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UIC Statutory meetings

77th UIC General Assembly and Executive Board in Beijing confirms the growing role of UIC for worldwide promotion of rail transport

- Mandates of UIC Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Director-General renewed
- Progress on global activities and regional cooperation
- UIC concludes a series of agreements and MoUs with leading institutions
- Boris Lapidus, RZD, will chair the International Railway Research Board
- Marc Descheemaeker, SNCB Operator, will chair the UIC Passenger Forum

(Beijing/Paris, 7 December 2010). The International Union of Railways (UIC), the worldwide association with 200 Members across the world held its statutory meetings, Executive Board and General Assembly, in Beijing on 5-6 December at the invitation of the Ministry of Railways (MoR) of China and prior to UIC HIGHSPEED, the 7th World Congress on High Speed Rail. The meetings were chaired by UIC Chairman Mr Yoshio Ishida, JR East, together with Vice-Chairman Mr Mauro Moretti, FS, and UIC Director-General Mr Jean-Pierre Loubinoux. The meetings were attended by a number of Railway Chairmen and CEOs including Mr Sun Lishi, MoR, Mr Vladimir Yakunin, RZD, Mr Sulëyman Karaman, TCDD, Mr Hu, KORAIL, Mr Robert Vanderclute, AAR.

Vice-Minister Mr Wang took the floor at the opening of the General Assembly to welcome all participants on behalf of the Ministry of Railways and to highlight the importance of UIC as the international organisation of railways. He highlighted the essential role of UIC to support the development of railways worldwide.

Among important issues relating to UIC governance, the mandates of the UIC Chairman and Vice-Chairman were renewed until December 2012 and the mandate of the UIC Director-General until March 2013. In addition, Mr Hubert du Mesnil, RFF President, was appointed to the Executive Board to replace Mr Bert Klerk, ProRail, as well as Mr Marc La Liberté, CEO of Via Rail, Canada, as the second Executive Board member representing North America.

The meetings provided an opportunity to report on the progress of UIC’s work since the previous UIC General Assembly in Tokyo in different areas:

- Global activities, structured around 5 key issues (world research, sustainable development, freight including corridors, safety and security, signalling, standardisation);
- Level of regional cooperation with the presentation of priorities in the UIC regions: Africa (with the recent opening of the UIC regional office in Tunis), North and South America, Asia (supported by regional office in Delhi and CIS representation in Tashkent), Europe (in close cooperation with CER and EIM), Middle-East (supported by the regional office in Tehran);
- Technical activities monitored by UIC working bodies (Forums and Platforms) and Departments.
An important development in UIC activities is the conclusion and preparation of agreements or Memoranda of Understandings with a series of intergovernmental organisations (such as UNEP, UNECE, UNESCAP, African Union Commission), financial institutions (World Bank, Asian Development Bank), professional organisations (OTA, USA; IMM, the Institute of Asset Management), standard bodies (CEN, Technical Recommendations with UNIFE), etc. Special support from the General Assembly will be provided to develop a partnership with ISO for global standards with UIC.

Some very important UIC activities are linked with the worldwide promotion of rail transport for its advantages in terms of sustainable development and CO₂ emissions. All UIC member railways are in the process of signing the UIC Sustainable Declaration and so will commit themselves to optimise their contribution for sustainable transport. This action is supported by UNEP and Global Compact. The next step will be an important high-level event for the promotion of the UIC Sustainability Declaration, jointly organised with the United Nations and held in New York in May 2011 to mark this close partnership.

Directors of the UIC Technical departments (Rail System, Passengers, Freight and Fundamental Values) reported on the progress of cooperation activities in Forums and Platforms.

Information on the financial results for 2010 and plans for the 2011 budget were unanimously approved by members. Members also expressed their satisfaction at the strict and transparent management of accounts.

A series of appointments was approved by the General Assembly at the proposal of UIC Director-General. Mr Boris Lapidus, Senior Vice-President of RZD, was appointed (along with 3 Vice-Chairmen) Chairman of the International Rail Research Board (IRRB) that will play an increased role in exchanging on research policies at world level. Mr Marc Descheemaeker, CEO of SNCB Operator, is the new Chairman of the UIC Passenger Forum (with the main cooperation issues on high speed development, inter-urban passenger transport, IT and customer services and station development).

The Research Coordination Group (RCG) will be chaired by Mr Christophe Chéron, SNCF. Mr Joachim Kettner, DB, was renewed as Chairman of the Environment, Energy and Sustainability Platform and Mr Jean-Michel Richard, SNCF, as Chairman of the Safety Platform. Mr A. Netolicky, ÖBB, was appointed as Chairman of the Expertise Platform.

Finally, the General Assembly approved the new membership of South Caucasus Railways CJSC (associate), Department of Transport of Victoria, Australia (affiliate), Arenaways, Italian passenger operator (associate), FFE, Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spanish Railways Foundation), Spanish Rail Foundation (affiliate), and ANTT, Brazilian National Transport Administration (affiliate).

The next UIC Executive Board and General Assembly meetings will be held on 7-8 June 2011 in Poland at the invitation of PKP.

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