



Sustainability demonstrated as the future for the railways at the 10th UIC Environment & Sustainability conference in London “the ticket to the sustainable journey”

Around 200 participants from 35 countries, including Canada, Korea and Japan, were brought together to share views on how the railway sector continuously improve its lead as a green, environmentally-friendly and sustainable form of transport.

(Paris, 15 September 2008). The 10th International Union of Railways (UIC) Environment & Sustainability conference was organised in conjunction with the British Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) on 11 and 12 September at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in London.

Luc Aliadière, UIC Chief Executive, stated in the opening session that ‘the increase of oil and energy prices and the urge to fight climate change are pushing the economies toward more efficient solutions and rail transport can provide an important solution among them. Rail transport plays a key role to significantly reduce the global greenhouse emissions from the transport sector whilst also continuing reducing its own impact.’

For UIC and its member railways, environment and sustainability are not new issues. The first international rail environment expert group was established in 1991 and the first UIC environmental conference took place in Paris in 1994. This 10th edition highlighted what the rail sector has achieved since then and that the high ambitions, range of activities and continuous progresses are today more actual than ever.

The conference gave good examples on what the railways are doing new within the field of sustainability. *Vipin Sharma*, UIC Deputy Chief Executive lined out the first version of the UIC Sustainability Charter, emphasizing the importance of developing the sustainability railway business case as top priority for railways leaders. *Jessica Ahrens* from Deutsche Bahn AG presented the UIC sustainability indicators project – developed to support the rail sustainability performance and to be a tool for support making good transport choices and thus facilitate a behaviour change in the transport sector. From UIC, *Raimondo Orsini* put forward the ongoing initiatives to communicate around the sustainability performance of railways and the importance of taking these further and *Enno Wiebe* highlighted a selection of ‘green’ rail research projects which were exposed at the World Rail Research Congress in Seoul earlier this year. Parallel workshops were treating different issues focusing on technical and behavior change such as energy efficiency, emissions, noise, soil pollution and sustainable mobility.

The first UIC Sustainability Award was introduced at this 10th edition of the conference to make visible and to reward the big efforts made within UIC member railways to continuously improve their sustainability performance. An independent jury with members from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Environment Agency (EEA) and Macroplan Consulting had awarded four projects.

The winners of the UIC Sustainability Award 2008 are:

- 1st prize: SNCB Group for their internal awareness raising campaign to save energy and increase energy efficiency
- 2nd prize: DSB and the 'Reducing the energy consumption for Light Emitting Diodes'-project
- 3rd prize: SJ and the 'Scrapping of old carriages in an eco-friendly way'-project.

The jury also awarded the 'UK rail carbon trajectory' from the Department for Transport Rail Systems, UK, with the Special Prize of the Jury (separate press release on the UIC Sustainability Award 2008).

The external speakers gave forceful messages to the audience. *Hugh Sumner* from the Olympic Delivery Authority spoke about the Carbon Management strategy for the 2012 London Olympic Games. London has put sustainability at the heart of its bid framed by the concept of 'Towards a One Planet Olympics'. One of the commitments is to make the Olympic Games a Public Transport Game – and catalyst for change - by showcasing sustainable forms of transport, including a strong emphasis on rail transport which also facilitates a long term modal shift to rail and public transport.

Michael Cramer, Member of European Parliament (Green Party), stressed that a modal shift from road to rail will exploit the energy efficiency of rail and relieves an enormous emissions reduction potential for the transport sector as a whole. *Heiko Kunst*, Directorate-General Energy and transport, gave an outline of what European policies plan to do to achieve a modal shift and more sustainable transportation.

Martina Otto from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) pointed out the lack of a total sector approach in policies to reduce emissions from the transport sector with its high oil dependency - 95% of its GHG emissions are caused by oil products. It is a contradiction that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) ignores the mitigation potential of the transport sector in its outline of 'Mitigation Potentials – by sectors and regions'. She added that this is a big opportunity to reinvent 'sustainable mobility' with rail as the backbone.

Peder Jensen from the European Environment Agency (EEA), emphasized this message by pointing out that the climate is now right for a change in the transport sector, stressing the need for new transport policies supporting behaviour change for all transport users. He mentioned the UIC internet tools with methodology acknowledged by the EEA, EcoPassenger and EcoTransIT as good examples on how to support this.

Tony Mercado from the UK Department for Transport and *Cornelia Baccega-Findeisen* from the French Ministry for Transport gave outlines of the British and French approaches to strengthen the role of rail transport in sustainable transport systems.

The conference brought together almost 200 delegates from 35 countries, including Canada, Japan and Korea. National and European policy-makers, together with experts from the fields of environment and sustainability from intergovernmental institutions such as United Nations (UNEP), the European Environment Agency, rail sector organisations such as CER, EIM, UNIFE and UITP and UIC member railways shared experiences, good practise, latest developments on management and research, new ideas and visions on how to continuously improve the environmental and sustainability performance of the rail sector.

More information about the conference and its sponsors, including the presentations, is available from the dedicated website: www.uic-environment.org.

For further information please contact:

Liesbeth de Jong
UIC Press Relations
dejong@uic.asso.fr

Henning Schwarz
UIC Environment & Sustainability team
schwartz@uic.asso.fr