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The worldwide railway organisation UIC is participating in the 25th Conference of the Parties (COP) in Madrid, Spain

New commitments announced

(Paris/Madrid, 5 December 2019) The Conference of the Parties (COP) is taking place under the Presidency of the Government of Chile and is held with the logistical support of the government of Spain from 2 – 13 December 2019. UIC, the worldwide railway organisation, is accredited by the United Nations as a recognised organisation to participate in major global events such as the COP. A UIC delegation is joining the events from 2 – 7 December to promote UIC Members' activities towards a more sustainable future and their commitments to fight climate change.

UIC commitments: increasing ambition

COP25 is an opportunity for UIC to reinforce the role that railways play in sustainable transport development. In 2019, scientific statements regarding climate are alarming; even if states were to meet their commitments made at COP21 in 2015 for 2020, the planet would warm up by 3°C by the end of the century. In order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement, countries need to multiply their ambitions threefold and carbon neutrality should be reached before 2050 and renew or revise upward their climate commitments ("Nationally Determined Contributions") submitted in 2015, by the end of 2020. Those must represent a progression compared to their previous commitment and correspond to the "highest possible level of ambition". The European Commission has already decided to increase its targets for 2030 and to work under the European Green Deal to become world's first carbon neutral continent before 2050.

During COP25, Mr François Davenne, Director General of UIC announced that "the global railway community target for 2020 is already almost reached with – 40 % of specific CO2 emissions for passenger transport and for freight this target will also be reached by the end of 2020." And this is why, given these results, UIC is committed to go even further.

UIC is going ahead and launching an update to the sector's commitment:

-UIC proposes to align its 2050 CO2 emissions target to what becomes more and more widely shared as a consensual target to reach the Paris agreement: Carbon Neutrality by 2050 (instead of and - 75% by 2050).

-UIC is also going one step ahead by announcing its willingness to support SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and to report on their progresses on the most relevant ones.

All UIC members are asked to adopt the carbon neutrality target by 2050 to support the SDGs through a signed declaration.

The Railway Climate Responsibility pledge 2019 <https://bit.ly/2PidN4v> is an extension to the Pledge signed in 2015 in the frame of UIC COP21 Campaign "[Train to Paris](#)".

UIC will also encourage UIC Members to join the [Climate Ambition Alliance](#) launched in the frame of COP25 by the High-Level Climate Champion of Chile, Mr Gonzalo Muñoz

UIC at COP25

December 2

UIC Director General Mr François Davenne and Mr Francisco Cardoso Dos Reis, Chairman of the UIC European region met the Portuguese Environment Minister João Pedro Soeiro de Matos Fernandes. Mr Davenne presented UIC activities as well as how to strongly advocate rail at global level, highlighting modal shift towards public transport with stations as hubs of multimodality and interconnectivity and interoperability especially in Europe for freight. Mr Cardoso particularly stressed that "We cannot solve mass transit issues with individual solutions." The Portuguese Environment Minister emphasised the importance of investing in rail, especially to reach the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 in Portugal, where the population, facing more and more climate hazards such as wildfires, understands the need to make a shift in transport, and that rail can be part of the solution.

December 3

UIC Director General Mr François Davenne was invited by Renfe, Spanish railways, to speak at the opening of the company's activities during COP25. Renfe gathered experts and professionals from the transport, sustainability and energy efficiency fields at national and international level at the Ministry of Transport in the COP25 Green Zone. Mr Davenne gave a short interview to the RENFE channel.

December 4

One of the key actions at COP25 this year was UIC co-hosting an official side-event with UITP – International Association of Public Transport and ITF – International Transport Forum: Transport Mitigation Actions in Cities. Most trips today take place in urban regions, and their number is expected to continue growing in line with cities' populations and economic development. The choice of transport mode is therefore critical to carbon dioxide emission levels. Low carbon transport options need to be integrated into existing transport and climate action plans for cities, which are also where robust transport actions already exist. This session focused on effective ways to decarbonise urban passenger and freight transport based on changes in technology and behaviour.

Mr Mario José Molina-Pasquel Henríquez, recipient of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his role in elucidating the threat to the Earth's ozone layer of chlorofluorocarbon gases, opened the event giving an overview of the situation but also stressed that "we have to work together to solve the climate problem".

The first low carbon transport measures in cities were discussed during a high-level session moderated by Debashish Bhattacharjee, Lead, Urban Mobility, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). Speakers included Young Tae Kim, Secretary General, International Transport Forum (ITF), Mohamed Mezghani, Secretary General, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), François Davenne, Director General, International Union of Railways (UIC) and Karen Vancluysen, Secretary General, POLIS (network of European cities and regions).

As far as UIC activities were concerned Mr Davenne emphasised some key messages such as:

- We need to make public transport and rail desirable.
- Rail is frugal: in public space and in terms of life cycle.
- Rail and public transport have quite positive externalities compared to other modes and must become the backbone of mobility.
- To move forward with sustainable transport, we need a change in mindset and make democracy instrumental.
- Rail freight is also not to be forgotten as in Europe the goal of many rail freight organisations is to achieve a modal shift towards 30% of rail freight by 2030 to prevent the negative effects of transport freight growth and quoted in that matter the example of the Rail Freight Forward initiative.

The second panel was a more technical one addressing how to scale up to increase ambition regarding mitigation in cities and was moderated by Jari Kauppila, Head, Quantitative Policy Analysis and Foresight, ITF. Speakers included: Jennifer Lenhart, Cities Lead, WWF, Alicja Pawłowska, E-mobility Expert, Ministry of Climate, Bureau of the COP 24 Presidency, Poland, Hanan Fridman, CEO, Trucknet and Walid Oueslati, Senior Economist, Environment Directorate, OECD.

December 7

On 7 December, UIC will actively contribute to the Marrakech Partnership event: the Global Climate Action Transport Action Event taking place on the morning of the 7th from 10am to 1pm in the Blue Zone at IFEMA, Feria de Madrid. Mr Davenne will contribute to discussions on adaptation to climate change. This event will showcase the efforts made by various transport stakeholders to create the building blocks for a low carbon, sustainable pathway to 2050. It will demonstrate the immediate, bold and ambitious actions that are currently being implemented across the world and discuss the ways to maintain the momentum through 2020 and beyond. It will focus on both mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender and accessibility.

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