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UN World Environment Day

The International Union of Railways (UIC) supports the UN World Environment Day “Green Economy: Does it include you?”

Release of the UIC sustainability report, “Railways and Sustainable Development – A Global Perspective”

(Paris, 5 June 2012) The UN World Environment Day is taking place today under the slogan “Green Economy: Does it include you?” Through this Day, UIC would like to show our strong commitment to environmental issues, and to emphasise that rail is an essential part of the solution for sustainable development.

The growth of mobility has delivered economic growth, but has also created environmental and social challenges. This trend in car ownership and use can be seen on a global level where transport already accounts for over 50% of world fossil fuel use. This share is expected to increase to over 60% by 2035.

The majority of fossil fuel is used in the road sector; railways can help address this issue by providing lower-carbon mobility: rail has approximately a 6% share of the world transport market, but only produces 2% of transport greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Today UIC releases its new sustainability report, “Railways and Sustainable Development – A Global Perspective”. The brochure provides examples and case studies from many of the 50 UIC member signatories to the UIC Declaration on Sustainable Mobility, which was officially launched at the United Nations in May 2011 in the presence of UN Under-Secretary-General Mr Sha Zukang. It is the first publication in what will become a regular series of such reports, to be produced every two years.

Highlights include:

Meeting the expectations of society

- Massive investments in renewable energy including a “Solar Tunnel” in Belgium where solar panels cover a railway tunnel eight football fields in length and investments in wind farms for railways in Germany and Japan

- Innovative approaches to wildlife management including “Green Bridges” for migrating animals in Poland: Bald Eagle protection schemes in the USA and Bird Nesting sites on catenary poles in Bulgaria

Meeting the expectations of customers

- Massive investment programmes to improve accessibility for persons of reduced mobility, for example Indian Railways are improving accessibility at over 1,500 stations
- Roll-out of WiFi internet access on many rail services including for example the Acela Express service on the North East corridor of the United States

Governance and responsibility

- Being stable and attractive employers – Chinese and Indian Railways are two of the largest employers in the world with 2 million and 1.65 million staff respectively
- Efforts to attract a more diverse workforce including the French “Equal Opportunity Train” which has toured the country four times promoting careers in rail in less advantaged areas

The publication can be downloaded here:

http://www.uic.org/IMG/pdf/brochure_env2012_web.pdf

In addition to this new publication, UIC has developed a strong programme of events at Rio+20, with a conference, workshop and speech planned on consecutive days from 14 – 19 June.

For more information on UIC activities for Rio+20 please visit our web page:

<http://www.uic.org/spip.php?article2872>

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