



***Dakar International Forum***  
***Financing Rail Projects in Africa***

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**Dakar Senegal, October 19-21, 2023**

**Under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Senegal**

**Venue: Abdou Diouf International Conference Center**

**Dakar Senegal**

**CONCEPT NOTE**

## BACKGROUND

Rail development will provide Africa with the means to support strong, sustainable economic growth, with real opportunities to guarantee resilience by strengthening intra- and international trade. With new technologies providing a wealth of innovative solutions, rail infrastructure and rolling stock will provide the continent with unparalleled leverage to drive a competitive economy.

UIC celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2022. This centenary was a symbolic and important moment, linking past, present and future. For over 100 years, railroads have been the most important mode of transport contributing to the development of African countries. In many parts of Africa, however, its history is closely linked to that of colonization.

Rail transport first appeared in Africa at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the 50 years following its introduction saw a period of rapid expansion. The aim was to transport raw materials (ores, timber, tropical products) from inland to the ports, bound for the European metropolises. This influenced the general design of the networks, with most lines running from sea-ports to the hinterland, but also the development of the regions crossed. In Africa, the railroads have been at the origin of the urbanization of several towns, even if their development over time has been exclusively linked to the existence of mining resources.

Today, railroads in Africa face competition from road transport, and are confronted with a number of challenges relating to governance, dilapidated facilities and rolling stock, and the financing and mobilization of resources for modernization.

At the same time, the rail network must keep pace with economic and demographic growth, with its comparative advantages in the transport of heavy, non-perishable goods.

It's against this backdrop that Senegal has implemented the Plan for an Emerging Senegal (PSE), the country's new economic and social development strategy, with the introduction of modern, sustainable mass transit systems capable of meeting the challenges of urban mobility with a view to decarbonized, inclusive economic growth. It was with this in mind that the rail policy, known as the Senegal Strategy of Rail Revitalization (S2RS), was conceived

and adopted. By 2035, and in perfect harmony with the PSE, it aims to build a rail system that is safe, respectful of the environment and of social and territorial equity, offering a high-performance transport service, and positioned as a vector for the densification of demographic flows conducive to the overall competitiveness of the Senegalese economy.

Senegal's determination to make the railways a key factor in the country's emergence is demonstrated by the implementation of the ambitious presidential project known as the Dakar-AIBD Regional Express Train (TER). This latest-generation rail infrastructure, linking the capital to Diamniadio (Phase 1) and the Diass Blaise DIAGNE Airport (Phase 2, currently under construction), is sparking a new enthusiasm for trains among the local population, technical and financial partners, and economic operators in the agricultural, tourism, mining and industrial sectors. After just one year in commercial service, the TER has carried more than 17 million passengers. Likewise, the African Union Commission (AUC) has taken several initiatives. Recently, African ministers responsible for transport adopted the Agenda 2063 for rail development in Africa. The project for an Africa Integrated High-Speed Rail Network (AIHSRN) is one of its flagship projects.

The development of the African transport system involves the development of specifications for African networks, technical governance of large rail areas, and the mobilization of funding. Rail will obviously be the backbone of this mobility chain and is an important asset for African integration and the development of trade as expressed in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

It is in this context that the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the National Senegalese Railways Company (CFS) are organizing an International Forum for the Financing of rail projects in Africa in the context of the railway renaissance and sustainable development.

## **OBJECTIVES**

It is in this context that the Dakar International Forum will be held from October 19 to 21, 2023, with the aim of promoting an effective revival of railroads in Africa.

Specifically, this meeting is organized in order to: (i) **encourage country-led rail development** in Africa; (ii) **bring together and mobilize** rail sector stakeholders, political decision-makers, rail company and industry representatives, technical bodies, rail experts, economists, key players in financing; (iii) **identify** major national and international investment projects; (iv ) **identify** financing mechanisms; (v) **strengthen** public-private partnerships and (vi) **develop** cooperation between states through strategic support for regional and sub-regional projects.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

The main results expected from this Forum are:

- Better integration of rail projects and Agenda 2063 "The Africa We Want" into national development strategies
- Better consideration of specifications for African networks
- Technical support for African rail development
- Training efforts
- Fund-raising support for investment projects
  - Roundtables on rail investment opportunities in Africa
  - B to B meetings
  - Partnership agreements signed
- Contacts with potential national and international partners.

UIC, in conjunction with regional organizations, will capitalize on the results of the Forum to make it a regular meeting point for the African rail sector. One of the outcomes of this Forum should be the pre-announcement of the second Forum.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Sponsorships with investors.

## PROGRAM

The Forum program can be downloaded from the UIC and CFS websites

[International Forum: Financing rail projects in Africa | UIC - International union of railways | Events](#)

## PARTICIPANTS

- 400 to 500 participants are expected, including:
  - African ministers in charge of railroads
  - African Ministers of Transport and Technology
  - AUC - African Union Commission
  - African rail companies
  - UAC - African Union of Railways
  - UIC - International Union of Railways
  - Experts from the Regional Economic Communities
  - AfDB - The African Development Bank
  - The European Union
  - ERA - European Union Railways Agency
  - FRA - Federal Railroad Administration
  - GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council
  - EIB - European Investment Bank
  - IsDB - Islamic Development Bank
  - FDA - French Development Agency
  - KfW Development Bank
  - OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
  - UNECA - The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
  - World Bank
  - IFC - International Finance Corporation
  - Standard Bank, London
  - Development banks
  - Railway companies
  - Infrastructure Managers
  - Port & maritime companies
  - Rail industry representatives
  - Investors (private, technical and financial partners)
  - African economists
  - African railway experts
  - Media & Guest rail media

## PLACE & DATE

The Forum will be held in **Dakar, from October 19 to 21, 2023.**

Centre International de Conférence Abdou DIOUF, Dakar

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**Website for further information and registration:**

<https://uic.org/events/Forum-Financing-rail-investment-in-Africa>