

**Marrakech, 16 March 2009**

ONCF - UIC Security Congress (Security Platform – Security Competency Centre)

**Railway Security: Strategies and Partnerships**

**Inaugural address**

**Vipin SHARMA: UIC Deputy Chief Executive**

Your Excellency, Chief Executive Officer, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today and personally to participate in the opening of this Congress alongside delegates permanently dedicated to the task of improving the security of persons, assets and installations in the railway sector. It is my firm belief, ladies and gentlemen, that this crucially important issue will best be addressed if transport professionals, national authorities, and international institutions pool together all their energies to achieve the desired outcomes.

The issue at stake is global in every sense of the term:

- Because it impacts upon all rail transport activities, whether in the passenger, freight or infrastructure sector,
- Because it is relevant to persons, assets and installations alike,
- Because it has a bearing on small routine delinquency and on the most violent and deadly acts of terrorism alike,
- Because it brings into play not only transport professionals but also their entire legal, administrative and institutional environment,
- Because it challenges each of our countries in the way it works and develops, and similarly in its relationships to others.

As we all know, the Railways are an important element of social cohesion within our countries in that they enable people to travel in ever better conditions made possible by network modernisation and development. They are also a key factor contributing to economic growth by facilitating exchanges in a world where production and consumer circuits are increasingly diversified, and where logistics chains are becoming more and more complex. And interestingly enough, they perform this dual function in a more environmentally-friendly way based on sustainable development as compared with other transport modes.

Yet the railways, at the same time as they perform this dual role, are a choice target for negative acts aimed at disrupting their installations or activities, either because such attacks have an instant major political, economic or social impact, or because their authors deliberately set out to challenge the role

played by railways as a symbol of the activity and organisation of our countries. And the fact that the railways are also a technological shop-window that epitomises modernity simply makes the threat all the more real and all the more permanent.

Because of these new constraints, and with the emergence of fresh challenges, our companies have been obliged to structure themselves in order not only to provide quick responses to the threat but also to develop practical security strategies ensuring that the resources deployed are dedicated to quality-of-service investments translating into greater service attractiveness, reliability and continuity.

Against this background, UIC set out a decade or so ago - remembering that the first UIC international forum centred exclusively on railway security took place in Autumn 2000 in Madrid – to develop a security-specific activity in the interest of its members, focused on the exchange of experiences and good practice, and on defining the needs or issues to be addressed by the public authorities. The Security Platform set-up in 2006 was subsequently revamped in Summer 2008 so as better to integrate regional specificities and more effectively to accommodate the spectrum of investigations to be carried out and the partnerships to be developed. Indeed the structure of the programme for this Congress and the origin of its different participants fully reflect this objective, and the key ideas which will be exchanged here must form the backbone of the work that needs to be undertaken together going forward.

*Some words from you about UIC's future*

Coming back for a moment to our common theme of security, I will not go into the details of the programme devised for our Congress, as this task will be performed by the Platform Chairman Tadeusz Kaczmarek from PKP PLK and its Vice-Chairman Moha Khaddour from ONCFM who is hosting our conference here in Marrakech. Let me simply highlight some of the strategic aspects which I would like the Safety Platform and Security Competency Centre to take on board given the global dimension of the problems we need to address and of the solutions we need to develop together.

We clearly must adopt a common approach to these matters, and I believe that this task must be taken forward by the Platform's working groups. These are groups set-up to reflect members' needs, with the common purpose of framing a global response for our companies to the challenges that lie ahead. I know we can rely on them to provide regular analyses and principles which we must then defend, or lobby for, both with the European institutions and on a much more global basis as I suggested earlier. The analysis and expert evaluation of problems must constantly underpin the policy proposals framed by our companies given the societal and financial issues that the different aspects of railway security actually entail.

For our companies, the growth of international traffic opens-up fresh opportunities on which our future depends to a large extent, and security must form an integral part of this development process.... And all measures taken to mobilise our employees, deploy appropriate technologies and devise trans-national responses obviously point in the right direction and call for our focused attention at all times.

Terrorism is a constant threat for all our countries, for my country, for our host country today, and probably for most if not all the countries represented here at this Congress.

The obvious and fundamental response to terrorism is not to yield to the threat but instead to deploy collective efforts against it, to prevent collateral crises from developing and to dampen their impact as far as possible. Crisis preparation and crisis management are undoubtedly two of the themes for which targeted responses must be devised... and we must never forget that there is a communication dimension to crisis management precisely because victims of terrorism and their close relatives demand and expect the proper responses to which they rightly aspire. I am delighted that the UIC Communication experts (people) are here today to lead the discussion around the national contributions presented during the main session.

Lastly, I would like to direct an appeal to the institutional institutions and working groups which have agreed to join forces with us. We as railway people are able to work on our vulnerabilities and to propose measures to attenuate them...But we need you, the States and the International Institutions, to help us analyse the threats and provide us with the appropriate institutional and political response framework.

This response to the security and terrorism challenges that we face must of necessity be a common response.

So let me thank you for having so readily accepted to join forces with us !

It is personally rewarding for me to see railways from all the continents represented here today and I would like to convey my special thanks to:

- UNECE,
- the US TSA as incumbent President of the International Working Group on Land Transport Security - IWGLTS) set up by the G8.
- UNESCAP which has sent a message of encouragement,
- the OSJD which officially shares our concerns
- the International Transport Forum, a partner from the very outset.

We now have the key stakeholders working together on shaping our common future.

May I also salute the UITP, which officially participates in the task of leading the Security Platform within its Steering Committee. Its presence today confirms most emphatically that the battle being waged is a common battle, as solemnly and collectively asserted by us all since June 2004.

I'll now leave it to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the UIC Security Platform, and to the UIC Competency Centre - which, in the context of the « UIC Global Dimension » is tasked with ensuring the continuity and development of the work - to define in greater detail the proceedings for today and tomorrow, and I urge them to draw appropriate lessons from the work of this Congress so that its final official conclusions can then serve as our common roadmap for the next period.

The very existence of our companies is at stake here: so too are their responsibility as shared with others and their future.

It is incumbent upon us, individually and collectively, to dedicate even more time, energy and resources to the issue of security, for this is the price our companies must pay if they are not to lose their efficiency and credibility in the prevailing climate and, more importantly still, if we are to prevent the risk of seeing our fellow citizens paying with their lives!