



PRESS RELEASE 10/2018

UIC Middle-East Regional Assembly (RAME) held its 21st Meeting in Ankara, Turkey

This meeting welcomed the UIC Asia Pacific Region (APRA) Members prior to the opening of the 10th UIC High Speed Congress co-hosted by UIC and Turkish State Railways – TCDD

(Paris, 15 May 2018) The 21st Meeting of the UIC Regional Assembly for the Middle-East (RAME) was held on 7 May in Ankara, Turkey, prior to the 10th UIC High Speed Congress starting on the 8 May.

The Chairman of this UIC Region, Mr Isa Apaydin, President of the Board and Director General of Turkish State Railways (TCDD) and UIC Vice Chairman launched the event along with Mr Renato Mazzoncini, UIC Chairman and CEO of Italian Railways and Dr Saeed Mohammadzadeh, Vice Minister for Roads and Urban Development, Chairman of the Board and President of RAI but also with Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC. The Assembly gathered TCDD and Tasimacilik A.S. -Turkish Railways, RAI – Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and JHR - Jordan Hejaz Railways. On this occasion, the Asia Pacific Region was represented at the meeting by its UIC coordinator, Mr Vincent Vu as well as representatives from RZD- Russian Railways and Beijing Jiaotong University.

Mr Isa Apaydin took the opportunity during his opening speech to acknowledge this interregional meeting opportunity with the APRA region and emphasised how *“keeping interregional relationships will be beneficial for everyone”*. Mr Isa Apaydin also welcomed a new Member of the RAME region: TCDD Tasimacilik A.S. in the presence of Erol Arıkan, Deputy Director General of the organisation.

Mr Renato Mazzoncini, expressed gratitude towards TCDD and the RAME team for organising this meeting, showing that UIC Members are *“developing a strong cooperation despite of regional context”*. He reminded the audience about the main topics for the region that are: International Freight Corridors, Standardisation and Interoperability, Safety, Infrastructure and Asset Management, Train Control and Signalling and Dedicated Training Programs: *“Those are the main pillars around which*

we are developing the railways of the future at UIC". Mr Renato Mazzoncini also drew the attention of participants to the development of Euro-Asian long-distance corridors, including the New Silk Roads linking China to Europe, as it will constitute a great challenge for railways from Asia, the Middle-East and Europe in the next years and decades. UIC in this field is committed to developing a comprehensive study on Euro-Asian routes and the New Silk Roads presented for members and shippers.

Dr Saeed Mohammadzadeh, welcoming the 90th anniversary of Iranian Railways, reinforced the importance of regional relationships and cooperation in support of the regional programme and to extend partnerships between the 15 Members of the Middle-East Region and implement its dedicated action plan to encourage investments in the region and benefit from them. He said: *"I wish for more development and interaction between the railways: this will develop peace and friendship in the region"*.

Mr Azmi Nalshik, Director General, JHR Jordan Hejaz Railways, expressed the ambitions of the railways in the country, despite many challenges, especially in cooperation with other countries with the objective to create a rail network of around 1,000 km connected to neighbouring countries. Jordan is willing to work with new sources of funding such as Public-Private Partnership projects in the region.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC, took the floor to thank TCDD for hosting the Regional Assembly and RAI for managing the regional office *"keeping unity and solidarity"* in the region. Mr Loubinoux gave an update of UIC actions over the last six months. On this occasion he also thanked Mr Wisniewski, new Coordinator for the Middle-East Region. Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux stressed the need to discuss the question of freight corridors during the Assembly especially in the presence of Ms Sandra G  h  not, Director Freight, UIC and of the Asia Pacific Region, Chaired by Mr Oleg Belozarov who could not be present but who encouraged this opportunity of a joint meeting to favour international initiatives from one region to the other.

Mr Abbas Nazari (Director of UIC M.E. Regional Office) then presented the report of UIC RAME activities and UIC Regional office for the first half of 2018 including the update of the publication *"Strategic Action Plan, 2016-2020"*, the preparation of the document *"Rail International Corridors passing through Middle East, connecting Asia to Europe"*. The UIC Regional Office prepared and diffused the updated edition (May 2018) of the *"Map of UIC Middle-East Railways"* which presents the current network together with the new railway lines planned in the Region.

Mr Jerzy Wisniewski, UIC Coordinator for the Middle-East, together with UIC RAME Members discussed and updated the UIC RAME 2018-2019 Action Plan. Mr Jerzy Wisniewski reminded the audience that UIC is very satisfied with the work done with the Region and how UIC is willing to share its expertise for training and actions on the ground as access to education and training is one of the key topics for the Middle-East Members, with the support of the MERTCe training centre in Ankara, Turkey. It was announced that online trainings will be launched and will be very helpful to develop the expertise of Members. Workshops on maintenance, seminars on freight, standardization, safety as well as the 7th Next Station conference in Yazd, Iran, to be held in autumn 2019 were also topics of discussions for the region Action Plan.

Two major events of interest for the region for the first semester of 2018 were discussed: The High Speed Congress that took place from 8 – 11 May as well as the 6th Global Rail Freight Conference to be held in Genoa, Italy from the 26 to 28 of June 2018, hosted by Ferrovie Dello Stato Italiane. Members of the region were warmly invited to join the event. This transition allowed Ms Sandra G  h  not, Director Freight, UIC to propose a presentation about freight corridors and the freight forum to participants. It was highlighted that the New Silk Roads linking China to Europe is a major topic for UIC Headquarters and both the Middle-East and Asia Pacific Region.

Afterwards, Mr Vincent Vu, Director – Institutional Relations and Coordinator for the UIC Asia Pacific Region presented cooperation opportunities and sharing experiences between Members particularly for technological developments and innovations. Mr Vincent Vu invited Members of RAME to join a training in Seoul, Korea, first regional workshop opened to Members outside the region: the UIC-IRaTCA Training Session 2018, 18-22 June 2018.

To conclude, this Regional Assembly was an excellent opportunity to discuss how Members can work towards a greater promotion of integrated networks, to make the most of each Members expertise and power to grow stronger in a mindset of cooperation in the Middle-East Region and beyond.

The 22nd Meeting of the UIC Regional Assembly for the Middle-East (RAME) will be held in November 2018 in Isfahan, Iran.

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