

United Nations Decade for Action for Road Safety: draft action plan

Report by the Secretariat

1. Road traffic injuries are the ninth leading cause of death globally, resulting in 1.3 million deaths and between 20 and 50 million non-fatal injuries each year, and are the leading cause of death among young people aged 15–29 years. Projections indicate that, without new and sustained commitment globally to preventing such injuries, the situation will only worsen, with a projected increase in deaths of about 65% over the next 20 years. Road traffic injuries are expected to become the fifth leading cause of death globally by 2030.
2. This major public health problem has a broad range of social and economic consequences which, if unaddressed, may hinder progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and, indeed, affect the sustainable development of countries. Economic losses to victims, their families and nations as a whole arise from the cost of treatment as well as reduced or lost productivity through death or disablement, and for family members who need to take time off work to care for the injured.
3. The *World report on road traffic injury prevention*, launched in 2004 by WHO and the World Bank on the occasion of World Health Day 2004 on road safety, summarizes the magnitude of the problem and impact of the consequences of these injuries on global public health and development.¹ It outlines the main risk factors for road traffic injuries and presents evidence of the effectiveness of numerous interventions. It recommends measures that Member States can put in place in order to improve safety on their roads.
4. In May 2004, following the publication of the world report, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 58/289 “Improving global road safety”, which recognized the importance of international cooperation towards further supporting efforts to deal with the global road safety crisis. In the resolution, the General Assembly invited WHO, working in close cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, to act as a coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system.
5. Later that month, the Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA57.10 on road safety and health, accepting the General Assembly’s invitation for WHO to act as a coordinator on road safety

¹ Peden M, Scurfield R, Sleet D et al. (Eds). *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2004.

issues within the United Nations system. The Health Assembly also urged Member States to mobilize their public health sectors and recommended implementation of a series of good practices.

6. In accordance with the invitation by the General Assembly, WHO has worked closely over the past five years with the United Nations regional commissions to coordinate the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, a group consisting of United Nations and other international organizations committed to improving road safety. The group comprises 12 funds, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system: WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the World Bank and the five regional commissions. About 50 other agencies (governmental and nongovernmental organizations, foundations and private-sector companies) working in international road safety, with a broad range of skills and experience, are also members.

7. In resolution WHA57.10 on road safety and health, the Health Assembly also recommended that Member States strengthen systems of pre-hospital and trauma care for victims of road traffic injuries. In resolution WHA60.22 on health systems: emergency-care systems, adopted in 2007, it urged Member States to strengthen the provision of trauma and emergency care. Resolution WHA58.23, on disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation, adopted in 2005, urged Member States to promote the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

8. In 2009 WHO published a global status report on road safety,¹ for which it had gathered information from Member States using a standardized method to collect comparable data. In that way, it provided the first assessment of the road safety situation at the global level, and revealed the gaps that exist in national road safety efforts. The report highlights the fact that half all road traffic deaths are among "vulnerable road users" – motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians – and the relatively low proportion of countries that have comprehensive legislation on the major risk factors to road safety.

9. Since the establishment of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, WHO has worked closely with many other agencies towards the development of a series of manuals on good practice. These publications provide practical guidance to countries on: increasing seat-belt use; reducing drink-driving; increasing use of motorcycle helmets; reducing speed; and improving data-management systems. The Secretariat has also increased the level of direct technical support provided to Member States in the implementation of this guidance and other measures being taken to improve national road safety.

10. The Commission for Global Road Safety issued a call for a decade of action for road safety in its report in 2009.² In November that year, the Government of the Russian Federation hosted the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (Moscow, 19–20 November 2009), at which the Moscow Declaration was adopted. The Declaration invited the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2011–2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

11. In March 2010 the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 64/255 proclaimed the period 2011–2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety with a goal of stabilizing and then

¹ *Global status report on road safety: time for action*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2009.

² Watkins K, Sridhar D. Road traffic injuries: the hidden development crisis. A policy briefing for the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, Moscow, 19–20 November 2009, available at: <http://www.fiafoundation.org/publications/Documents/road-traffic-injuries-kevin-watkins.pdf>.

reducing the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at national, regional and global levels. The resolution requested WHO and the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with other partners in the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and other stakeholders, to prepare a plan of action of the Decade as a guiding document to support the implementation of its objectives.

12. In response to resolution 64/255, WHO prepared a Plan of Action for the Decade through wide consultation with stakeholders, including extensive input from members of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, an open web consultation, and contributions from the Friends of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 (an informal group of Member States and international agencies supporting the Decade).

13. The Plan focuses on activities that can be conducted at national and local levels but also includes some international activities. Activities are divided into five categories: improving the management of road safety through a number of multisectoral mechanisms; assessing road infrastructure and improving design of roads; making vehicles safer; changing the behaviour of road users; and improving emergency-care and rehabilitation services. The Plan serves as a guide for governments to develop their own plans and targets according to their domestic priorities and objectives for the Decade. Nongovernmental organizations and the private sector are in the process of defining their contributions towards implementing the global Plan.

14. At an international level, the Plan proposes the coordination of several activities, such as increasing global funding for road safety; advocating road safety at the highest levels; raising awareness of risk factors and prevention measures; providing guidance to countries on strengthening systems for managing road safety and implementing good practices and trauma care; and improving the quality of road safety data.

15. The General Assembly, in resolution 64/255, also invited WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to coordinate the monitoring of progress in meeting the targets set in the Plan of Action. Progress is expected to be monitored through various processes, including the use of data from further global status reports and a mid-term review.

16. WHO will act as the coordinating secretariat for the Decade of Action in order to further the implementation of the Plan of Action and to strengthen its role as coordinator of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. As such, in addition to the development of the Plan of Action, WHO has already supported the development and launch of the symbol for the Decade, hosted planning meetings, responded to media and other enquiries about the Decade, and supported the planning of local, national and international launch events. The Decade will be officially launched on 11 May 2011.

17. The Plan of Action was finalized in late 2010 and is available on the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration web site.¹

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

18. The Board is invited to note the report.

¹ http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/en/index.html.

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