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Seminar on safety management and human factors: this international seminar organised by Tunisian Railways (SNCFT) and UIC Africa opened in Tunis with the Tunisian Minister of Transport

(Tunis, 6 June 2012) The international seminar on Railway Safety Management and Human Factors which opened in Tunis on 5 June – and attended by 120 people – was organised in partnership between Tunisian National Railways (SNCFT) and UIC Africa.

This seminar comes as part of the concrete implementation of the action plan that was decided at the 8th UIC African Regional Assembly held in Paris on 7 December 2011.

Held concurrently with the seminar were the 20th General Assembly of the Maghreb Railway Transport Committee (CTFM), bringing together the CEOs and the key decision-makers of the Maghreb rail networks (Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya), and the Executive Committee for UIC Africa.

Mr Abderrahman Gamha, CEO of SNCFT, welcomed the participants and highlighted that *“these types of events, which bring together the key decision-makers and experts of the Maghreb, African and European railways, reflect a desire to give fresh impetus to the cooperation programme for developing railways”*.

Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, Director-General of Moroccan railways ONCF and Chairman of the UIC Africa Region, also expressed his satisfaction at *“the praiseworthy efforts made so that Tunis, over the course of two days, was able to host a series of railway events at both continental and regional level which are crucial in order to discuss the issues that are important – if not strategic – for the development of rail’s role in social and economic activities”* in these countries. Mr Khlie added that *“the work to draw up a robust strategy for the balanced and effective development of rail on the African continent was undertaken with determination and commitment at UIC. It is currently going through the final stage of approval before it will be presented to the regional bodies and institutions most likely to support its implementation. This is an ambitious strategy which concerns various key areas, whilst giving special consideration to safety and human resources management”*.

Mr Jean-Pierre Lehman, UIC Coordinator for the African Region, recalled how much importance the international railway community attached to railway development in Africa. He also referred to the importance of safety, which lies in well-maintained and customised technology, as well as a systematic and professional approach to human factor issues. On the list of UIC’s aims were the worldwide promotion of rail transport, interoperability, cooperation, expansion into new markets and integration of sustainable development. Mr Lehman also informed the floor of the desire by UIC members to take an active role in the development of ISO standards by attempting to connect the various UIC regions. To conclude, he warmly thanked the representatives of the African networks who attended, namely Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Gabon, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Burkina Faso, etc. for their active participation in the seminar.

The seminar was officially opened by Tunisian Transport Minister Mr Karim Harouni, who underlined that Tunisia was being developed through major infrastructure projects with particular focus on the railways. The Ministry of Transport's restructuring plan focused more on the real needs of the freight and passenger sectors and multimodal transport. He also stressed *"the importance of freedom of movement of individuals both inside and outside state borders and the high speed line project from Nouakchott (Mauritania) to Cairo (Egypt)"*.

The speech given by Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie (Chairman of the African Region) during the seminar's opening ceremony is available at:

http://www.uic.org/?page=region&id_mot=24

CONTACTS:

Liesbeth de Jong, Media Relations, dejong@uic.org

Meryem Belhaj, Safety Advisor, belhaj@uic.org