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1st UIC International Conference on Natural Disaster Management for Railway Systems organised with THSRC in Taipei

(Taipei / Paris, 15 May 2014) The 1st International Conference on Natural Disaster Management for Railway Systems jointly organised by UIC and Taiwan High Speed Rail THSRC was opened on 14 May in Taipei in the presence of Mr Jeng James, CEO of THSRC, Mr. Satoshi Seino, Chairman JR East, Chairman of UIC Asia-Pacific Region, and representing UIC Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General and Mr Vincent Vu, Director of Institutional Relations and Coordinator for Asia Pacific.

200 participants representing 15 countries and all parts of the world are attending this first international conference dedicated to the management of natural disasters, an issue with particular relevance for member railways in Asia and a concern in many other regions of the world. The UIC Director-General welcomed in his opening address delegates from Asia, Australia, Russia, Japan, Korea, India, China, as well as from Europe such as France and the Middle-East such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and an audience through the web on the UIC internet, with 100 participants connected and following the conference live.

Over the three days from 14 – 16 May 2014, experts and delegates will have the opportunity to exchange information and best practices on all essential aspects of natural disaster management. Various sessions in the programme will address the following aspects:

- Concepts and Strategies of Natural Disaster Management for Railway Systems,
- Ways of Detection and Warning of Natural Disasters,
- Disaster Preparedness: Planning, Organising and training,
- Civil & Technical Measures for Disaster Prevention & Mitigation
- Natural Disasters on High Speed Systems and other Specific Cases,
- Mechanism and Practice on Emergency Response, Relief and Recovery.

Whilst warmly thanking Mr Jeng James, CEO, and all the team of THSRC for hosting this 1st international conference on Natural Disasters in Taipei, UIC Director-General Jean-Pierre Loubinoux underlined the rich *“experience of THSRC in operating modern railways – in particular a high speed rail system – as well as in coping, unfortunately, with daily challenges of bad weather and earthquakes hitting the island every year... This is a real opportunity for Taiwan High Speed Rail to show that they are one of the best players in high-speed around the world, learning experiences from countries as Japan and France, still in search for improving its efficiency and now benchmarking its own success to the others.*

He added: *“this 1st international conference is expected to meet the current worries and challenges addressed by more and more railways around the world due to climate change. But it is also a big challenge for THSRC and UIC as it is the first ever being organised at global level on this topic. It is rather a new topic for UIC compared to others and we are opening a new field of expertise in the scope of climate changes”.*

A technical visit is planned on Friday 16 May at the 921 Earthquake Museum of Taiwan.

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