



Train from Kyoto to Copenhagen to Raise Awareness of Climate Change Ahead of Crucial UN Conference

Paris/Nairobi, 24 September 2009 – The International Union of Railways (UIC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the global conservation organization WWF today launched the symbolic one-month and nearly 9,000 kilometer-long train journey from Kyoto to Copenhagen to document the impacts of climate change and raise awareness of low-carbon transport solutions.

The project is done in partnership with the Seal the Deal! campaign led by the United Nations to galvanize political will and public support for reaching a comprehensive global climate agreement at the UN climate change conference (COP 15) in Copenhagen in December this year.

Train operators from around the world will participate in the Train to Copenhagen campaign with the aim of raising awareness of transport's influence on climate change.

The transport sector is major producer of CO₂ emissions, already accounting for over one-fifth of global CO₂ emissions. These emissions are projected to double within only 40 years. Railways are crucial in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and in developing sustainable transport systems.

The campaign will kick off on 5 November with the UIC Climate Change and Rail Seminar in the Japanese city of Kyoto – the birthplace of the current Climate Change Protocol, the current commitment period of which is due to end in 2012. The message for COP15 participants will be carried to Copenhagen through a symbolic rail journey from Kyoto to Copenhagen.

During the train journey through Russia, environmental experts and climate change campaigners will send eye-witness accounts of global warming signs underway. Siberia is a global climate change “hotspot”, where thawing permafrost and melting peat bogs could slowly release billions of tons of methane and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere over the coming years.

On 5 December in Brussels, the Climate Express, which will be powered by 100% renewable energy, will take on board more than 400 climate change negotiators, campaigners and other high-profile personalities going to Copenhagen to participate in COP 15, for a 12-hour on-track conference focusing on how we can solve the challenges posed by the transport sector with regard to global warming.

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Jean-Pierre Loubinoux, Director General of UIC, said: "The Train to Copenhagen team has one goal: bringing people to Copenhagen and bringing COP15 to the people. Taking the train is part of the solution in combating global warming. Trains are the most environmentally friendly mode of transport, so why would you travel by any other means to the one event in 2009 that can make a difference to the planet's future?"

UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said: "We are on the road to nowhere if existing policies and economic models prevail with their over emphasis on private cars and on shifting shipments of goods to the roads. The Train to Copenhagen project is a showcase of sustainable transport solutions that will be part and parcel of a resource-efficient, low-carbon Green Economy of the 21st Century. By Sealing the Deal on an ambitious climate agreement in Copenhagen, governments will get into gear to propel the world to a low-carbon future so that societies may also finally embark on a journey to more sustainable transport."

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said: "It is clear that business as usual is not an option if we want to reverse current trends and prevent catastrophic climate change. If we can really integrate the costs of pollution into the price of transportation, rail will be a big winner."

Kim Carstensen, Leader of WWF's Global Climate Initiative, said "The Train to Copenhagen is symbolic of the long journey we have taken in addressing climate change since Kyoto. We know where we are heading, but world leaders need to add much more steam to guarantee a fair, ambitious, and binding climate deal in Copenhagen."

Notes to Editors:

The Climate Express project is launched in conjunction with Global Climate Week (21-25 September) organized by the United Nations (<http://www.sealthedeal2009.org/global-climate-week>) and the UIC Energy Efficient Days 2009 (23-25 September) in Tours, France (<http://www.energy-efficiency-days.org>).

A number of UIC members are undertaking local Train to Copenhagen campaigns facilitating transportation to the COP15 for national delegations and other participants, including special fares. Check your local railway company for more information or www.traintocopenhagen.org

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