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5th International Seminar on Railway Safety and Security jointly organised between ONCF and UIC opens in Tangier

(Tangier, 10 April 2013) The 5th International Seminar on Railway Safety and Security has opened in Tangier. Held under the high patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the seminar is being hosted from 10 – 12 April by Moroccan National Railways (ONCF) and the International Union of Railways (UIC). The event will serve as an opportunity to take stock of various technical and institutional aspects thanks to the sharing of experience and issues between businesses, particularly with regard to high speed systems that are already in operation, being developed or being planned.

For UIC's part, the seminar was prepared by the Passenger/High Speed Department, under Mr Ignacio Barron de Angoit, and the Security Division, under Mr Jacques Colliard.

The seminar was officially opened by Mr Aziz Rabbah, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure of the Kingdom of Morocco, who highlighted:

"2013 is about improving railway transport thanks to large investments in infrastructure and giving priority to security and safety aspects. Stepping up security in stations and on all infrastructure will ensure that passengers are provided with secure rail services. The Kingdom of Morocco is an open country which welcomes both national and foreign investment."

Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, Chief Executive of ONCF and Chairman of the UIC Africa Region, stressed that: *"ONCF has budgeted three billion euros for its 2010 – 2015 investment programme. The priorities are the building of the Casablanca-Tangier high speed line and upgrading existing infrastructure, which will include removing dangerous level crossings. A quarter of the investment budget is allocated to improving safety and security. With regard to human factors, ONCF has created a Railway Training Institute (Institut de Formation Ferroviaire, IFF), which is open to railway staff from any country."*

Finally, Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director General, concluded the seminar's opening session by emphasising: *"This 5th international seminar ties in with ongoing activities. It also ties in with human commitment. For the first time, participants from 25 different countries will discuss experiences and projects in the field of safe railway operations, security of goods and people, and anticipating crisis situations by mitigating the consequences. Strengthening links with civil defence services as well as specific issues relating to high speed will also be discussed. Though safety and security have been rail's principal assets since its creation, we should remain modest about our achievements in these areas so as to ensure strong progress in the future."*

Nearly 250 participants are attending this seminar, which is focusing on practical aspects related to safety, security and civil defence. Close to 40 panellists from varied backgrounds will address specific issues both at management level in their companies and research development in preparation for the future:

- Security in the context of protection and combat against malicious intent
- Traffic safety in transport organisation
- Civil and environmental safety in terms of taking into account natural hazards
- Civil defence and the role of emergency services in the event of incidents and accidents

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