

6th International Seminar on Railway Operating Safety and Security

Tangier, 19 April 2017

Opening session

Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, UIC Director-General

Minister,

.....(names/titles of representatives of local & regional authorities),

My dear friend Mohammed Rabie Khlie, ONCF Chief Executive and Chairman of the UIC African Region,

This is already the 6th edition of this ONCF - UIC seminar on Safety & Security. That in itself is a testament to ONCF's continued commitment, led by their Chief Executive, to serving Morocco by developing rail transport in their country, and to doing so safely and securely, which is vital if rail is to remain an attractive mode of transport.

I will first talk of security, for two reasons. Firstly, because from 2008 to 2012, ONCF made a major contribution to the UIC Security Platform through the personal dedication of Mr Moha Khaddour, who though now retired is still active and present, but who at that time was firstly Vice-Chairman and later Chairman of the Security Platform.

Secondly, because amongst security issues, terrorism is more of a threat than ever, and I would like us all to spare a thought for the victims of terrorism across the world, specifically the most recent attacks in London, St Petersburg, and Stockholm. We know all too well that any of our homelands could one day be the target of indiscriminate violence, and that we must redouble our efforts in our respective countries so that life may go on and security and justice triumph over intimidation and hatred.

That brings us to our overarching theme: safety and security. Here it is important to take a joined-up approach, for though the causes and responsibilities differ, the two areas are related and have much in common in terms of their consequences and the human resources we deploy to manage them, both within our companies and in the external partnerships which are a necessary part of our work. To this we may add the related aspects of climate-related,

geological or other natural risks which may also cause accidents or otherwise disrupt our business.

That was the focus of the previous seminar, the 5th, held here in Tangier in April 2013, whose title was "Successfully managing safety and security ensures that rail transport retains its principal asset". This is a subject of ongoing relevance, and one that is complex enough to be worth revisiting on a regular basis.

The seminar before that, the 4th, held in Ifrane in April 2011, already addressed the procedures for the commissioning of high speed systems, but the forthcoming opening of Morocco's high speed line - North Africa's first - next year means that it is timely and certainly not superfluous to focus once more on high speed rail. The principles underpinning safety and security may be the same for high speed as for conventional rail, but the potential consequences of any security breaches or safety failings would be so much worse - due to the higher speed - that additional attention and vigilance are needed.

In this regard, I find this seminar's programme particularly well structured, since it treats the subject as an ongoing process that accompanies the rail system throughout its life: from design through to construction, management and operation.

Safety and security, or "comprehensive protection of the rail system" as they are also known, are realities that have to be considered and designed into a rail system as far upstream as possible if they are to underpin quality of service and not become external constraints which add to the existing operating conditions and risk undermining the system's cost-effectiveness. This will be addressed during session 2.

Having designed the system, it must then be ensured that everything is shipshape and ready to go when it opens for service: logically enough, this will be the subject of session 3, for which I am pleased to welcome a number of speakers who are "non-railway" in that they do not work for railway companies, even though rail is part of their field of work or responsibilities: we have Peter Mimh representing the European Railway Agency/ERA, as well as François Davenne, the Secretary-General of OTIF, an organisation of which Morocco is a member.

The job then is to learn from experience to create a virtuous feedback loop and ensure continuous improvement all round: that is the theme of session 5

Two other aspects remain:

- the partnerships and relationships we need to develop and keep alive with external authorities: this is particularly important in relation to security and civil defence, as will be discussed during session 1
- mobilising the men and women who work for our companies to preserve safety & security: these issues of training and safety/security culture will be addressed in session 4.

This very full programme thus touches on every aspect at one time or another, whether during the design or commissioning of a high speed system or later during its operating life. But I would like to go further and suggest a topic for the next edition of this seminar: I wish to focus on the impact of technological change, specifically communications technology and what we call the "digital world".

Digital's emergence and growing presence at every moment of our lives has already shaken old certainties and radically altered our habits, ways of thinking and the way we get our information, and will continue doing so.

Technology, in particular social media, now means that information is no longer confined by time or space: everything is known, everywhere, all the time. That is simultaneously a golden opportunity and an increased risk or threat, as we said at our seminar at the World Bank in Washington last May on the subject of "Digital technology and railway security – threats and constraints, advantages and opportunities".

How can our companies - by nature hierarchical - respond to information which in the short term is uncontrolled and uncontrollable? How can they better meet the ever-more demanding requirements of customers who are increasingly well-informed and able to compare situations or indeed transport modes at any time? Are our companies ready to "go digital" and make new communications and information technologies a pivotal part of their improvement?

Though it is nothing new to say that safety and security have always required a combination of technologies, procedures and human factors, we now need to look again at all these things in a context of increasing digitalisation. That will certainly be one of our major challenges in future. So let us take it up without delay.

To conclude, I wish to inform you of two important UIC events dealing with the subjects addressed here this week.

The first is this year's "Security week", which will take place at UIC Headquarters from 6 to 9 June. This will provide an opportunity to present and disseminate the results of the additional security programme UIC members asked for in 2016, and which has been completed.

This will involve:

- Pooling and making available security training programmes via a joint "toolbox" and providing information on the new challenges we face,
- structuring the security-related information to be exchanged between railway undertakings and with external partners: this will be covered by a UIC leaflet, an "International Railway Solution"

- developing effective, joined-up crisis management solutions: the UIC Security Division has just published guidelines which will enable anyone to rate the solutions or responses they have adopted

Finally, we will be holding our annual seminar on terrorism, plus on Thursday 8 June 2017, the inaugural "Awareness day", during which our railways will stress the importance of security-related communication with our customers so that they too play their part in ensuring their own security, in addition to and alongside the organisational measures we take.

The other event, of course, is the UIC NextStation conference on 19 and 20 October 2017 in Madrid, following the extremely successful edition in Marrakesh on 21 and 22 October 2015. In particular, a piece of joint work between the UIC Security Platform and the Station Managers Global Group (Passenger department) will be presented in Madrid. This will take the shape of a handbook on station security, both stations in general and high speed stations.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you