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“The climate is right for rail” with UIC, CER and UITP at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 14) in Poznan

(Paris/Poznan, 9 December 2008). Climate change has become THE global issue, and even the most sceptical seems to acknowledge the need of acting urgently to reducing the human activities causing the global warming. The transportation sector is one of the major producers of green house emissions – responsible for more than 25% (IEA 2008) of the total amount of fossil fuel emissions. While many other sectors have been able to curb their production of emissions, the transportation sector is increasing its emissions. In the short term railways can handle some increased demand for services but in the long run it's necessary with investments in infrastructure if our society should fully benefit from the sustainable mobility the railways offer.

UIC, CER and UITP are present for the 6th time at the UN Climate Change conference. For COP 14, in addition to a joint exhibition UIC, CER, UITP have organized an informal discussion forum on transport in cooperation with two transport research institutions, Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) from UK and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) from Germany. At a very well visited event entitled “A low carbon transport under a different regime” which besides the organisers involved a guest panel with participants from the World Bank and the European Commission a discussion was held on what could be done in order to reduce the CO₂ production from the transport sector.

Magrethe Sagevik, Sustainable Development Senior Adviser of UIC sent a clear message that the railways are part of the solution and that more importance should be placed on the advantages of rail and public transport in the development of sustainable transport systems. She also presented the many ongoing activities in the sector on energy efficiency, emissions reduction etc. *Matthew Ledbury*, Environment Adviser of CER pointed out that the including the aviation sector in the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) is only a first step. If the transport sector is to reduce its emissions, other measures to address the climatic impacts of all modes of transport will be needed such as internalizing the external cost. The presentation from *Heather Allen*, Senior Manager Sustainable Development, UITP, stressed that behaviour change can help to fill the gap in the short and medium term before technological solutions for green transport is there.

The rail and public transport organisations have promoted the importance of transport in the climate change combat discussions and the needed contribution from rail and public transport in future sustainable transport systems with the “Keep Kyoto on Track”-campaign including official UNFCCC side events since COP 9. This has given them the opportunity to build up a network among transport and climate change experts and given the organisations

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a key role in bringing these experts together. For COP 14 the audience in the official side event "A low carbon transport under a different regime" included several transport and climate change experts who support in bringing the messages of rail and public forward in the UNFCCC discussions.

COP 15 in 2009 will be hosted by Copenhagen. Here the successor of the Kyoto Protocol shall be agreed upon. The railway sector is currently organising a promotional campaign under the name of Train to Copenhagen which among other things will aim at facilitating sustainable transportation for the many official delegates.

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