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UIC Middle-East Seminar on Infrastructure Maintenance and Asset Management held in Amman, Jordan, at the invitation of Aqaba Railway Corporation

Activities of the UIC Middle-East Region (RAME) focus on the international promotion of railway projects in the region and the development of regional cooperation on technical and operational issues with UIC support

(Paris / Amman, 22 September 2010). The UIC Seminar on 'Infrastructure Maintenance and Asset Management' organised for the Middle-East railways was successfully held on 19-20 September in Amman, Jordan, at the kind invitation of Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC) and with the participation of 60 managers, experts, researchers, academics from Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Italy as well as UIC representatives. This seminar was part of the 2010 / 2011 Action Plan for the UIC Regional Assembly for Middle-East (RAME) approved by the Director Generals of UIC member railways from this region.

The seminar was opened by *Eng. Hussein Krishan*, President of Aqaba Railway Corporation ARC and host of the session. In his opening address HE the Minister of Transport of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, *Mr. Alaa A. Batayneh*, underlined the importance of the railway system for the development of the Middle-East region and the confidence of his country in the future of railways, illustrated by the ambitious plan of creating 950 kilometres of new lines in Jordan. Actually this project will make Jordan to a major transit –corridor- country in the international transport system linking Europe, Middle-East, Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Asia. UIC was represented in the opening by *Mr Paul Véron*, Director, UIC Coordinator for the Middle-East Region.

The technical programme of this seminar had been prepared within the UIC Rail System Department in coordination with the UIC Regional (RAME) Office based in Tehran and managed by Iranian railways.

Technical content

After a presentation of UIC technical activities coordinated by the UIC Rail System Forum and Department in the field of Infrastructure, following themes were addressed by UIC representatives (Mr *Teodor Gradinariu*, Senior Technical Adviser, Mr. *Björn Paulsson*, Senior Technical Adviser and Dr. *Anders Ekberg*, Chalmers University Sweden / UIC (Innotrack Project) and discussed with participants:

- *Asset Management: Asset Management Strategy, the PA 55 Standard for Asset Management, Locating Assets,*
- *Innotrack, a summary of results, Optimum track geometry durability, Under sleeper pads, under ballast mats,*

- *Inspection, Measurement, Monitoring,*
- *Bridges and Structures, Sustainable bridges, Masonry arch bridges (inspection, assessment, rehabilitation, strengthening),*

-Benchmarking, Line comparison, Regional lines and high capacity areas, Lasting Infrastructure Cost Benchmarking (LICB).

Mr Mohamad Satei, from NirooRail, Iran, presented activities and studies on behalf of Iranian railways RAI.

During the seminar, the representative of the Ministry of Transport of Jordan made a more detailed of the Jordanian Rail Project.

In the seminar closing session, the railways from the Middle-East Region were invited to participate to technical projects and activities coordinated by UIC in particular under the umbrella of the Rail System Forum as far as these activities are relevant to Middle-East. Participating (Middle-East) railways will have access to a sum of information on UIC works and results on all issues mentioned above (dissemination via UIC website, CDs, Guidelines, presentation brochures). They then will decide which specific aspects should be studied more in-depth because of specific conditions in the Middle-East (sand, extreme temperatures, etc.). A project will be submitted by Jordanian Railways at a next meeting of the UIC Regional Assembly for Middle-East.

All participants and UIC warmly thanked the Aqaba Railway Corporation for their hospitality and the excellent organisation of this regional UIC seminar in Amman.

CONTACTS:

Paul Veron
Director
UIC Coordinator for the Middle-East
Email: veron@uic.org

Liesbeth de Jong
UIC Media Relations
Tel.: + 33 1 44 49 20 53
Email: dejong@uic.org