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Successful second UIC NARA (North America Regional Assembly) Meeting in Montreal, at the kind invitation of VIA Rail Canada

Towards an Action Plan and a series of actions of common interest for the North American Railway Community

The Regional assembly was held in conjunction with the International Level Crossings Awareness Day (ILCAD)

(Paris, 5 June 2017) The International Union of Railways UIC successfully held its second meeting of the North America Regional Assembly (NARA), in Montreal, Canada, on June 1st, 2017 at the kind invitation of one of the members of the UIC North American Region, VIA Rail Canada. This Regional meeting was held in conjunction with the joint world event ILCAD, a UIC event organised for the 9th edition and aiming to attract attention to the need to develop awareness and prevention actions concerning the hot rail topic of level crossings.

This second Regional Assembly, following a first edition held last year in May in Washington at the World Bank HQ, brought together the six railways and railway authorities from the United States and Canada constituting the UIC North American region. The vocation of this kind of regional meetings is to develop the existence of a coherent group meeting around community values, exchanging best practices, to envisage collaborative actions and to promote rail in every part of the world, one of the fundamental roles of the UIC. The ambition is to establish a common vision for this continent and a series of actions of common interest.

Mr. Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President and CEO of VIA Rail Canada and Chairman of the UIC North American Region led the meeting and said: *“Developing a Regional Strategic Vision is a real opportunity in order to develop the range of mobility solutions, through the topics of the interoperability, the improvement of passenger equipment, the signalling and telecom system. We have to move away from an historic and monopolistic system to a more universal and shared public transport”*. He asked the Members of the region to work together in order to update the UIC Regional Strategic Vision and present it to the UIC General Assembly to be held in Paris on 6 December.

Representatives of North American Region members gave the meeting very interesting inputs from their company and held lively discussions with each other. VIA Rail Canada was represented by Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano and Marie-Anna Murat, Director of Communications; the Federal Railroad Administration / United States Department of Transportation was represented by Ms. Barbara Klein Barr, Director, International Programs Division as well as by Mr Robert Lauby, Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety, Chief Safety Officer; the California High Speed Rail Authority represented by Mr Thierry Prate; KPMG, on behalf of Jeff Morales, CEO, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) represented by Mr. Byron Comati, Vice President of Corporate Planning. The Railway Association of Canada (RAC), which became a UIC Member last December, was participating for the first time through the presence of Mr Michael Bourque, President and Chief Executive Officer and Gérald Gauthier, VP Communications. The Association of American Railroads apologised for not being present but provided other Members with an interesting input. All the Members presented their priorities and current strategies. All the presentations will be available in the near future on the North American region webpage of www.uic.org.

Mr Renato Mazzoncini, UIC Chairman, CEO of the Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane FSi, was very pleased to attend a north American region assembly for the first time by also participating in the meeting. He gave participants his priorities as Chairman: modal complementarity, sustainable development (the UIC Pledge, the Train to Paris action, the continuous involvement of UIC in Conferences of Parties COP, etc.), the promotion of corridors, the interregional collaboration and the digital input on railway business.

UIC's Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC, accompanied by several representatives of UIC, in the field of Safety-Level Crossings, Digital and Communication, highlighted several points by reminding to everyone the motto of UIC: "share-open-connect". He also acknowledged the presence of APTA, the American Public Transportation Association, represented by Mrs Petra Mollet, Vice-President Strategic and international Programs, as well as UITP, the International Union of Public Transport, with which UIC is trying to develop common actions and vision of modal complementarity. UITP was represented by Andrew Bata, Regional Manager for North America.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, on the need to update the Strategic Regional Vision for North America, said: *"We started to build a Strategic Vision two years ago. We then decided to wait a little bit to have more fresh inputs and today we need to establish an Action Plan to share a common vision and reach the steps further together"*. He started by presenting one of the current major projects of UIC in the field of telecommunications FRMCS (Future Railway Mobile Communication System) and he called on the UIC North American members to join this project.

He focused also on the challenges of sustainable transportation, including weather resilience, during which he presented the projects RailAdapt (designed to assist UIC members by providing a

strategic framework to help rail to adapt, with guidance on prioritising issues, locating existing knowledge and sourcing funding for their developing needs) and Herbie (herbicides using in the railway context, this project aims at developing guidelines for responsible use of herbicides) and encouraged UIC members to participate in the project. On the other hand, he reminded the audience that in the USA, the transport sector was responsible for emitting 5.2 billion tCO₂ (35% of total CO₂ emissions) in 2013, representing the largest source of CO₂ emissions of the country. The USA transport sector has the largest contribution to its national total in terms of CO₂ emissions of the countries and regions examined in the UIC-IEA Handbook. 2.2% of transport CO₂ emissions were caused by the rail sector (about 40 million tCO₂). 0.1% of passenger-km and 33% of goods (in tonne-km) were transported by rail in 2013. We can add concerning this USA case study that between 1975 and 2013, energy consumption per passenger-km decreased by 32% and energy consumption per freight tonne-km decreased by 58%.

