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UIC makes the case for rail at COP 17 as a low-carbon solution for transport

UIC is hosting a side event "Are roads the only option? Public transport in emerging economies" as the official representative of the global railway sector to the United Nations.

(Durban/Paris 29 November 2011) As the world's scientific and diplomatic community gather from 28 November to 9 December for the UN Conference of Parties (COP17) on Climate Change in Durban, the latest round of climate change negotiations, the International Union of Railways (UIC) is making the case that railways offer a low-carbon transport solution for the future.

UIC is hosting a side event as the official representative of the global railway sector to the United Nations. The side event, entitled "Are roads the only option? Public transport in emerging economies", will be held in cooperation with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Japanese Institution for Transport Policy Studies (ITPS), on Wednesday 30 November.

UIC, represented by Alexander Veitch, Head of the Sustainable Development Unit, will highlight case studies from emerging economies such as Turkey, Morocco, Ethiopia, or Vietnam, where rail projects are being developed as a low-carbon solution to transport problems.

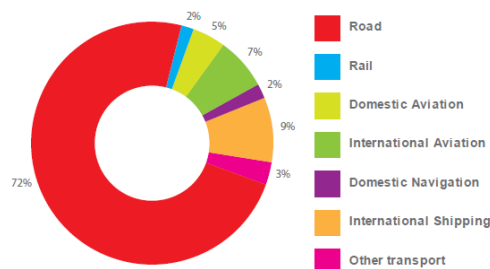
Contributors from UNEP and ITPS will look at ways in which reductions in CO₂ emissions from the transport sector as a whole can be made, by using a combination of reducing the need to travel, through modal shift, and through the use of more energy-efficient technologies.

Alexander Veitch said: "It is crucial for UIC to make the case for rail at the COP17 meetings. Transport is already the biggest user of fossil fuels worldwide, and investment in energy efficient rail systems can help countries to provide affordable public transport while reducing their carbon emissions."

Almost 20% of the world's total delivered energy is used in the transportation sector, where liquid fuels are the dominant source.

According to 2010 figures of the International Energy Agency, transportation alone accounts for more than 50% of world consumption of liquid fuels, and this share is forecast to increase to over 60% by 2035 over time.

Transport CO₂ emissions 2008



Within the transport sector, energy consumption and therefore CO₂ emissions are dominated by road, followed by aviation and shipping. Rail accounts only for 2% of CO₂ emissions within the transport sector.

In a related initiative, the South African environmental agency Indalo Yethu, supported by the South Africa Department of Environmental Affairs, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa and the German Embassy have joined forces to create a “Climate Train” in the spirit of UIC’s “Climate Express”, a special train from Brussels to Copenhagen for COP 15.

The “Climate Train” has arrived in Durban after criss-crossing through South Africa raising awareness about climate change in 17 different local communities. It can be found at Durban Station for the duration of COP 17, where it will provide information and resources about climate change.

For more information on the UIC Side Event please see the UNFCCC schedule:
http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/reports/events_list.html?session_id=COP17/CMP7

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Note to the Editor:

About UIC – International Union of Railways

UIC, the international railway association which celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2012, counts 200 members across 5 continents (railway companies, infrastructure managers, rail-related transport operators, etc.). UIC’s members represent 1 million kilometres of lines, 2,800 billion passenger-km, 9,500 billion tonne-km, and a workforce of 6.7 million people.

UIC’s chief task is to promote railway transport around the world and help its members to meet all the current and future challenges of mobility and sustainable development.

UIC’s cooperative undertakings aim to boost the railway system’s competitiveness and interoperability, particularly on an international scale. The 700 or so leaflets which make up the “UIC Code” constitute a technical benchmark across the globe. UIC also comprises 8 forums and cooperation platforms, 6 regional assemblies, 30 study bodies coordinating circa 180 railway projects, world congresses, conferences and information sessions organised each year, as well as a host of services offered to its members.

www.uic.org

UIC Activities in the field of Environment

<http://www.railway-sustainability.org>

UIC has a strong tradition of working on environmental and sustainability issues, both in helping members to improve their sustainability performance, and communicating on a sector level to promote the development of sustainable transport systems. It manages research projects on issues including improving energy

efficiency, reducing air pollution and CO₂, reducing railway noise as well as external costs. UIC is also leading the rail sector's work in adapting rail infrastructure to the consequences of climate change.

UIC also develops indicators and communications tools to promote the environmental advantages of the railways, such as the online carbon footprint tools for passenger traffic www.ecopassenger.org and for freight: www.ecotransit.org.

UIC has had consultative status to the United Nations (ECOSOC) since 1949 and has observer status at the UNFCCC. This gives UIC among others the possibility to actively and regularly participate among others in the Commission on Sustainable Development, UNFCCC COP meetings and UN regional conferences (UNECE, UNESCAP, and UN-ESCWA).

One of the main achievements has been the launch of the UIC Declaration on Sustainable Mobility & Transport, which lists the most important sustainable development goals for the global railway sector. By signing it, presidents of member railways are making a public commitment to working toward these objectives and providing progress reports. The Declaration provides UIC members with a credible tool for external communication towards key stakeholders in order to present themselves as responsible, forward-looking and innovative business leaders – as well as a tool for internal awareness-raising and for continuous improvements of the rail sectors' sustainability performance.

The Declaration is supported by United Nations Global Compact and is in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).