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UIC participates in the Conference of African Ministers of Transport (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 7 – 11 April 2014)

Presentation of the Regional Strategic Vision "Revitalisation of Rail in Africa: Destination 2040"

(Paris/Malabo, 10 April 2014) The third session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport (CAMT), organised under the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC), chaired by H.E. Dr. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim, currently being held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea – which currently holds the presidency – brings together African Ministers of Transport to discuss "Speeding up Transport Programme Delivery for Facilitating Africa's Economic Growth". The first session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, which took place in April 2008 in Algeria, was a historic conference that established the CAMT as a statutory conference of the African Union.

The objective of this Ministerial Conference, opened in the presence of the Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea, is to review the implementation of the various sub-sector plans of action, target specific outcomes, and identify constraints as well as new challenges to facilitate rapid implementation of transport development activities. Providing strategic direction to the AU Commission and all stakeholders on the appropriate actions to take for a coherent development of the transport sector on the continent will be also discussed.

Representatives are African Ministers responsible for Transport from all the African countries, including the Prime Minister of Guinea, Senior officials of ministries and agencies responsible for transport regulation of member states of the African Union, Heads of African regional and continental transport specialized institutions, CEOs of national authority of road, port facilities, airports and railways, African Union Commission, NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Development Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, international technical organisations, regional and international financial organisations as well as various development partners.

The Conference is also attended by Commissioner, Infrastructure and Energy H.E. Dr. Elham Mahmood Ahmed Ibrahim, who signed the "Aide Memoire" in March 2010 between the African Union and UIC, strengthening cooperation in railway transport development within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the AUC and UIC in April 2007.

UIC is represented by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General, who presented the Strategic Regional Vision coordinated by UIC titled "*Revitalisation of Rail Transport in Africa: Destination 2040*". During the first Keynote Speech, he said: "*This strategy carried out by and for Africa is none other than the result of work led by a team of experts representing the various regions of the African continent. Three questions need to be asked: which strategy and for what purpose? What is the current situation of the African railways, and what path are we taking for 2040? [...]*" He added: "*This study ties in with the concern shared by the African railway community and which consists in working towards developing this tool to effectively contribute to the region's sustainable and inclusive growth.*"

Four objectives have been set:

- 1 – Develop a suitably efficient African railway system which is able to adapt to changing demands and is first and foremost interoperable*
- 2 – Meet the international standards recommended by UIC, notably in terms of safety and security, operations and management*
- 3 – Harmonise and improve the conditions of creating and operating railways across the continent*
- 4 – Encourage and promote expertise and cooperation between networks within the frame of UIC.”*

He continued by saying: *“Rail in Africa is failing to play its role properly, its rightful role in socio-economic affairs and should therefore position itself better in the land transport market.”*

He ended by saying *“This work has led to the development of a model consisting of three scenarios: one intensive and optimistic trend scenario on significant prospects. As an example, and measuring in kilometres, passenger traffic could double, and that of freight traffic could increase eight-fold by 2040 based on the 2012 data. This needs the commitment of all stakeholders to implement the most suitable framework to address this issue in the best conditions. The study also showed a need to build 18,000 km of lines by 2040, which equals a cost of 36 billion dollars, and to gradually upgrade the whole existing network at a cost equivalent to 32 billion dollars. This financing need is completely in line with the results of the study conducted by PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa).*

Obviously the implementation of this strategy will certainly have a significant socio-economic impact estimated at between two and seven billion dollars depending on the chosen scenario. In practical terms, and if it is limited to the intensive scenario which is in line with the PIDA programme, there is strong performance in 2040, and this is very important with regard to reducing the number of injuries by 24,000 per year, the number of deaths by 2000 per year as well as with regard to improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 3000 tonnes of CO2 per year. All this progress also contributes to the continent’s societal and economic benefits.”

The UIC Regional Assembly for Africa, comprising railway companies from African countries, is chaired by Mohammed Khlie, Chief Executive of Moroccan National Railways (ONCF) and groups together 22 Members.

The Publication *“Revitalisation of Rail Transport in Africa: Destination 2040”* will be soon available on request at: plaud@uic.org

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