



INTERNATIONAL UNION
OF RAILWAYS



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UIC, its African region and ONCF to be partners in the “Africa Express” initiative, aiming to support sustainable energy projects on a train journey through Africa

(Paris, 13 February 2012) UIC, the international association comprising 200 railway companies across five continents, its African region – chaired by Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, CEO of Moroccan Railways (ONCF) – and ONCF itself, have announced their support for the “Africa Express” mission, which will take the shape of a tour of Africa by train, starting in Tangier.

The aim of this 20,000 km train journey is to study renewable energy projects in the countries visited. 2012 has been declared by the United Nations as the *International Year of Sustainable Energy for All* and the “Africa Express” initiative is backed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The aim of this mission is to highlight initiatives in the field of energy, to identify their key success factors, replicability and durability, and to attract national and international investors to implement and reproduce these projects. A White Paper will be released at the end of the mission to promote good practice and target energy stakeholders in Africa (international donors, governments, NGOs, companies and national electric power companies, etc.). A film targeting the general public will also show the main issues and aspects of the mission.

The “Africa Express” mission is sponsored by French photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand, who said *“we need community initiatives that respect our future and our environment. I am fully supportive of the “Africa Express” mission as it is a project that corresponds perfectly to this need.”*

“Africa Express” is bolstered by a Support Committee composed of a number of personalities involved in energy and the environment, energy experts, and representatives of institutions, NGOs and companies. Among these partners, reference should be made to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Agency for Environment and Energy Management (ADEME), the French Development Agency (AFD), Schneider Electric, EDF, Electriciens sans Frontières, GoodPlanet, Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).

UIC Director-General Jean-Pierre Loubinoux *“welcomes the fact that the train – as the sustainable mode of transport par excellence – has been chosen as the medium for this tour of Africa dedicated to renewable energy projects.”* He reiterated that *“the aims of the “Africa Express” mission are mutually supportive of those of the international railway community, which are to develop transport that is sustainable, environmentally-friendly and energy*

efficient, contributing to the economic and social development of the regions through which the train will pass. It is in fact the aim of the UIC African region to coordinate the efforts of all the players, with a view to developing a system such as this to serve the African continent.”

For more information on “Africa Express”: www.africaexpress.org

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 Africa

The UIC African Regional Assembly aims to play a vital role to consolidate the efforts of all the African railways towards modernising and expanding their networks, and to gradually integrate the African rail transport system whilst attracting increasing support from political, economic and financial decision-makers.

The UIC African Regional Assembly is drafting “Vision 2025 for Railway Development in Africa”, which will be the key to a long-term strategy and working in close collaboration with the African Union Commission, the World Bank and the African Union of Railways.

The activities of UIC Africa are coordinated and backed by the UIC executive regional office based in Tunis.

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