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## **18th Meeting of the UIC Regional Assembly for the Middle-East (RAME) was held in Amman, Jordan**

### **Publication of new UIC Map of Rail networks and projects in the Middle-East**

(Paris, 22 November 2016) The 18th Meeting of the UIC Regional Assembly for the Middle-East was held on 20 November in Amman in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, at the kind invitation of Eng. Yaser KRISHAN, Director General of Aqaba Railways Corporation (ARC), one of the two UIC members in this country.

The UIC Middle East Regional Assembly was opened with an address by the Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Jordan, HE Mr. Hussein SOUOB, who warmly welcomed “UIC, an actor that can bring real added value and expertise to the development of Transport in Jordan”.

He added: “*The political stability of the country is a key point and this dimension should attract more investors in order to set-up a strategic railway network in the region, connected to the neighbors*”... and “*Feasibility studies are currently prepared and updated concerning dry port projects or how to face the congestion and pollution problem in Jordan*”.

In his opening address, UIC Director General Mr. Jean-Pierre LOUBINOX underlined that “*Railways have a strong potential for successful development in the region. The Middle-East is one of the world’s regions with the highest investment in the railways, with ambitious plans and achievements in Turkey, Iran, Jordan with dry ports, in GCC (Gulf) countries and neighbouring countries in Central Asia, in particular with the projects connected to the New Rail Silk Roads.*”

He added: “*UIC through its professional cooperation structures is committed to support its members in all developments and progress relating to railway operations. Strong focus is currently on Standardisation and Interoperability (with the latest “IRS”, International Railway Solutions), harmonisation on railway corridors, Signalling (with ERTMS becoming Global), Digitalisation (impact of the digital revolution on railway operations), Safety and Security, Sustainability and Energy management, Training sessions...*”

Mr. LOUBINOX warmly thanked the Authorities of the Kingdom and Jordanian railways (Aqaba Railway Corporation ARC and Jordan Hejaz Railway JHR) for their strong and continuous involvement as Vice Chair railways in the UIC Middle-East Region (RAME) since its creation in 2007. Six Regional Assembly meetings (out of 18) were already held in Jordan at the invitation of ARC or JHR, together with a number of UIC RAME seminars and workshops on technical issues (infrastructure maintenance, asset management, signalling, ETCS, SATLOC,...).

## **Achievements and Action Plan of the UIC Middle-East Region**

The UIC Middle East Regional Assembly meeting was chaired by Mr. Isa APAYDIN, President of the Board and Director General of Turkish State Railways (TCDD), Chairman of the UIC Middle-East Region, with the participation of Eng. Yaser KRISHAN, Director General of Aqaba Railway Corporation ARC and Dr. Abdallah MALKAWI, Acting Director General of Jordan Hejaz Railway JHR, for UIC Mr. Jean-Pierre LOUBINOX, Director General, and Paul VERON, Director in charge of the Coordination of the Middle-East Region, Mr. Abbas NAZARI, Director General International Affairs of the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran RAI, and Director of the UIC Regional Middle East Office located in Tehran, etc.

On the topic of Directors General reports, Mr. APAYDIN presented the current railway projects and achievements in Turkey with a focus on high speed development, construction and modernization of lines, modernization of signalling and electrification, new stations (Ankara High Speed) and freight terminals, international corridors, etc.

Mr. NAZARI presented the recent railway achievements and the projects going on in Iran, also with a focus on international freight corridors, connections to neighbouring regions, high speed, etc.

RAME Chairman Mr. Isa APAYDIN then gave the floor to Mr. NAZARI, Director of the Regional Office to present the activities recently carried out: 1st International UIC/ITE Oil, Rail & Ports conference successfully organised with RAI and held in Tehran, International Conference organised by IRHA, TCDD and UIC (UIC Middle-East) on Railway History, successfully held last November in Istanbul and dedicated to the long distance railway routes linking Turkey to Europe, Middle East, Asia and the Far East Asia, in the Past, the Present and the Future (TCDD, RAI and ARA from Afghanistan presented the projects along future railway corridors, including the New Silk Road).

Mr. NAZARI also presented the new Map (update January 2017) of UIC Middle-East railways. This map coordinated by the UIC Middle-East Regional Office in Tehran, in close cooperation with all members, provides a comprehensive picture of all achievements and projects in the Middle East and demonstrates the dynamism and strong potential for railway developments in the region.

The map can be obtained by sending a request to UIC.

Paul VERON, UIC Director, Coordinator for the Middle-East, presented the updated UIC Middle-East Action Plan for 2016-2017. Activities of the Region will include a conference on the New Rail Silk Roads to be planned end of 2017, the International Business Forum early 2018 in Istanbul, potential to meet with railways, railway partners, international institutions, banks and eventual investors in rail projects in the Middle-East.

On 11-14 July 2017, Turkey will host the 10th UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail, UIC HIGHSPEED 2017 to be held in Ankara. This worldwide unique event dedicated to high speed rail is being prepared in close cooperation and partnership between TCDD, UIC and all other actors involved. It will provide a comprehensive picture of all projects, problems of railway financing, etc.

Marie PLAUD, Deputy Director of Communications at UIC, presented to the Middle-East Assembly members the objectives and highlights of UIC activities in the framework of the UIC Digital Platform. Among the latest initiatives and activities led by the UIC Digital Platform, we can mention PoCs (Proofs of Concept), which are easy, quick and cheap ways

of validating and testing a concept, to solve an operational issue with new digital resources. Three POC developed in 2016 cover:

- Detection of shunting defaults
- Detection of broken rails
- Analysis of switch motor performance

UIC Members for the Middle East could benefit from this pragmatic “PoC approach” on the occasion of a dedicated workshop to be planned in the near future with the expertise and know-how of UIC experts and actors in this field.

Finally UIC Director General Mr. LOUBINOUX reminded the audience of the UIC project for UIC to support the publication of two books, one on “Railway Stations around World” and “The New Rail Silk Roads by Train”. These two books being prepared for Pre-Order among UIC member Railways, represent a fantastic opportunity to present both the Historic and Present value of railways in the regions.

## CONTACT

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