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The “Train to Paris” campaign will actively highlight rail as a part of the solution to Climate Change at the COP21 negotiations in Paris at the end of 2015

Launch of “Train to Paris” campaign

(Paris, 17 March 2015) In nine months’ time, the UIC co-ordinated campaign “Train to Paris” will bring thousands of delegates including national governments, NGOs, decision-makers and journalists from across Europe and Asia by train to Paris for the COP21 United Nations Conference on Climate Change to be held end of 2015 in Paris. The campaign will highlight rail as the back bone of sustainable transport and raise awareness of the importance of developing more sustainable transport systems.

Towards a universal agreement on climate change

A new global agreement on tackling climate change is expected to be reached on 11 December 2015, imposing limits on the world’s largest greenhouse gas emitters. The COP21 negotiations, which will be held from 30 November to 11 December 2015 in Paris, will mark a turning point for post-2020 action and ambition to reduce climate change.

“Train to Paris” campaign

The “Train to Paris” campaign, involving railways from around the world, will include a synchronised network of trains arriving in Paris from across Asia and Europe, with some trains originating from Mongolia, Russia & China. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the important role of sustainable transport, and low carbon rail transport, in the solution to both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

A series of high-level and media events are scheduled to take place end of November 2015, including a symbolic welcome of delegations on arrival in Paris and discussions during a high-level Round Table at the headquarters of the International Union of Railways.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General of UIC, said:

“The international railway community, represented by UIC, has been committed to sustainable development for many years now – whether through the reduction of greenhouse gases, clean

energy research, urban planning or reducing noise pollution. An initial statement at Kyoto has highlighted a desire to take things further, to contribute to the improvement of our sector’s performance levels. Renewed efforts will be made by this community to play an active role in the two-degrees scenario and to achieve considerable energy savings as part of a virtuous circle of developing the railways to help serve transport and mobility as a whole.

The initiative taken by the railway community and approved by our General Assembly was presented at the Climate Summit in New York in 2014, and through these three major

commitments, highlights the important role that railways can play, as the backbone of a new mix of transport modes, to comply with the two-degree target.”

Note to Editors

The International Union of Railways is the global organisation of the railway sector aiming to promote rail transport at world level and meet the challenges of mobility and sustainable development.

UIC has 240 members on five continents, with its headquarters in Paris (www.uic.org).

UIC constantly endeavours to build on the advantages of the railway sector in the areas of the environment and sustainable development – including energy efficiency. UIC also leads the efforts of the railway sector in adapting infrastructure to the impact of climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or “UNFCCC”, was adopted during the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. It entered into force on 21 March 1994 and has been ratified by 196 States, which constitute the “Parties” to the Convention – its stakeholders. This Framework Convention is a universal convention of principle, acknowledging the existence of anthropogenic (human-induced) climate change and giving industrialised countries the major part of the responsibility for combating it.

The Conference of the Parties (COP), made up of all “States Parties”, is the Convention’s supreme decision-making body. It meets every year in a global session where decisions are made to meet goals for combating climate change. Decisions can only be made unanimously by the State Parties or by consensus.

The term CMP is also used to refer to the States that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol – with Paris hosting the 11th session. The CMP reviews the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and takes decisions to ensure that it is effectively promoted.

By the end of the Paris’s Conference, and for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, all the nations of the world including the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases will be bound by a legal agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The work achieved at COP20 in Lima has provided solid foundations to reach a set of decisions in December 2015 – above all, an ambitious and binding agreement from all the nations in the world to respond to the challenge of global warming. This action will have an important impact on the transport sector, as this is currently responsible for approximately one quarter of energy related CO₂ emissions. Strong action to develop more sustainable transport systems is an essential component of the solution to limit temperature rises to 2 degrees Celsius.

Against the backdrop of this worldwide debate, all the railways brought together by the International Union of Railways (UIC) unanimously committed themselves to support the goals of COP21 at one of the association’s General Assemblies held in Portoroz, Slovenia in June 2014. UIC is moreover headquartered in Paris and accredited to the Conferences of the Parties and holds consultative status to the United Nations.

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