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UIC goes to Washington to discuss the railways' role in transforming transport

The organisation participated in the Transforming Transportation Conference hosted by the World Bank and World Resources Institute, and the High-Speed Rail Seminar organised by APTA, both held on 15-16 March 2023.

(Paris, 21 March 2023) UIC was in Washington last week for a range of transport events and bilateral meetings:

- The Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) consortium meeting
- The workshop on the Breakthrough Agenda *Towards a New Sector Breakthrough for Land Transport* organised by the Climate Champions team
- The SLOCAT Partnership Annual Meeting
- *Transforming Transportation 2023: Accelerating Toward Green and Inclusive Mobility* organised by the World Bank and the World Resources Institute
- The *High-Speed Rail Seminar - Connecting America's Cities* organised by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)
- Bilateral meetings with the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank

These events created opportunities to engage with US and global stakeholders, and to continue to position rail as one of the readily available solutions to climate change.

During the **Sum4All consortium meeting**, François Davenne highlighted that if the transport sector wants to have the highest impact in terms of decarbonisation, then it must put robust indicators for a modal shift in place, as is already the case in certain countries such as Austria or India.

Joining a debate on decarbonising freight during **Transforming Transportation 2023: Accelerating Toward Green and Inclusive Mobility**, UIC explored the progress made towards zero-emissions and the opportunities in established and emerging markets. Speakers highlighted the importance of public policy as the key driver for the market transformation which is needed to reach zero emissions in freight, not only to move businesses in the same direction but also attract private sector investment to finance this transformation.

Davenne then made the case for rail as the mode of transport with the lowest emissions, with Europe, for instance, having 17% of freight transport but only 0.5% of emissions. Accelerating the future of zero emission freight requires a paradigm shift with more services consuming less energy, which is exactly what rail offers. Levelling the playing field by developing policies that ensure that the positive and negative externalities from each mode of transport are also financially reflected in their cost structure, is another crucial step to keeping global warming below 1.5°C.

He used road freight as an example, stating how it is not paying for its average negative

impact on society, and that if this was balanced, rail freight would become much more #competitive and the necessary shift to rail would happen.

UIC also took part in the **High-Speed Rail Seminar - Connecting America's Cities** organised this week in Washington by APTA.

Here Davenne focused on the international experiences in nurturing and sustaining railway development, saying how in the previous two weeks, the first at the UIC World Congress on High-Speed Rail in Marrakesh and again at the APTA High-Speed Rail Seminar, UIC had seen proof of great enthusiasm for high-speed rail and was reminded of the power and value in sharing experiences about transport system changes across the global regions.

Marc Guigon, UIC Passenger Director, gave a presentation on high-speed rail across the world which encompasses a total length of 59,000km with two thirds being in China, while the rest cover the other continents including Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North America. Each high-speed service not only captures pre-existing traffic between the poles served but is also a tool for a modal shift from air and road to rail transport, while also solving some of the issues regarding induced traffic.

Philippe Lorand, UIC High-Speed Rail Senior Advisor, gave an overview of the medium and long-term development of HSR projects, with many corridors being launched in the coming years in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Korea, India, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. They will create jobs and employment, help innovation, and reduce emissions.

The UIC team additionally attended important meetings with key stakeholders and partners including the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank to further the common goal of improving rail travel services and achieving a 40% shift from road and aviation to rail worldwide by 2030.

During these discussions, the following takeaways from the recent UIC World Congress on High-Speed Rail were also mentioned:

- **High-speed must be integrated seamlessly with all other modes of transport to achieve the modal shift needed to combat climate change**
- **A high-speed system can be effective in every region, including in middle income countries**
- **Financing rail infrastructure must be understood as an investment in a low carbon world**

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