He also presented the global challenge of the international corridors, and among others the challenge of OBOR (China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative is a strong driver for the growth of existing and new Eurasian rail routes) reiterating that it is supposed to boost the economy of more than 60 countries. These countries represent 70% of the global population, more than half of global GDP and 24% of global trade. China has invested over \$100 billion and more than 100 countries have signed on with free trade, collaboration agreements etc. According to the World Economic Forum, when completed, OBOR could result in the creation of 70,000 new jobs vastly improving the economy. Corridors are a global topic in a worldwide economy. For this reason, UIC has made corridor developments one of its priorities for freight at European level as well as at regional level (Asia and Middle East). UIC's key partnerships with CCTT, CIT, OTIF, UNECE, ADB, EAU are designed to support this development and current priorities focus on efficiency gains in operations, fostering broader differentiation in services and improving coordination of traffic flows. He also mentioned the results to come in a near future of the study asked by UIC to Roland Berger on corridors.

Isabelle Fonverne, UIC Senior Advisor, Safety and Interoperability, presented the UIC North American members some highlights concerning the Safety activities at UIC: the UIC Safety Unit, the System Safety Management Group (a common UIC/CER group). She also gave some information about the safety culture and the Human Factors issue managed at UIC. She informed also Members of the participation of UIC in a UN ECE Group of Experts on safety at level crossings. Concerning Safety at the rail/road interface, she also mentioned the participation of UIC in a European Commission project as "SAFER Level Crossing by integrating and optimising road-rail infrastructure management and design" (SAFER-LC).

Finally, she presented the UIC initiative ILCAD, the International Level Crossing Awareness Day, organised this year on 2 June in Montreal, in close connection with the UIC Regional Assembly and with the support of the Railway Association of Canada (RAC). Each year, the ILCAD partners

choose a different section of the public to target during their awareness campaign. As everywhere on the roads, but at this particular interface between the road and the rail, called level crossings, human error is the main factor that usually leads to an incident or an accident. Even if severe collisions happen less often than on the roads, collisions at level crossings are mostly very impressive and fatal. They may have severe consequences on the road vehicle driver involved but also on the transported persons and sometimes on the railway staff or railway customers. Those collisions have also financial, societal consequences: traffic disruption, damages on vehicles, costs to the society when someone is severely injured or killed (loss of a beloved person, colleague...). These human errors may be caused deliberately or by distraction caused by the use of electronic devices (i-phones, video games, headphones, GPS, ...) but also because of fatigue, drugs, alcohol. Since the collisions caused by distraction are increasing also at level crossings in many countries around the globe ILCAD organisers decided this year to raise awareness again among the public on "Distraction". More information on this worldwide campaign, involving this year more than 40 countries, can be found here: <http://www.ilcad.org/ILCAD-2017.html>

Francis Bedel, UIC CDO, underlined the fact that Digital has an impact on our business, with a new disruptive thinking to integrate progressively. He reminded the audience of the necessary connection to make between UIC, railway companies, and the digital eco-system, with the need, within the UIC Digital Platform, to Discover-Design-Deliver new pragmatic solutions, thanks to the Collection-control-correction-connection-creativity related to the data, which has to be seen as the "new oil". He also gave a report on the recent 1st UIC Digital Transformation Tour and a full immersion in Digital eco-system of the Silicon Valley, in the presence of around 20 UIC members. Among the main outputs and opportunities, UIC North American Members were informed of UIC's wish to renew this initiative, to reinforce the connection with the digital eco-system. More information on these potentialities will be communicated further. Concerning this issue, Jean-Pierre Loubinoux encouraged the North American Region to join the UIC Digital Platform and to bring their Vision.

Marie Plaud, in charge of the UIC Communications activities and coordinating the relations with North American members, mentioned that UIC was their catalyst, that UIC was "listening to them". She informed Members that UIC was ready to help to coordinate the preparation of an updated version of the Strategic Version in the months to come. She also informed Members that UIC has a range of communication tools allowing them to better cooperate. She also took the opportunity to present two concrete examples of cooperation: the current preparation of the UIC Book "Railway stations around the world" (VIA Rail and Amtrak are participating in this project) as well as the charity campaign UIC-USIC-Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) emphasising one of the UIC values, Solidarity, and set up in the context of the series of Memoranda of Understanding signed recently by UIC with other organisations. She encouraged Members to relay this information to their contacts and informed them of the possibility to be a sponsor of this campaign. To finish she invited North American members to join physically or virtually the re launch of the

Communications Club. UIC will organise a first meeting in Lisbon on 27 November, in connection with the International Rail Festival CinéRail.

More information on the North American Members Community will be available on the UIC website in the near future.

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