



PRESS RELEASE nr. 29 /2012

9th UIC Regional Assembly for Africa in Tangier

2012 Activities and 2013 Action Plan

Appeal from Tangier for rail development in Africa

(Tanger, 17 octobre 2012) On 17 October 2012 the UIC Africa Region held its 9th Regional Assembly in Tangier, under the chairmanship of Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie, Director-General of Moroccan National Railways (ONCF) and Chairman of the UIC Africa Region.

Senior managers from around 10 African railway networks took part in this meeting (from Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Morocco, etc.) as well as the UIC Director-General and the Coordinator of the UIC Africa Region.

The first item to feature on the agenda of this 9th Regional Assembly was the review of the results of the UIC African Region activities during the first 10 months of this year. As such, the participants were pleased to note the activities undertaken, despite the challenging environment.

Moreover, Mr Mohamed Rabie Khlie stressed that the activities of the UIC African Region during 2012 had been adapted to the region's situation through the launch of several projects in accordance with the action plan decided at the previous Regional Assembly.

These include for example:

- The organisation of a seminar on railway security and human factors in Tunis
- The participation of a number of African networks in the international awareness day on the hazards of uncontrolled level crossings (ILCAD)
- The strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the shape of visits between African rail networks with the aim of sharing experience and good practice
- Launching an annual technical training session on railway security for operations managers of African railway networks at Moroccan Railways' hosting and training centres
- Supporting the Africa Express mission, consisting in organising a tour of Africa by train – the most environmentally-friendly form of transport – to promote around 20 sustainable development projects in 23 African countries, starting in Tangier

With regard to 2013, whose outlook is optimistic and forecast for economic growth is 4.8%, the participants agreed on an ambitious action plan. The plan will focus in particular on the organisation of targeted technical seminars and training sessions in various African countries, along with an African forum to share the new strategic vision with decision-makers and regional economic communities on rail development in Africa until 2025.

Finally, this 9th Regional Assembly has been a key event in the dynamic of the UIC African Region. This is reflected in the adoption of the **TANGIER APPEAL**, to be sent to decision-makers and African rail networks in order to encourage them to further promote this form of transport, which has undeniable advantages for the community and which has a considerable impact on sustainable development within the continent.

The TANGIER APPEAL is attached to this press release.

For further information please contact: com@uic.org

TANGIER APPEAL

9th UIC Africa Region Assembly

The members of the UIC African Regional Assembly present in Tangier on 17 October 2012,

Starting from the premise that:

- The African continent continues to record significant development, reflected in its uninterrupted structural economic growth of 5% since 2000
- Today the African continent occupies a key place in major international issues. It is considered, by several powers, to be a source of potential growth for the future
- Social sector levelling remains a tremendous challenge, as is meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)
- Mobility needs for both people and goods are increasingly important when combined with a growing population which is set to double to two billion by 2050
- Infrastructure of all types represents a major tool in the socio-economic take-off of the continent

Consider that:

- Railways constitute a strategic vector of development and economic integration for Africa
- Railway transport has undeniable advantages which are increasingly sought after today for the community and which are vital for putting in place a transport system that is appropriate, efficient, coherent, integrated and varied enough to meet future challenges
- Major efforts still need to be undertaken to revitalise railways on the African continent in order to provide a real tool to meet the growing needs in the area of eco-mobility and subsequently the regeneration of African countries
- Rail transport has all the qualities needed to play a significant and effective role in developing trade between African countries

Are persuaded that:

- For most rail networks, the current situation remains vulnerable and requires major restructuring programmes and improvements
- The UIC African Region remains the most appropriate body to help African networks benefit from experience in harmonising the railway system
- Sharing experience between the networks and developing cooperation at regional level remains the best approach to derive the maximum benefit from good practice and to promote rail transport across the continent

Wish for:

- Africa to have a rail transport system that is reliable, viable, effective and affordable, capable of promoting socio-economic development across its countries
- Africa to modernise, develop and interconnect its African rail networks
- Railway companies to confirm that their desire to modernise should be carried out with and through training to help younger generations prepare for the various professions in the railways
- Railway companies to further improve their range of services for users and economic operators, whilst maintaining a more professional and efficient management of the system
- The development of multimodal complementarity to be effective through better coordination between the various stakeholders and a better designed transport system with regard to the roles of the various links in the chain
- Rail transport to play a greater role in promoting regional integration and the position of the African continent on the world stage

Call for:

- Railway companies to include their development efforts in the vision set out by the UIC Africa Region, in a participatory manner, by 2025
- Railway companies to become more involved in the implementation of this new strategy to ensure rail transport plays a part in the continent's economic take-off
- Regional economic communities to play a major role in the deployment of the agreed improvement measures
- Governing bodies for transport, funding bodies and all stakeholders to support the AFRICA RAIL 2025 rail development project, which has beneficial consequences for our continent in a number of areas

Tangier, 17 October 2012