

Webinar: Health & Safety Challenges faced by Railways since COVID-19

30 September 2021

Conclusions

Said Chandid, Responsible of the UIC Africa Regional Office

Here is one of the highlights of our virtual meeting today. We have followed closely our eminent speakers who have shared with us their thoughts and experiences, on railways and the new challenges of health and safety since COVID-19. This is one of the fundamental concerns, along with the technical aspects, for which we are called to direct our strategic choices in order to efficiently accompany our activities while preserving our human capital.

Our programme included 10 interventions structured in two panels, through which several elements emerge and which can be summarized in four main points:

- The first element is that the rail networks are prepared to adapt to the new context. They have continued to reinvent themselves to ensure their sustainability, viability, strengthen their resilience and confirm the worth of rail for the community: the case of the Freight and Logistics activity.
Our community has thus called upon its creativity, rigor and commitment to manage the crisis and preserve and protect the health and safety of all its stakeholders involved in the value chain.
- The second element is that the recovery within the framework of the new normal is our common responsibility to be able, together and in good collective intelligence, to overcome the constraints related to the change in our environment, and capitalize on the lessons learned.
In this respect, the theory of the 5 R's is highly significant (Resolve, Resist, Return, Reimagine and Recast) and we must strive to demonstrate, each at its own level, innovation and exceptional mobilization to win the bet of the future.
- The third element is that the recovery within the framework of the new normal is our common responsibility to be able, together and in good collective intelligence, to overcome the constraints related to the change in our environment, and capitalize on the lessons learned.
The exceptional period we have experienced has enabled us to identify areas for improvement to which we must attach importance in order to gain in terms of productivity, reactivity, effectiveness, efficiency and restraint in the face of tough competition that has placed importance on R&D and new technologies.
- The 4th element to remember is that in a post-Covid context, marked by paradigm shifts and a new normality, health requirements will take precedence as fundamentals in our activities. We are obliged to recast and even reinvent:
 - Firstly, our OHS system, by working to inculcate the OHS culture with a strengthening of our CSR pact and commitment, by developing an integrated and coherent system and by equipping ourselves with an OHS risk map, knowing that this is an aspect that will require multidisciplinary management.
 - Secondly, it was noted that it is extremely important to apply the tools, adapt to recent standards, comply with legal obligations and rely on the principles of

prevention, accelerate the digitalization of the system and strengthen the steering system and decentralization

- Thirdly, the importance of resources was noted: recommending to readjust the organisation of work, strengthen OHS skills, design OHS training cycles, as well as develop cooperation (HR circle at UIC), build and deploy appropriate awareness plans.

The objective is to define and deploy an innovative HRM model that reconnects with people, while repositioning health and safety at the heart of the future of work. As noted in the speech of the UIC Africa Chairman, this is the only way to turn the COVID-19 crisis into a real catalyst for building an integrated, human-centered, inclusive, sustainable and resilient OHS.

These are some of the highlights of our meeting today. On behalf of the Presidency, the UIC and on your behalf we would like to thank our speakers, the Paris organization team and Regional Office for their efforts in organizing this webinar. And we look forward to seeing you in November for our African Rail Thursdays' cycle with another topical subject. Do not hesitate to send us your proposals for the subjects that are of interest to you.