

David Cockroft Biography

David Cockroft retired in 2013 as General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, after 20 years in the position. He holds an MA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) from St Catherine's College, Oxford. In 2006 he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science (Maritime Affairs) by the World Maritime University in Malmo, Sweden. In 1974 he began his professional life as an assistant in the Economic Department of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) during the Wilson/Callaghan governments. In 1978 he became head of the research department of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer staff (APEX), a white collar trade union which subsequently became part of the GMB general union. In 1979 he joined the international trade union movement as Secretary for Industrial Salaried Employees at the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees (FIET) in Geneva. This organisation subsequently merged with three other global union federations to become UNI.

In 1985 he returned to the UK as Research and Publications Department Secretary of the ITF. Shortly afterwards he was also appointed as Secretary of the ITF's Dockers', Civil Aviation and Tourism Services' sections. In 1991 he was appointed ITF Assistant General Secretary and, following the decision of the then General Secretary to retire at the age of 60, was appointed ITF Acting General Secretary in 1993. The following year he was elected ITF General Secretary at the 37th Congress in Geneva, and was re-elected at the New Delhi (1998), Vancouver (2002), Durban (2006) and Mexico City (2010) Congresses. In 2012 he announced to the ITF Executive Board that he would retire, like his predecessor, at the age of 60 and left his ITF position in May 2013. During his period of office, he also served as ex officio Secretary and Trustee of the Seafarers' Trust. He was and remains a Director of Seafarers' Rights International, an independent body set up with initial funding from the ITF Seafarers' Trust dedicated to pursuing the legal rights of seafarers.