transmission

- Understand the nature of the disease, how it is transmitted, and how to prevent it from spreading further.
- Listen to and follow directives issued by Ministry of Health.
- If you suspect someone close to you or in your community of having Ebola virus disease, encourage and support them in seeking appropriate medical treatment in a health-care facility.

Source: WHO

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