

Addressing the challenges of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011–2020): outcome of the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety – Time for Results

Report by the Secretariat

1. The Executive Board at its 138th session considered an earlier version of this report.¹ The Board agreed to further discussion on the draft resolution between the 138th Executive Board and the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly. Paragraph 17 has been amended in the light of comments raised and actions following the session.
2. More than 1.2 million people are killed every year in road traffic crashes and up to 50 million are injured. Road traffic crashes are the leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 29 years and rank as the ninth cause of death globally. If appropriate steps are not taken, road traffic crashes are predicted to become the seventh leading cause of death by 2030.²
3. Low- and middle-income countries bear a particularly high burden of the fatalities: although those countries account for only half of all vehicles registered globally they record about 90% of the overall number of road traffic deaths. The magnitude of deaths varies by WHO region, with the lowest fatality rates in the European Region (9.3 deaths per 100 000 people) and the highest in the African Region (26.6 deaths per 100 000 people).³
4. About half the people killed on the roads are vulnerable road users, including, for example, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. The risk of crash injury also depends on age (that is, the risk is higher among children, young people and elderly people), gender (about three quarters of all road traffic deaths occur among males) and disability.

¹ See document EB138/12 and the summary records of the Executive Board at its 138th session, thirteenth meeting, section 3 (document EB138/2016/REC/2).

² For more information, see the website on projections of mortality and causes of death, 2015 and 2030, at: http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/projections/en/ (accessed 11 May 2016). Under global summary projections, tab entitled “Top 20 causes” provides information for 2015 and projections for 2030.

³ For more information, see the Global status report on road safety 2015, which is available on the website at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/en/ (accessed 11 May 2016).

5. Road traffic injuries have significant implications for public health and development. Millions of people who are injured in road traffic crashes are hospitalized, incurring significant medical costs to both their families and governments. In addition, where the death or injury of a breadwinner has occurred, the consequent loss of income pushes some families into poverty. Low- and middle-income countries are estimated to lose up to 5% of their gross domestic product as a result of road traffic crashes.¹

6. Countries should adopt a “safe system approach” in order to decrease road traffic fatalities and injuries. Such an approach recognizes that the human body is vulnerable and that human beings make mistakes; it compensates for these fallibilities by facilitating interventions targeted at not only road users but also vehicles and road infrastructure. Application of such an approach requires multisectoral engagement and cooperation among a number of sectors, including health, transport, education, the interior (police) and finance.

7. The combination of implementing good practices (such as the adoption of appropriate legislation and their enforcement), awareness raising through social marketing, improving roads and vehicles, and better post-crash responses has led to significant reductions in deaths and injuries in many countries. The promotion of equitable access to sustainable mobility, including safe public transport and safe walking and cycling, is a key element in reducing deaths and injuries, and brings other benefits, such as reduced emissions and better health resulting from increased physical activity.

8. The collection and analysis of data are crucial to understanding and improving road safety. Some Member States have put in place robust systems that follow international standards to collect and analyse data. Other Member States still need to implement such systems.

9. The United Nations General Assembly, in several resolutions since 2003, has called attention to the global road safety crisis and the need to implement good practices. In resolution 58/289 on improving global road safety (2004), the United Nations 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. In resolution WHA57.10 in 2004, the World Health Assembly accepted that invitation and WHO subsequently facilitated the creation of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration.²

10. The Collaboration is an informal consultative mechanism whose goal is to facilitate international cooperation and to strengthen global and regional coordination, for instance, through joint action on United Nations global road safety weeks and supporting the implementation of good practices in countries. Twice a year more than 80 partner organizations gather (including Member States, bodies in the United Nations system, multilateral organizations, academic institutions, foundations, civil society and private sector entities) to coordinate road safety activities, such as the road safety weeks. Some of its members have also collaborated to developing normative guidance (published as a series of manuals for decision-makers and practitioners).³

¹ See International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), A business case for safer roads, <http://www.irap.org/en/about-irap-2/a-business-case-for-safer-roads> (accessed 11 May 2016).

² For more information, see the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration website, at: <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/en/> (accessed 10 May 2016).

³ Road traffic injuries publications and resources are available at http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/en/ (accessed 10 May 2016).

