



**PRESS RELEASE nr. 28 /2012**

### **3rd Global Rail Freight Conference organised by UIC and ONCF successfully held in Tangier, Morocco**

*ONCF and UIC Director-Generals draw main conclusions and sign the “Declaration of Tangier”*

(Paris, 25 October 2012) The third edition of the UIC Global Rail Freight Conference (GRFC), jointly organised by UIC and the Moroccan Railways (ONCF), under the High Patronage of The King of Morocco Mohammed VI, on 17-19 October in Tangier, was a great success. Tangier, located at the crossroads of cultures but also aware of its attractive geostrategic position, gave 250 delegates from over 30 countries the opportunity to discuss “Railway transport – what role does it play in the development of global logistics?”

The Global Rail Freight Conference (GRFC) is a key milestone in UIC’s calendar of freight events. The conference, which takes place every other year, is a key opportunity for addressing all strategic issues of freight development, focusing on management, products and international corridors. It aims to develop and promote exchanges and partnerships between all major stakeholders involved such as top executives and decision makers, rail and logistics professionals, customers, influential politicians and regulators, and institutions from across the globe. Over two days, delegates and participants, including all stakeholders, not just from the railways but all those involved in the global logistics system such as logistics operators, maritime transport, ports, intermodal operators, the supply industry, forwarders, and commercial intermediaries – not forgetting all the authorities such as customs and international institutions which address transport issues, discussed key themes such as international freight corridors, intermodality between maritime and rail transport, technological innovations for logistics and Morocco: a bridge between Europe and Africa?, etc. Optimising the supply chain through the introduction of new technologies was also a topic addressed in depth.

Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, Director-General of ONCF and Chairman of the UIC African Region, particularly stressed that “the integration of rail freight traffic in the global logistics system has become a priority for companies operating in this area, especially given the changes and new economic order which is characterised by more competition, more performance and more innovation, particularly in terms of action and quality of services.”

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The word “integration” was one of the key words that led discussions among participants. In this regard, all participants agreed that it was essential to give a greater role to the railways, including freight, integrating in the supply chain, if possible very early on in the logistics chain, with the need to bring together all stakeholders to serve and benefit the final customer, based on service excellence, technical and human flexibility, and at the best cost.

The closing ceremony on 19 October was co-chaired by Mohamed Rabie Khlie and Jean-Pierre Loubinoux.

**Among the findings that have appeared most important to address, we can mention:**

- Growth in transport demand
- Low share of rail in inter-continental segment: “there are many inherent expectations...and there is hope if we remove the barriers” said Mr Khlie.
- Positive expectations of logistics stakeholders for rail freight to have an enhanced role
- Demonstration of “success stories” of supply chains integrating rail “We trade on very specific cases in such conferences” said Mr Loubinoux
- Need for better consideration of customer requirements: consistency, reliability, flexibility.
- “It is not only necessary to develop technical solutions but also commercial ones. For freight in general, the perception is still to change among clients seeking the most appropriate solution” said Mr Khlie.

**Ultimately, rail freight: a strong link or a weak link in supply chains?**

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, on behalf of all the participants in the conference is convinced that rail freight is a strong link with many advantages:

- Proven value over long distance
- Strong ability to transport large volumes
- Benefits of sustainable development

But rail freight can also be a weak link if:

- The benefit is limited to single rail traction
- There is lack of synchronisation between information flows and real transport flows
- There are gaps in modal and non-modal interoperability

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux added that “rather than setting freight apart from other modes of transport, the solution is to integrate it into others.”

To strengthen the role of rail in the global supply chain, participants agreed on the fact that several levers would help achieve this such as:

- Intermodal integration and interoperability worldwide
- Training
- Flexibility, changes in operating rules, removing rigidities (regulations, etc. ..)
- Technological innovations of today and tomorrow

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Jean-Pierre Loubinoux mentioned several times the need to move towards global interoperability. "This word carries all the actions managed by UIC for the last 90 years. We have entered into an intermodal complementarity phase of the 21st century. In 2013, the first link will be opened by Turkish Railways between Asia and Europe (Marmara Project). All these are no longer dreams, we progress in this reality that is being realised" he said.

To conclude this conference Jean-Pierre Loubinoux and Mohamed Rabie Khlie signed a final Declaration grouping together all the expectations and needs of the freight stakeholders:

The TANGIER DECLARATION is attached to this press release.

**For further information please contact:** [com@uic.org](mailto:com@uic.org)



## 3<sup>rd</sup> GRFC Tangier Declaration

Participants in the third edition of the Global Rail Freight Conference (GRFC) on rail freight and logistics held in Tangier, who seek to reinvigorate and rejuvenate 21st century rail transport, and following the developments that have characterised the sector since the session in Delhi in 2007 and Saint Petersburg in 2010,

### Have ascertained:

- Growth in transport demand despite the crisis affecting most markets with medium-term trends, which are positive for global freight transport
- Rail's small market share in inter-continental trade
- The positive expectations of logistics stakeholders for rail to have an enhanced role
- The record of success stories where rail has been integrated into logistics chains
- The need to take customer requirements more fully into account in terms of consistency, reliability and flexibility

### Are persuaded that:

- Rail freight plays a strong link in logistics chains through its proven value over long distances, its capacity to deal with large transport volumes and its undeniable advantages in terms of sustainable development
- Efforts are still needed to overcome the obstacles related to the limited provision for rail traction, the lack of coordination between information flows and real transport flows, and the low levels of modal and extra-modal interoperability

### Call for:

- Rail's role in the global logistics chain to be strengthened, by working towards developing integration and intermodal interoperability worldwide, training and flexibility, changes in operating rules and removing rigidities, as well as investing in technological innovations to acquire a more reliable and viable railway logistics system, whose key components are quality, safety, security and cost reduction
- The development of major inter-regional and inter-continental corridors to achieve a better balance in transport modes
- Interoperability to be strengthened through three key dimensions: technical compatibility between the various national and regional railway systems, procedures to be simplified and partnership complementarity between the various stakeholders in the logistics chain to be integrated in customer services
- Information-sharing, research and technological innovation to be strengthened, and training in a wide range of railway professions and logistics to be given to young generations of international railway staff

Tangier, 19 October 2012

**Mohamed Rabie Khlie**

**Director-General of ONCF**

**Chairman of UIC Africa Region**

**Jean-Pierre Loubinoux**

**Director-General of UIC**