



## **4th meeting of UIC Regional Assembly 'Middle East' (RAME) held in Istanbul at invitation of Turkish Railways TCDD**

*The UIC "Vision 2025 – Strategy for the development of Middle East railways" will be presented to decisions makers from the region at a high-level workshop in Turkey in the first half of 2009.*

*UIC Regional Assembly 'Middle-East' approves Action Plan 2009 / 2010 focused on promoting new business opportunities, financing railways development, new partnerships with shipping lines and ports, projects in the fields of rail infrastructure maintenance and railway safety management, use of smart technologies, developing industrial competence and educational programmes for ME railways.*

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(Istanbul / Paris, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008). The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the *UIC Regional Assembly Middle East (RAME)* took place on 14<sup>th</sup> October in Istanbul at the invitation of Turkish National Railways TCDD. This meeting was held in synergy with the 2<sup>nd</sup> *International Railway Symposium & Exhibition "IRS Turkey"* (15-17 October) jointly organised by TCDD, the Turkish Ministry of Transport and UIC -under the high patronage of the European Investment Bank (EIB)- together with the *UIC Global Conference on Traffic Management & Train Control Systems* (16-17 October).

UIC Assembly 'Middle East' is chaired by *Mr Süleyman Karaman*, President and CEO of TCDD and vice-chaired by *Dr. Hassan Ziari*, Vice Minister of Transportation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and President of RAI. The meeting was held in presence of UIC Chairman, *Mr Kalyan Coomar Jena* (Chairman of the Board, Indian Railways), UIC being also represented by: *Mrs Beatrice Dunogué-Gaffié*, Provisional Administrator, *Luc Aliadière*, Chief Executive, *Vipin Sharma*, Deputy Chief Executive and responsible for UIC's Global dimension and *Paul Véron*, Director, coordinator for the Middle East region.

Members of 'UIC Middle East' include beside TCDD and RAI, Railway CEOs from Irak (IRR), Jordan (ARC, Aqaba), Saudi Arabia (SRO), Syria (CFS and CFH Hedjaz Railway) and a new member Niroo Rail Company from Iran.

The first part of the meeting was dedicated to an intensive debate on UIC governance issues resulting from the recently completed audit process. Members from the region expressed their opinion and supported the adopted vision of a global UIC wherein regional assemblies will play an increasing important role in defining the global strategy for UIC as well as in planning, developing and monitoring regional action plans. And the related progress.

Another important achievement of the UIC RAME is the approval of the "*Vision 2025 – Strategy for the development of Middle East railways*". This strategic document has been prepared in close cooperation with all members from the region. It integrates national railways' development plans and represents a useful basis for the further planning of

transport links and partnerships with all important actors in the region. Next steps will be an intensive communications activity to promote this “*Vision 2025 and Strategy*” towards decision makers and the development of new cooperation links on one hand with railways from neighbouring regions (as South East Europe, Asia and other parts of Middle East) and on the other hand with key economic actors and business partners (such as transport operators, shipping lines and ports). A high level workshop to promote the “Vision 2025” will be organised in Turkey in the first half of 2009.

National railways development plans were presented by CEOs of RAI (Iran), ARC (Jordan), TCDD (Turkey)

The Regional Assembly ‘Middle East’ reviewed the progresses in the implementation of the *Action Plan 2008 / 2009* and approved the *2009 / 2010 Action Plan* together with the budget proposed for regional activities. Main focuses of this Action Plan are on

- *in the field of infrastructure a project “Track Maintenance within an effective Asset Management Strategy – Tailor made proposal for the Middle East region” (kick-off workshop in 2009),*
- *in the field of Railway Safety, a cooperation programme for ME railways including the elaboration of a Safety Database and a methodology for developing a Safety Management System (SMS) (this project will be handled as part of the courses and training programmes of the International Railway Academy based in Tehran),*
- *exchange of experience and best practice on the issue “Railway Construction, Operation and Maintenance in Desert conditions,*
- *in the field of higher education, development of the training programmes of the International Railway Academy and promotion of this academy towards ME railways. The first important educational programme will be concentrated on “Developing the Railway Safety Management” System for ME railways” (see above).*

Further the *Action Plan 2009 / 2010* includes following themes

- *the organisation of Investment Forums for Middle East railways,*
- *creation of new business opportunities: organisation in 2009 of a workshop on the optimisation of partnerships between railways, shipping lines, port authorities of the ME region,*
- *a seminar in 2009 on high speeds for passengers and higher speeds for freight,*
- *a workshop in 2010 on Use of Smart Technologies in the rail sector,*
- *development of industrial competence: quality assurance certification for regional vendors, organisation of a Rail Exhibition in Middle East 2010,*
- *financing rail transport development in the region, workshop in 2010.*

During the Istanbul meeting, Mr Süleyman Karaman and Dr. Hassan Ziari were confirmed in their mandates as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Regional Assembly. They along with Mr. Mokabari Director General of Syrian Railways were recommended to be the members of the UIC Executive Board for 2009 and 2010.

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