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Future direction of work and action plan for the UIC African Region to be proposed at the UIC Executive Board for Africa

UIC African regional office to open in Tunis on 13 November

(Paris, 20 October). Further to the course of action set out by Mr Mohammed Khlie, the new Chairman of the UIC African Region and Chief Executive of Moroccan National Railways (ONCF), a working group met on 14 and 15 October in Tunis. Attended by Messrs Jean-Pierre Lehman, UIC Coordinator for Africa and Legal Director, Saïd Chandid, Head of ONCF's Corporate Strategy Department (Morocco), Mokhtar Essadok, Head of SNCFT's Communications and External Relations Department (Tunisia), and Mrs Rym Ben Ayed, Head of SNCFT's External Relations Department, the group's aim was to draft a proposed short-term action plan for this UIC region. The action plan will be submitted to the UIC Executive Board for Africa scheduled for 13 November 2010 in Tunis under the chairmanship of *Mr Mohammed Khlie* and will bring together, in addition to ONCF, SIPF, SETRAG and TRANSNET.

The proposed action plan for the UIC African Region makes provision for the following four main workstreams:

- -Organisational start-up (in particular opening the UIC regional office for Africa in Tunis)
- -Financial matters (particularly the financial procedure for running the office and drafting the UIC Africa budget for 2011)
- -Preparing the working meeting of the Executive Board (including, in particular, a reminder of the main priorities set out by "Vision 2025 for Africa" and follow-up)
- -Cooperation initiatives: the action plan makes provision for cooperation with other UIC regions (seminar on stress), international organisations with relevant competence in the African region, the European Union (TALEX programme), the African Union of Railways (AUR) and financial institutions – primarily the ADB.

One of the initial organisational measures will be the establishment of the regional office for UIC Africa (since offices already exist for UIC Asia in New Delhi and UIC Middle-East in Tehran). The Africa office will be established in Tunis and opened in November. Its work will be based on the course of action defined by and under the responsibility of the UIC Africa Chairman, benefitting moreover from the organisational and logistical support of Tunisian Railways. The UIC Africa office will be managed by Mr Mokhtar Essadok from SNCFT and will in particular be in charge of overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, as well as maintaining all the necessary links with the members and railway bodies in the African region.

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