

**Speech by Oleg Belozеров, Chairman of UIC and President of Russian Railways, at the 87th session of the UIC General Assembly on Point 3 of the Agenda
Paris, 1 December 2015**

Dear Mr. Loubinoux, colleagues and members of the UIC General Assembly,

I warmly welcome the heads and senior officials of rail companies from all over the world, and the directors and representatives of leading international organisations.

Before I begin, on behalf of the JSC “Russian Railways” and the entire Russian transport industry, I would like to offer my sincerest condolences to the people of France over the tragic series of terrorist attacks that took place in Paris on November 13th, 2015. We wholeheartedly share the pain of all countries affected by the same tragedy, and affirm our solidarity with France, Mali, Tunisia, Lebanon, Kenya, and other states.

We understand this pain all too well, as 224 Russian citizens also fell victim to the terrorist attack against the Russian plane on October 31st.

There can never be any justification for the evil that terrorism brings. Human life is beyond value. We grieve for all the victims and wish those who were injured in the attacks to recover soon.

Let us all have a moment of silence in honour of those who lost their lives... Thank you.

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First of all, let me begin by thanking everyone for your kind words following my appointment as President of the JSC “Russian Railways”. I would also like to thank you for entrusting me with important mission of being the Chairman of UIC, a global organization that currently unites more than 200 rail companies from all continents. I am extremely pleased to see the best representatives of the global rail community here today.

I assure you of my commitment to the noble traditions of our Union. And I will make every effort to further the development of the UIC as a respected global association that provides its members with great opportunities for effective multilateral cooperation.

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In the globalized world there is a change in approaches to forming international transport policy on a global scale. In the past, the global transport agenda was, as a rule, set by states or inter-governmental organisations. Now, there is a growing interest within the transport industry in engaging decision-makers at the multilateral level, including at the level of the United Nations.

Transport has become a focus of the United Nations and other international organisations, especially in light of the Resolution of the 69th Session of the General Assembly on the “Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation for Sustainable Development” adopted in December 2014.

Railways of the 21st century have taken on a new shape, becoming a genuine form of sustainable transport, the goals of which are in line with the **17 Sustainable Development Goals of humanity set in the UN Resolution on Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on 25 September 2015**.

Rail transport should answer the challenges of our time: the globalisation of the economy; improving safety, and especially security; growing urbanisation; fighting poverty, etc.

However, despite these new challenges, rail transport continues to play a connective role in developing the economy and trade and in mobilising people.

UIC Director General Jean-Pierre Loubinoux will deliver a report about the results of the Union’s activities over the past year in all areas of its work.

I would like to take some time to analyse our achievements in a number of areas of our work that I believe are very important.

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

As you all know, in less than one year the United Nations will hold an International Conference on Sustainable Transport, where the results of the work of the High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport – in which the UIC plays a very important role – will be presented, as will the results of the UN’s Global Transport Survey.

A key focus for the UIC in this work was the **issue of sustainable development and sustainable transport**. At the same time, the role of business in tackling global problems of sustainable development has increased dramatically. This is reflected in the creation of regional and global partnerships.

I would like to inform you that, right now, global partnership programmes have been launched by the United Nations in the spheres of sustainable energy and tourism, as well as in the other areas.

The initiative to create a global partnership on sustainable transport was announced last November at the United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna.

Today, major players in the transport industry, including Maersk, AMTRAK, DHL, Michelin, Volvo and others, are involved in developing the main tasks and areas of work of this Global Partnership.

I believe that the UIC should take the lead in this project so that it can promote rail transport as the most effective and environmentally sustainable mode of transport, especially in terms of transport trends in developing countries.

I would also like to remind you that at the beginning of this year, the Committee on NGOs of the United Nations Economic and Social Council approved the motion to raise the UIC to Special Consultative Status. This means that we can now include the most pressing issues associated with the needs of our members in the agenda of international intergovernmental organisations within the UN structure.

It is quite symbolic that the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has started at almost the same time as our meeting here. The UIC's **Train to Paris** project was launched as part of the Conference.

Both the UIC headquarters and its members have demonstrated a high level of coordination and involvement in this project, making every effort to position railways as the most environmentally safe mode of transport.

2. INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

The UN Resolution on “The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation for Sustainable Development” has become the basis for the joint work of national governments, international organisations and the business community in forming a modern and safe transport infrastructure.

The creation of universal transport and logistical supply chains. The interaction of different modes of transport. The development of dry ports. The harmonisation and simplification of border crossing procedures. These are just some of the issues that the UN Resolution will address.

It also calls for international organisations, financial institutes and developments banks, and public and private structures to mobilise their financial resources.

