



Press release nr. 11/2009

## **UIC, the worldwide association of railways, welcomes the proactive and ambitious initiatives launched by the USA in the field of environment and rail transport.**

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(Paris, 20.05.09) The USA has been a pioneer of railway technology since the very beginning of railway history, in particular with the construction of the first transcontinental railway connection linking the East and West coasts in 1869.

With the recent strategic plan for high speed proposing new corridors for world-class high speed rail and rebuilding existing rail lines making them incrementally faster, the USA is set to join the world high speed leaders.

The successful expansion of this modern rail technology first in Japan and Europe and more recently in Korea, China, Taiwan, and Turkey together with the presence of numerous projects at the top of the political agenda in Russia, Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Iran and India demonstrates the global nature of the development of the high speed rail industry and technology.

Some of the key figures are as follows: 6.689 miles (10.703 km) of high speed lines in operation, 8.847 miles (13.505 km) of high speed lines under construction and 10.987 miles (17.579) km of high speed lines planned (not including projects in the pipeline in the USA and India). Over the course of 2009 commercial operations are anticipated on 1.945 (3.131km) miles new lines (267 miles (430 km) have already been put into service). Statistics on high speed traffic in Europe show a 10 % growth rate (61.2 billion passenger miles) in 2008 compared to the previous year.

UIC welcomes this development highlighting the role of the railways as a vector of economic development and integral to sustainable development: rail travel is on average 3 to 10 times less CO<sub>2</sub> intensive than travel by road and air and more energy-efficient; railways support decongestion of urban areas and a better balance between the different modes of transport.

The development of high speed is one of the cornerstones of UIC's activities and is an area which is set to present real industrial, technological, financial and social challenges for railway companies and manufacturers. UIC provides support for its members in the development of high speed systems, in particular via its activities in the area of technical harmonisation and cooperation, and also by facilitating discussions and the sharing of experiences in all of these areas.

It is the sincere hope of *Jean-Pierre Loubinoux* - President of the international branch of the French Railways "SNCF International" before being appointed UIC Director General on 31 March and who spent five years living in the USA - that the international rail experience acquired by UIC over the last 80 years may contribute to the dawn of this new high speed era in the USA.

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**Note to the editor:**

The International Union of Railways (UIC) is the worldwide organisation for promotion of rail transport and cooperation across the world and comprises 200 members on all 5 continents. UIC, as a technical platform, provides its members with technical know-how and expertise (regulations and specifications in order to enhance technical cooperation) and ensures the coherence of the rail system to help meet the challenges of mobility and sustainable development.

Studies, up-to-date statistics and maps on high speed are available from the UIC High Speed Department, including the study on infrastructure charging and the impact of new high speed lines on regional and international traffic. Studies currently in progress include "High speed and the City", High speed territory management", "High speed and sustainable mobility" and "High speed under extreme weather conditions".

**For more information please**

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