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Launch of the UIC centenary: an opportunity to reflect on some of the achievements and also the challenges that have faced the railways over the years

Highlighting important topics that link with current global climate strategy planning

(Paris, 18 May 2022) As part of its centenary celebrations, UIC hosted an online launch ceremony on 5 May 2022. The event was an opportunity to hear from the UIC Chairman and Director General, to listen to messages and wishes on behalf of UIC Members from right around the globe and to learn more about the UIC Manifesto, to be published at the beginning of June 2022, containing the existing and future solutions that need to be implemented.

What made UIC successful?

- **UIC has succeeded in bringing all the world's railways around the same table.** UIC is a forum where all railway networks are speaking together and developing specifications and operational solutions. UIC has developed global common specifications with some success. For instance, we can take the braking issue. The braking systems used on most railways are based on solutions developed at UIC. For instance, UIC is still labelling braking systems in China because they are using UIC specifications.
- UIC has been successful also in **promoting rail development**, with, for instance, the promotion of the high-speed networks in the U.S. based on successful experiences in Europe and in Asia. UIC is also providing technical support for the initiative of the African Union to develop a rail backbone for the continent.
- UIC has also an advisory status at the UN level and is especially active, in particular during the COP, in promoting modal shift.
- Railways have a global challenge, which is **reducing greenhouse gas emissions by contributing to increase the modal share of rail and public transport.** This will be possible if our sector reaches a better cost position for improving competitiveness. It will come through the preparation and publication of common specifications and operational standards.

The UIC Manifesto

The UIC Manifesto is putting climate change at the centre of UIC's strategy. Transport accounts for a quarter of all greenhouse emissions whilst the demand for transport services is expected to grow by another 20% by 2050[1],

Railways are part of the solution: for example, if 10% of traffic was to be shifted to rail in France, about 8% of the total greenhouse gas emission of the transport sector would be eroded[2]. This very simple idea that modal shift is part of the solution is something that UIC would like to share with decision-makers. It is therefore essential to define what technologies have to be put forward, to explain how the shift should be organised and to define what operational procedures need to be implemented.

That's where UIC has a role to play in partnership with public transport, cities and transport authorities. Together, we can draw a new transport paradigm that would be valid in urban areas, but also in peripheral areas. This would be achieved within an open dialogue with other modes such as road and aviation.

UIC, with the support of its members, can contribute to this ambitious goal through essential technical components such as:

- the specification for a **5G telecom backbone** (FRMCS) that would be essential for developing autonomous trains and thus increasing capacity on existing infrastructure;
- participation to the system pillar of Europe's Rail Joint Undertaking, in order to set up a **consistent rail architecture** ready for implementing rapid market uptake of essential innovative deliverables;
- new **data models for passenger and a digital platform for freight** opening the way to digital ecosystems for multi-modality and logistics chains. For instance, UIC has developed, with our stakeholders, **OSDM – Open Sales and Distribution Model**, a game changer for ticketing applications.

[1] ITF Transport Outlook 2021: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/transport/itf-transport-outlook-2021_16826a30-en

[2] « Le fer contre le carbone » : <https://medias.sncf.com/sncfcom/pdf/strategie/fer-carbone.pdf>

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UIC is the worldwide organisation for the promotion of rail transport at a global level and collaborative development of the railway system. It brings together some 200 members on all 5 continents, among them rail operators, infrastructure managers, railway service providers, etc. UIC maintains close cooperation links with all actors in the rail transport domain around the world, including manufacturers, railway associations, public authorities and stakeholders in other domains and sectors whose experiences may be beneficial to rail development. UIC's main tasks include understanding the business needs of the rail community, developing innovation programmes to identify solutions to those needs, as well as preparing and publishing a series of documents such as reports, specifications, guidelines and IRS that facilitate the implementation of the innovative solutions.
