
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

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Road safety issues and policy interventions in the SPECA subregion
(Item 5.5 of the agenda)

Note by UNECE / UNESCAP

Challenges

1. Worldwide, road traffic accidents kill an estimated 1.3 million people and injure 50 million people every year. Global road fatalities are forecast to reach 1.9 million by 2020.¹ Road accidents are a major public health problem in Asia and the Pacific. The number of road fatalities in Asia is estimated at 700,000 per year, more than half of the world's total.
2. Only in Europe as much as 127,000 people die every year and 2.4 millions more are injured or disabled causing, in addition to human suffering, overwhelming costs amounting to 1.5 to 2.5 % of Europe's GDP. Despite some progress in recent years, Eastern, South Eastern European and Caucasus countries are still suffering from high numbers of casualties on the road.

Global response to the challenge: Launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020

3. To address the global challenges in road safety, the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety with a goal to reduce the level of road fatalities around the world by increasing activities at national, regional and global levels.
4. The international community, largely through the WHO-led UN Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC), is planning the launch of the Decade with objectives:
 - (a) to draw attention to the Decade and more generally to the impact of the global road safety crisis and the prospects for prevention;
 - (b) to provide an opportunity for governments, international agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders to announce their respective plans for the Decade.
5. At the global level on 11 May 2011, a 24-hour "rolling" event is planned across the world's time zones, beginning in Fiji or New Zealand and ending in Mexico, involving national dignitaries and

¹ Commission for Global Road Safety, *Make Roads Safe: A Decade of Action for Road Safety* (London: 2009).

celebrities. Certain events are to be broadcast live through a social media website (still to be developed). It is also expected that the main objective of these events will be to announce national Plans for the Decade and publicity.

Sixty years of road safety activities by UNECE

6. UNECE's work focuses on improving road safety through developing and updating legal instruments aimed at internationally harmonized traffic regulations, construction and technical inspection of vehicles as well as for the transport of dangerous goods. These regulations have assisted many countries in harmonizing and enforcing traffic rules and measures, producing safer and cleaner road vehicles, reducing the risk of accidents with dangerous goods and hazardous materials and ensuring that only safe and well-maintained vehicles and competent drivers are allowed to participate in traffic. Transport infrastructure agreements developed under the UNECE auspices have given Europe coherent pan-European and safe road transport networks.

7. In September 2010, the 60th anniversary of road traffic safety activities at the UNECE coincided with the sixtieth session of the WP.1 and was celebrated at the joint meeting of – WP.1 (Road Safety Forum) and SC.1 (Road Transport) – two working parties which, through the development of legal instruments and best practices, have made the considerable contribution in improving road safety and road transport operations across the world. The joint session identified some common areas of interest and it is hoped this new co-operative effort will bear fruit.

8. The UNECE, apart from participating in the initiatives noted above, is planning to organize other activities for launching the Decade of Action. In addition, the UNECE secretariat intends to scale up UNECE Road Safety Forum's activities in two areas: safety at level crossings and multidisciplinary crash investigations, see Annexes 1 and 2 for more detailed discussions of these two areas.

9. Under the auspices of the UNECE (with the Executive Secretary and senior officials attending), the Inter-Parliamentary meeting on road safety will be held by the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) of Ukraine in April 2011 in Kiev. The parliamentarians from some 20 countries as well as representatives of the United Nations, World Bank, WHO, EU, Global Road Safety Partnership, Ukrainian Road Safety Association and private sector will participate. The objective is to share best practices on "comprehensive road safety legislation", motivate members of parliament into action of strengthening road safety legislation and to serve as a platform for discussion. Signing of the Kiev Declaration on Road Safety and development of a road safety handbook for parliamentarians is also planned.

