Africa has heralded the arrival of its first high-speed rail connection: the International Union of Railways (UIC) commends the achievement of the Moroccan National Railways Office (ONCF), one of its members in Africa.

(Paris, 15 November 2018) Worldwide railway organisation UIC today commended the opening of Africa’s first high-speed railway line and welcomed this important turning point for the railways in Africa. The "Al Boraq" high-speed Tangier-Casablanca line was inaugurated by His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco and Emmanuel Macron, President of France.

Today’s opening of the high-speed line between Tangier and Kenitra is the first milestone in an ambitious project aimed at creating a high-speed network in the region – Rabat, Casablanca, as well as Marrakech and Agadir in the more distant future. In the meantime, the high-speed TGV will run on the traditional line from Kenitra to Rabat and Casablanca. The journey time between Tangier and the economic capital of Morocco will be reduced from four hours and 45 minutes to two hours and ten minutes at a speed of 320 km/h.

Upon completion of construction works spanning seven years, and with a budget of just over two billion euro, line approval testing and running-in was performed on the trains in situ throughout 2018.

Pending construction of a high-speed line, the rest of the Kenitra-Rabat-Casablanca route will run on a third track with authorisation to travel at 180 km/h rather than 160 km/h for conventional trains.

Journey times will change significantly following the commercial opening. The journey between Tangier and Kenitra will be 47 minutes rather than the three hours and 15 minutes required for conventional trains – a time saving of two hours and 28 minutes.
Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director-General of UIC, said: "On behalf of UIC, I am especially pleased to welcome the arrival of high-speed rail on the African continent. The Moroccan railways, a member of UIC, completed this remarkable project while continuing to modernise its network and services."

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