23rd meeting of the Regional Assembly for Middle-East Railways (RAME) held on 6 July 2019 in Aqaba City in Jordan

(Paris, 9 July 2019) The 23rd Meeting of the Regional Assembly for Middle-East Railways (RAME) was held on 6 July 2019 in Aqaba City, courtesy of Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC). The UIC RAME meetings are organised biannually in relation to the UIC General Assembly meetings with the presence of the top management of the railways members to discuss and decide on the activities of the region, reviewing and approving the previous programmes, presenting the report of the CEOs and Directors General of RAME, keeping up to date with regard to UIC HQ reports and activities, and being involved in them.

This time the 23rd RAME meeting was opened by Mr Yaser Krishan, Director General of ACR. He extended his gratitude to the esteemed participants, especially to the newly confirmed RAME chairmen: Mr Ali Ihsan Uygun (TCDD), Mr Saeed Rasouli (RAI), as well to Mr François Davenne, UIC Director General and Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Honorary Director General for their contribution and support and to Mr Abbas Nazari, Director of the UIC Middle-East Region Office (based in Tehran) for the excellent preparation of the meeting. He also wished the 23rd RAME meeting a fruitful outcome.

In addition to Mr Krishan, Mr Uygun thanked ACR for their efforts in organising this important regional meeting and their great hospitality. TCDD is willing to cooperate with the region to get more railway traffic flow on international corridors. Despite the great investment in infrastructure and rolling stock there is the need for continuous and closer cooperation with several international organisations such as UIC for its technical expertise and to get legal and financial support from OTIF, ECO, OSJD, UNESCAP, WB, etc. Mr Rasouli, in thanking ACR and UIC, underlined that only coherent strategies for the development of international railway connections within the region can contribute to the future increase of cargo and passenger volumes on rail. He relies on the update of the ME Region strategy and a vision of elaboration based on the UIC Global Vision for Railway Development endorsed by the last UIC General Assembly. In addition, he recalled that from 11 – 13 November 2019, Iranian Railways, RAI, together with UIC, will be hosting the 7th edition of the UIC nextstation Conference in Tehran.

Mr François Davenne thanked Mr Yaser Krishan for the organisation of the 23rd RAME meeting. As a newly nominated UIC Director General he will put special focus on the region. UIC has recently being working on the migration of its leaflets into International Railway Solutions (IRS).
These technical standards will help in the areas of railway interoperability and technical progress. UIC will bring more recent developments, providing expertise for making the best choices. UIC has recently been working on promising key projects such as FRMCS, the future telecommunications system which will replace older solutions helping new investments and data security, DIGIM II – digital solutions for safety on rail-road level crossings, asset management – to ease and optimise the management of assets, the block chain pilot project to improve information exchange within the logistic chains on rail freight corridors, etc. He encouraged RAME members to explore new edited documents such as the UIC Activity Report and UIC Staff Booklet where you may find comprehensive information on recent UIC work and associated staff within our projects.

Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, after 11 years as UIC Director General, expressed his deep gratitude to the members for their trust and support. He extended his thanks to Mr Krishan for organising the meeting in Jordan and Mr Nazari for his help in preparing the 23rd RAME meeting. He said that his mandate went to the end, but he ensured the continuity of UIC governance, financial standing assisting François Davenne – nominated by the General Assembly in Budapest as UIC Director General – to take the transition period as smoothly possible. Today as UIC Honorary Director General he summarised his experience and sentiments of the 22 RAME meetings in which he participated. He also extended his gratitude to Mr Paul Véron, former Coordinator of the Region and Mr Abbas Nazari and his team at the UIC Office in Tehran for their help with the organisation of all these meetings.

He underlined that future cooperation within the region should be based on better interoperability in operations and win-win business framework. The questions of a knowledge transfer, training programmes & education are big challenges faced by almost everywhere. So a very important role is expected on behalf of MERTCe, the UIC Regional Training Centre in Ankara. He also thanked TCDD for their support. Cooperation between UIC Regions, as already begun with Asian-Pacific and European regions, will provide another opportunity to open, share and connect. He recalled the UIC support given recently to our Syrian members to testify its solidarity and unity. Finally, he thanked all the RAME members and staff involved for the great opportunity to cooperate.

The report on UIC’s RAME activities and the UIC Regional Office in the first half of 2019 was presented by Mr Abbas Nazari: the updated draft to the final document on “Border Crossing Practices in Railway Transport in the Middle East” was delivered and the DVDs of 22nd UIC RAME meeting were distributed to members. The 2019 UIC RAME Directory and regular update of the UIC Middle East website (in English, Persian, & Arabic) is being prepared.

The Global Vision for Railway Development II” (updated version in June 2019), was presented by Mr Jerzy Wisniewski, UIC Coordinator for the Middle-East. The comprehensive vision of the railway development connected to the global mobility chain proposes several solutions for transport customers, operators and industries to consider new opportunities challenges and treats. The GVRD II was endorsed by the General Assembly in Budapest. The document will also be presented at the forthcoming World Congress for Railway Research on 28 October in Tokyo.
Following this was a discussion and approval of the research on “Realisation of the Strategic Action Plan for the Middle East (2018-2020) and 2040 Vision, by M.E. Regional Office and the RAME members were informed about the projects and achievements of UIC RAME Members by RAME Railway Directors General and Presidents.

Mr Thierry Bera, UIC Finance Director, presented the report on the RAME budget & financial issues. He underlined that the 2018 budget went well, it was a positive result noted since 2017. For 2019 and the following year the same level of fees and budget are foreseen. The activities by the Tehran Office and Mertce have been enriched by additional funds, as requested by members, to develop more training programmes and seminars, without any fee increase. He also appealed to the RAME members to ensure that their fee payments were made on time.

The next 24th RAME meeting is scheduled to be held just before the next UIC General Assembly in Paris (date to be confirmed).

CONTACTS

Jerzy Wisniewski, UIC Coordinator for the Middle-East Region: wisniewski@uic.org
UIC Communications Department: com@uic.org