I would like to note here that the UIC has achieved a great deal in the development of transport corridors. The practical recommendations contained in the Concept for the Development of International Transport Corridors have been developed in the framework of the UIC's Global Team of Experts.

Importantly, the Concept received the support of major international UN organisations – the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Council – as well as key regional transport organisations, including the Organization for Cooperation of Railways and the Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transportation, among others.

Therefore, the practical implementation of the Concept for the Development of International Transport Corridors, along with other UIC projects, should be considered the UIC's contribution to the UN Resolution on "The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation for Sustainable Development".

On the other hand, the UIC should use the work to implement the UN Resolution to promote the interests of the rail industry in such regions as Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America more actively. This is especially true for landlocked countries.

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And there is another aspect which it would be worthwhile for us to consider.

The significance of **Eurasian railway freight transport** cannot be overestimated. In recent years, however, we have observed a kind of decrease in the work being done to develop Eurasian transport, including that done by international organisations. We are seeing a crisis of ideas, a lack of breakthrough initiatives and recommendations for developing long-distance inter-regional freight transport.

In these circumstances it seems to me that **the UIC should launch an initiative to hold a special international Conference in 2016** in conjunction with the UNECE and UNESCAP and also other interested international organisations, and possibly the governments of a number of countries.

The main aim of the conference should be to seek ways to increase the efficiency of Eurasian transport links. Holding such a conference would determine the areas of development for ITCs. It is worth adding that such an event comes fully within the mandate of the UN.

3. STANDARDISATION

We all realise how important the topic of standardisation is for all parties in the international railways market.

Creating international standards is a long and complicated **process**. But the majority of UIC members, both in Europe and in other regions, have an obvious interest in the results of this process in terms of eliminating infrastructural and technical barriers and creating integrated regional rail systems.

The main consequence of harmonised standards would be the simplification of the border-crossing procedures and introduction of the advanced technologies and equipment, and, as a result, expansion of the

access to markets, increase of the efficiency and competitiveness of rail transport, and the growth in the scale of international passenger and freight transport.

I believe that this work, which is currently being done by the members of the European regional assembly and partially concerns the 1520-mm gauge area, should also be extended to other regions.

Overall we are moving forward in this area. The first UIC International Rail Standards have been drawn up. The Joint UIC/OSJD Group on Creation of 1520-mm Gauge International Rail Standards (IRS) started work in 2015.

The leaders of the Platform are pursuing cooperation with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on a permanent basis and developing various methods and mechanisms for cooperation with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

There is no doubt that we must approach the planning and consequent precise fulfilment of the objectives facing the Standardisation Platform in a very responsible way.

4. SECURITY

Dear colleagues, the **UIC Security Platform** has done some serious work over the past year. We are all well aware that the work of ensuring security has moved to the forefront in the majority of international organisations, and also our members, the railway companies of the world.

I would like to note that if we are to achieve effective and coordinated work our cooperation in this area must be of a global coordinated nature and be targeted towards overcoming national and regional borders.

The example of successful cooperation in this field was the global seminar “Combating terrorism: the role of the human factor in averting terrorist acts”, organised on the initiative of the JSC “Russian Railways” on 16–17 June this year in Paris. More than 70 experts from 23 countries took part in it. At the end of the event the participants drew up a declaration which reflects the main areas of combating terrorism on rail transport.

The area associated with **cybersecurity** is actively developing. Some effective work is being done here by the UIC Special Group COLPOFER, in which railway security services and the police cooperate.

A whole range of tragic events over the past year unfortunately leave us in no doubt that the question of countering terrorism will remain extremely important for the immediate future.

5. PROJECT ACTIVITY.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Organisation's project activity, as we are all well aware, remains one of the difficult issues. The development of **global projects of common interest** has not yet begun in practice, and yet the project approach can take our cooperation to a qualitatively new level.

I believe that if we are to fulfil this objective we need more active cooperation and coordination not only within the UIC regional assemblies but also between them.

One example of this is the **creation of a Heavy Haul Platform**. In view of the fact that the development of heavy haul is now a subject of interest, in my view it would make sense to use the opportunity for practical cooperation on this topic within the UIC.

The work to **create a quality management system** which is being done by the UIC's European region is also extremely important. In my view, all the regions should be involved in this work, since it concerns an issue which all of us have in common. The concept of quality and the requirements for it should be shared by all of us.

Dear colleagues,

In conclusion I would like to assure you once again that I shall always follow the principles of the International Union of Railways, which are geared towards strengthening the railway community, and I shall make every effort to maintain the balance of interests between the UIC's members. I am counting on your support, and on our open and constructive dialogue.

Thank you for your attention!