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UIC HIGHSPEED 2012:

The 8th UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail opens in Philadelphia in the presence of US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, other prominent representatives of American authorities and the international rail community represented by over 1,000 participants

According to the Secretary of Transportation, high speed rail is a legacy that today's generation should leave to the next generation

(Philadelphia, 12 July 2012) The 8th World Congress on High Speed Rail, jointly organised by UIC and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), and in close partnership with all UIC North American members, started today in Philadelphia, USA, in the presence of over 1,000 participants representing the worldwide rail sector.

UIC HIGHSPEED is the unique platform at global level to benchmark and exchange on all issues determining the planning, construction and operations of high speed rail systems across the world.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General, expressed great satisfaction in holding this world conference for the first time on the North American continent, at a time when important political decisions are being taken towards the development of the first high speed rail services in the United States. The opening addresses were given by Yoshio Ishida, Chairman of UIC, Gary Thomas, Chairman of APTA, Michael P. Melaniphy, President and CEO of APTA and US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

Ray LaHood presented the latest perspectives for the introduction of high speed rail in America and insisted that today's generation has to leave high speed rail as a legacy to the next generation.

“The UIC Congress in the USA is a unique opportunity at a time when dreams can become reality for the next generations”, said Ray LaHood.

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General, said “UIC, as a kind of Federal Association around the world of rail operators and specialists, is happy and ready to support the American vision for high speed through the accumulated experience of all its members.”

The opening included a high-level panel of Ministers and Railway Presidents who described the achievements and perspectives for high speed rail in their respective countries following a “World Tour of High Speed”. Key speakers included Mr Osamu Yoshida, Senior Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan; Mr Huawu HE, Chief Engineer, Ministry of Railways of the P.R of China; Mr Süleyman Karaman, President of Turkish Railways (TCDD), Chairman of UIC Middle-East Region; Mr Mauro Moretti, CEO of Italian Railways (FS), UIC Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER); Mr Vladimir Yakunin, President of Russian Railways (RZD); Mr Marcel Verslype, Executive Director of the European Railway Agency (ERA); Mr Guillaume Pepy, President of SNCF, Chairman of UIC European Region; Mr Marc Descheemaeker, CEO of Belgium Railways (SNCB), Chairman of UIC Passenger Forum; and a representative from Spain, Mr. Apolinar Rodriguez.

The present status of high speed rail around the world was also presented by Mr Ignacio Barron de Angoit, UIC Passenger and High Speed Director, followed by a presentation of the Congress programme by Mr Michel Leboeuf, French National Railways (SNCF) and Chairman of the UIC HIGHSPEED 2012 Scientific Committee.

The programme will be followed by parallel sessions on all specific aspects of high speed rail developments and operations. Two high-level round tables on 12 July will be dedicated respectively to the question “How to deliver a high speed rail project in today’s economic context?” (moderated by Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC) and on 13 July to the question “What part can high speed rail play in the future transport market?” (moderated by Michael P. Melaniphy, APTA).

During the course of the three days, participants will have the opportunity to become familiar with the products of over one hundred exhibitors at the UIC HIGHSPEED Exhibition as well as the rolling stock and equipment displayed by Amtrak and SEPTA at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia.

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UIC, the worldwide trade association of railroads

Its core missions: promoting the development of rail transportation across the world, organising international cooperation between its members, contributing to the adoption of global railway standards

Founding of UIC 90 years ago

In the wake of two intergovernmental conferences held in Italy, the International Union of Railways (UIC) was founded in 1922, its headquarters based in Paris. The founding members comprised 46 railways from 27 countries across Europe, Middle-East, China and Japan. UIC became the worldwide non-profit trade association of railroads and currently has 200 members from 91 countries on all 5 continents. Members may be integrated railroads, rail operators, infrastructure managers or rail service providers such as rolling stock leasing companies, etc. UIC members from North America are the Federal Railroad Administration (US DoT), the Association of American Railroads (AAR), Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada. UIC celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2012.

UIC's missions

UIC's initial mission was to harmonise conditions for creating and operating railways at international level. Its missions were progressively extended and are currently focused on promoting rail as the most sustainable transportation mode across the world, enhancing international cooperation between its members – with a view to increasing competitiveness and interoperability – and contributing to building a coherent railway system through harmonized standards at global level. UIC is supporting all efforts made by its members to increase effectiveness, sustainability and profitability of rail transportation, for the benefit of customers and society as a whole.

To achieve its goals, UIC maintains and develops cooperation links and concludes agreements with a large number of institutions and international organisations, among them the United Nations and its specialised bodies, the World Bank, OECD, NATO, regional organisations, and transport associations such as APTA, USHSR, IHHA...

UIC Governance

UIC is led by the General Assembly composed of Chairmen and CEOs of the 200 members. The guidelines for global activities are given by the UIC Executive Board, made up of 21 members with geographical representation. Cooperation activities at regional level are steered and managed within 6 UIC Regions (North and South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle-East), with each region chaired by a railway CEO from the region. Paris UIC headquarters is led by the UIC Director-General assisted by a board of Directors, 4 technical departments, 4 support departments, and 3 subsidiaries in charge of specific tasks. Technical cooperation activities are organised in the framework of professional bodies, forums and platforms, comprising member railway representatives in charge of Passenger (including High Speed), Freight, Rail System (including infrastructure, rolling stock, traffic management systems, etc.), Research, Safety, Security, Expertise Development,...

Main types of action

The promotion of rail transportation through expertise and capacity-building, as well as knowledge sharing, are major objectives which UIC addresses through:

- Drafting technical standards, including interoperability standards for railways ("UIC Code", comprising 700 leaflets, constitutes a recognised reference worldwide),
- Promoting projects in a systemic approach for the development of all components of the railway system,
- Developing global and regional studies concerning railway corridors, multimodal transport links, etc.
- Research activities for increasing safety, optimising customer satisfaction, reducing costs,...
- Drafting and updating visions for all 6 UIC Regions (see above),
- Further developing advantages of railroads in terms of the most sustainable transportation mode,
- Organising the exchange of experience through international congresses, conferences, workshops on technical issues,
- Developing worldwide expertise training and human resource networking.

UIC's actions in the field of High Speed Rail

Main actions targeted at supporting the development of high speed rail systems across the globe include:

- Promoting the development of high speed rail systems under ideal conditions for member railways, customers and society,

- Supporting the railways which operate or plan high speed transportation in their relations with authorities, industry,
- Optimising the modal interfaces between high speed and regional transportation at stations as passenger hubs,
- Conducting studies on specific aspects of high speed (HSR and the environment, HSR and profitability, HSR in the city,...),
- Providing members with best practice, statistics on HSR,
- Regularly organising the UIC HIGHSPPEED world congresses (8th World Congress in Philadelphia) as well as conferences with more technical focus,
- Organising training sessions/practicums

For more information please visit the UIC website: www.uic.org