11. In 2009, the Government of the Russian Federation hosted the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety: Time for Action (Moscow, 19–20 November 2009), at which delegates adopted the Moscow Declaration.¹ In that text, they invited the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2011–2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

12. In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly, in resolution 64/255 on improving global road safety, duly proclaimed the period 2011–2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety, with a goal to stabilize and then reduce the level of road traffic fatalities. It also called for action to increase the proportion of countries with appropriate legislation on key risk factors from 15% to 50%.² The Decade of Action, launched in more than 100 countries, has generated considerable results internationally, including the creation of the Global Alliance of Nongovernmental Organizations for Road Safety, the series of WHO's global status reports on road safety, additional philanthropic donations for implementing good practices at country level, and national and local improvements of legislation, enforcement and awareness.

13. The Secretariat has contributed to the Decade of Action, *inter alia*, by:

- providing leadership through coordination of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and providing secretariat support to the Decade of Action
- facilitating the work of the Friends of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, an informal group of Member States and international agencies that promotes the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020
- monitoring and implementing good practices through the periodic publication of global status reports on road safety
- providing technical support to countries to improve their road safety legislations and to implement hard-hitting social marketing campaigns; such efforts have resulted in increased rates of wearing seat-belts and motorcycle helmets and use of child restraints, and reduced rates of speeding and drinking and driving in several countries
- providing capacity-building, guidance and technical support to Member States to improve emergency medical services for people injured and disabled in road traffic crashes, for example, through promotion of a single emergency national access number and improved emergencies training programmes for health sector professionals.

¹ For more information on the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety: Time for Action, see http://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial_conference/declaration_en.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 10 May 2016).

² United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/255 – Improving global road safety, see http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/UN_GA_resolution-54-255-en.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 10 May 2016).

14. In September 2015, road safety was targeted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ Target 3.6 calls for reducing by 50% road traffic deaths and injuries by 2020 and Target 11.2 calls for providing by 2030 access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons.

15. Participants at the Second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety: Time for Results (Brasilia, 18–19 November 2015), including more than 2000 delegates and 52 ministers and deputy ministers from 122 countries, adopted the Brasilia Declaration,² which, inter alia, encouraged WHO to facilitate a process that would lead to the definition and use of national, regional and global targets and indicators to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries, and to engage in the process that would lead to the definition and use of indicators for the road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

16. The *Global status report on road safety 2015*³ described some of the improvements in road safety in the first three years of the Decade of Action, including a stabilization of the number of road traffic deaths in the world at 1.25 million despite a 16% increase in the number of vehicles globally. It reported that 17 countries had improved their legislation on at least one key risk factor. However, it also showed that considerable action is still needed: although more than half WHO Member States have appropriate legislation on seat-belts, only about a quarter have appropriate legislation on the use of child restraints, speeding in urban areas and wearing of standard motorcycle helmets; only one-fifth of countries have appropriate legislation on drinking and driving. Furthermore, policies promoting walking and cycling are being implemented in only 92 countries.

17. On 15 April 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 70/260 on improving global road safety.⁴ The General Assembly resolution, inter alia, reaffirmed its resolution 70/1, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets; endorsed the Brasilia Declaration adopted at the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety; reiterated its invitation to Governments to take a leading role in implementing the activities of the Decade of Action and the road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda, while fostering multisectoral and multistakeholder collaboration that includes the efforts of academia, the private sector, professional associations, civil society, including national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, nongovernmental organizations, victims' organizations, youth organizations and the media; and requested WHO, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, to continue to facilitate, through the existing mechanisms, including the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, a transparent, sustainable and participatory process with all stakeholders, to assist interested countries in developing voluntary global performance targets on key risk factors and service delivery mechanisms to reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries in the context of the process leading to the definition and use of indicators for the road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda and the Global Plan for the Decade of Action; invited WHO to continue to

¹ United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 – Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, see http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1 (accessed 10 May 2016).

² For the Brasilia Declaration, see: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_traffic/Final_Brasilia_declaration_EN.pdf (accessed 10 May 2016).

³ For the *Global status report on road safety 2015*, see: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2015/en/ (accessed 10 May 2016).

⁴ The United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/260 on improving global road safety is available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/260 (accessed 19 May 2016).

monitor, through its global status reports, progress towards the achievement of the goals of the Decade of Action; and requested WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to facilitate the organization of activities during 2017 for the fourth United Nations Global Road Safety Week.

ACTION BY THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

18. The Health Assembly is invited to note the report.

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