THE 2001 CAPE TOWN CONVENTION
ON INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS IN MOBILE EQUIPMENT

RAIL WORKING GROUP

www.railworkinggroup.org

Baarerstrasse 96, PO Box 7262, 6302 Zug, Switzerland
Tel: +41 (0)41 760 28 88; email: info@railworkinggroup.org

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PRESS RELEASE

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Zimbabwe approves accession to the Luxembourg Rail Protocol



Howard Rosen, Chairman of the Rail Working Group (left), with Hon. Joshua Sacco, Zimbabwe's Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development (right), at the SARA Rail Conference in Johannesburg 20 October 2026

The Rail Working Group (RWG) welcomes the announcement by the Government of Zimbabwe that it has approved accession to the Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention, marking an important step towards strengthening investment opportunities in the country's railway sector.

The Rail Working Group is a not-for-profit association constituted under Swiss law
representing a broad cross section of the global railway community.
For a complete list of our members and more about us, please visit our website at www.railworkinggroup.org

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The announcement was made by **Hon. Joshua Sacco, Zimbabwe's Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development**, during the SARA Rail Conference and Exhibition in Johannesburg on 20 October 2026. Speaking at the conference, Deputy Minister Sacco confirmed that the Protocol had been approved by both chambers of Zimbabwe's Parliament and subsequently received presidential assent from H.E. President Dr Emmerson D. Mnangagwa. With the domestic approval process completed, Zimbabwe is now preparing to formally deposit its instrument of accession in Rome.

Expressing his enthusiasm for this milestone, Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development, Hon. Sacco stated: "*It opens us many doors, many opportunities, de-risking investments in rail*."

By establishing an internationally recognised legal framework for securing creditors' rights over railway rolling stock, the Luxembourg Rail Protocol aims to facilitate private-sector financing, reduce financing costs and provide greater legal certainty for investors and operators. Its implementation could therefore help Zimbabwe access new sources of capital to support the modernisation and expansion of its railway fleet, while contributing to stronger regional rail connectivity.

Howard Rosen, Chairman of the Rail Working Group, commented: "*This is an exciting step forward for the rail sector. Zimbabwe will be the third SADC state to accede to the Protocol and its accession will play an important role in encouraging other states in Southern Africa to move forward with the Protocol.*"

The Rail Working Group looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Government of Zimbabwe as the country moves towards the formal deposit of its instrument of accession and the implementation of the Protocol.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Luxembourg Rail Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment is a new global treaty under the auspices of UNIDROIT, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. The Protocol will make it much easier and cheaper for the private sector to finance all types of railway rolling stock. It sets up a new system for recognition, priorities and enforcement of creditor and lessor rights, which will be registered in an international registry based in Luxembourg, accessible to everyone over the internet 24/7 and introduces, for the first time a new global unique permanent identification system (URVIS) for rolling stock. The United Nations has adopted global Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock setting out minimum standards for the permanent marking of railway rolling stock with URVIS numbers.

The upgrading of the Model Rules to include digital platforms will create significant additional benefits for the industry. The Protocol entered into force in contracting states on **8th March 2024**.

The European Union (in respect of its competences). The Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Luxembourg, Paraguay, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden have ratified the Protocol. France, Germany, Switzerland, Mozambique, Italy, and the UK have already signed the Protocol but have not yet acceded to the Protocol. Many other states, including Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Kenya, Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, Ethiopia and Mauritius, are actively looking at ratification of the Protocol. The Protocol is endorsed by many international rail organisations (including the African Rail Industry Association, OTIF, CIT, UIC, UIP, ERFA, ALLRAIL, UITP, CER and Eurofima) and actively supported by the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

The Rail Working Group is a Swiss-based not-for-profit association focused on the adoption and implementation of the Luxembourg Rail Protocol. It has about 90 direct members and hundreds of additional rail stakeholders represented indirectly by various industry organisations that belong to, and support the objectives of, the RWG.

For more on the Luxembourg Rail Protocol and the Rail Working Group visit www.railworkinggroup.org.

Further information from the Rail Working Group:

Tel.	+41 41 760 28 88	WhatsApp	+41 79 340 21 53

Email | LinkedIn | Africa Contact | Europe Contact

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