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## **UIC held its first NARA (North America Regional Assembly) Meeting in Washington, DC**

### **First Meeting of the UIC North American Region Assembly (NARA) held in Washington at the World Bank Headquarters, in conjunction with a workshop on Digital Technology and Railway Security**

(Paris, 10 May 2016) The International Union of Railways UIC held its first meeting of the North America Regional Assembly (NARA), on May 4, 2016 bringing together five railways and railway authorities from the United States and Canada at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, DC in conjunction with a workshop on “Digital Technology and Railway Security”.

The UIC NARA meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, President and CEO of VIA Rail Canada and Chairman of the UIC North American Region, and in presence of all five North American Region members : VIA Rail Canada represented by Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano; the Federal Railroad Administration / United States Department of Transportation represented by Ms. Barbara Klein Barr, Director, International Programs Division; the Association of American Railroads represented by Mr. Thomas Farmer, Assistant Vice President for Security; the California High Speed Rail Authority represented by Ms. Sheila Dezarn, Vice President - Strategic Project Development at Parsons Brinckerhoff; and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) represented by Mr. Ron Baklarz, Chief Information Security Officer. The UIC European Region was represented by Mr. Francisco Cardoso dos Reis, Senior Advisor of Infraestruturas de Portugal and Member of the Board, and Mr. Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of the UIC.

In his opening address, Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano discussed the broad guidelines of the chairmanship of the UIC North American region and highlighted the structured approach that the UIC has been following for the past year with its regional strategic vision for the UIC North America Region. He put particular focus on the current challenges that North American railroads face, including population growth and changing demographics, energy costs, environmental protection, accessibility, road and rail congestion and safety concerns. He also mentioned the necessity to better manage passenger service and passenger experience in the region. He said: *“by creating this American group we are responding to the growth of passenger rail services in North America. Thus, we must orient our actions towards the passenger experience to increase market value and a business / industry view. Our industry can be part of the solution to road congestion and climate change.”*

UIC Director General Mr. Loubinoux was pleased to welcome all the members of the “UIC American family” together for the first time. He started by saying that these two days of meetings organised at the World Bank and workshop on “Digital Technology and Railway Security”, were a good illustration of what UIC can bring to its members who share the same of vision and values of unity, solidarity and universality, explaining its major role of technical expertise on the railway field.

Beyond the UIC missions of Innovation, Transmission, Knowledge and Dissemination best practices, he also outlined the UIC's global strategic themes, approved by the UIC General Assembly, which include global standards, interoperability, sustainable transport, a commitment to combat climate change, traffic management and train control (including European Rail Traffic Management System, ERTMS and Positive Train Control, PTC), security and safety (including the level crossing issue and transportation of hazardous goods) and training issues.

Mr. Loubinoux also reminded members of the three drivers that lead UIC actions: professionalism, productivity and promotion. Keeping with the last driver, he mentioned several UIC conferences and congresses that UIC North American members were welcome attend (including the UIC Global Rail Freight Conference, the International Rail Safety Council, the International Level Crossing Awareness Day campaign) and also invited members to host their own conferences to create "win-win opportunities". While in Washington the UIC also participated in the "Climate Action Summit 2016" organised by the World Bank and in presence of the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Mr. Loubinoux discussed some of the barriers to railway cooperation in the North America Region and encouraged the North American members to enrich the UIC's strategic vision for North America and to present it at the next Regional Assembly, which will be held next year in Montreal in conjunction with the International Level Crossing Awareness Day campaign.

Each regional member made a presentation about their company and they all showed interest in developing synergies and to share best practices within the UIC as a whole. One member said: *"We are a system, a worldwide system, and we are pleased to be part of it"*.

## **UIC North America Action Plan for 2016-2017**

During the first North American Regional Assembly (NARA), the decision was made to update the strategic vision document, entitled "Strategic Action Plan for UIC North America", to incorporate the most recent railway projects and achievements in the Region. At the next meeting items from the previous action plan will be further discussed.

The UIC would like to thank the World Bank Group for their hospitality and excellent support in the organisation of this meeting.

## **CONTACT**

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