Road safety activities by the UNESCAP

10. Continuing efforts have been put by the UNESCAP secretariat to improve road safety in the region. The Regional Expert Group Meeting on Implementation of Decade of Action for Road Safety was held in Bangkok (21-23 September 2010). A set of UNESCAP regional road safety goals, targets and indicators with the overall objective of a 50-per cent reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on the roads in Asia and the Pacific have been developed, in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010, as well as in support of UNESCAP resolution 66/6 of 19 May 2010 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific. Delegations attending the Committee on Transport (second session, Bangkok, 1-3 November 2010) also noted the importance of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, and stressed the need to plan activities to improve the road safety situation in member countries.

11. In addition, the advisory services provided by the UNESCAP secretariat to governments and assistance extended to them in organizing national road safety workshops (Ulaanbaatar, 20 August 2010; Tashkent, 25 November 2010; Dushanbe, 29-30 November 2010), enabled the countries concerned to, *inter alia*, articulate or develop measurable road safety goals, targets and indicators. Further support and assistance will be provided to the governments in developing and refining their national road safety goals, targets and indicators in support of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020.

12. The UNESCAP secretariat participated in 12th Meeting of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (Geneva, 5-8 October 2010), and updated the meeting on regional progress and plan for the Decade including (i) organization of the regional meeting in Bangkok, (ii) updated regional road safety statues; (iii) development set of regional road safety goals, targets and indicators for the Decade and (iv) plan to organize a regional road safety meeting in conjunction with launch of the Decade on 11 May 2011.

13. Initiatives are being taken by the UNESCAP secretariat to establish a web-based road safety network to encourage partnerships and monitor achievements at the regional and national levels. As part of the projected work plan, the UNESCAP secretariat has updated status of road safety in the region and countries have been requested to further update their road safety status.

Issues to be considered by the Project Working Group

14. The Project Working Group may wish to

- encourage the SPECA member countries to develop and implement a national road safety

strategy and action plan with goals and targets in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety

- encourage the SPECA member countries to mobilize resources for road safety activities.
- encourage the SPECA member countries to pay attention to the developments of the two specific projects initiated by UNECE, namely safety at level crossings and Multi-disciplinary crash investigation: a tool to improve road safety.

Annex 1. Safety at level crossings

15. A level-crossing is a level intersection between a road and a railway or tramway track (sometimes level-crossings include an intersection between a rail line and a pedestrian walkway). Crossings represent serious risks despite warning signals and/or protective barriers. Generally, given the difference in mass between a train and a road vehicle, it is the road vehicle/pedestrian that is at risk. However, a collision with a heavy goods road vehicle can also have serious consequences for rail traffic.

16. Despite many measures taken to indicate level-crossings and make them safe, too many road users and pedestrians are killed or injured at such crossings. Almost all accidents at level crossings are due to road users failing to observe mandatory stop lights, signals and basic traffic safety rules.

17. A UIC-led International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) is a joint initiative consisting of rail undertakings, road transport sector, national governments, road safety agencies and non-governmental organizations. The ILCAD has approached the UNECE to join forces and work together on making level crossings safer. Should the member governments endorse this initiative, the UNECE is prepared to host a multi-disciplinary group of experts including experts from road traffic safety, railways, road and railway infrastructure organizations and other stakeholders.

Annex 2. Multi-disciplinary crash investigation: a tool to improve road safety

18. The Multidisciplinary Crash Investigation (MDCI) is about the reconstruction of a crash and a study of the factors that may have contributed to it. The factors include environmental, human and mechanical and are associated with the three phases of a collision which are pre-collision, at-collision and post-collision. The objective is to prevent crashes of a similar nature from recurring. Multidisciplinary crash investigations already take place in many countries. It appears that the countries where such investigative mechanisms exist are the best road traffic safety performers.

19. WP.1 has considered the subject of multi-disciplinary crash investigation. It appears that the MDCI offers many benefits in terms of enhancing road safety, but the establishment of a MDCI mechanism is complex as it requires co-operation and co-ordination among national ministries, agencies and other relevant entities. The subject of MDCI was considered at WP.1 in September 2010. There was no consensus on how to proceed except by presenting MDCI mechanism as a best practice (in the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) or separately). The UNECE secretariat will continue to encourage governments to contribute information on the existing national practices in this area with a view of preparing a document on possible follow-up options, including a creation of an expert group.