

Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety

Terms of Reference

Background

Every year, some 1.3 million people are killed and up to 50 million people are injured on the world's roads. Half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Road traffic deaths are also the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-29, and road traffic injuries are the eighth leading cause of death globally. Beyond human suffering, road traffic deaths and injuries impose significant economic and financial losses to societies. Low and middle-income countries are the hardest hit.

In 2010, the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution 64/255) proclaimed a Decade of Action for Road Safety ("Decade"). The goal of the Decade (2011-2020) is to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic deaths around the world.

The Decade reaches its mid-term review this year (2015) with little observed change in the number of global annual road traffic deaths. With motorization rates rising rapidly around the world corresponding to economic growth, especially in low- and middle-income countries, it is timely and imperative for all countries now to make tangible progress in improving the safety of their roads if they have not yet started to do so, and to further improve their road safety record.

It is within this context that the United Nations Secretary-General is appointing a Special Envoy for Road Safety to help to mobilize sustained political commitment towards making road safety a priority; to advocate and raise awareness about the United Nations road safety legal instruments; to share established road safety good practices; and to generate adequate funding for advocacy efforts through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. In carrying out these activities, the Special Envoy will work in close collaboration with the relevant UN departments, entities and organizations. Specific functions of the Special Envoy for Road Safety will include:

1. Promoting a global partnership to support the design and implementation of strategies and activities to improve road safety

The Special Envoy will support the attainment of the overall goal of the Decade, by leveraging his or her professional expertise and experience. In this regard, the Special Envoy is expected to develop a global partnership with a particular emphasis on raising levels of political commitment. The Special Envoy will work with key funding partners – including governments, financial institutions and the private and non-governmental sectors – to secure adequate resources to implement the global partnership strategy.

2. Advocating with governments, civil society and the private sector for the promotion of road safety, particularly in countries with high level of road fatalities and injuries

The Special Envoy will advocate for road safety, identifying achievements and challenges at the global, regional and national levels, as appropriate. He or she will highlight the challenges and needs for technical and/or other assistance which may be required, particularly by low- and middle-income countries, to improve road safety.

3. Participating in global and regional conferences and meetings on road safety

The Special Envoy will participate in global and regional conferences on road safety, including the second high-level global conference on road safety to be held in November 2015 in Brasilia, Brazil. On specific request and case-by-case consideration by the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy may represent the Secretary-General in relevant meetings.

4. Advocating the accession to, and more effective implementation of, United Nations road safety legal instruments

The Special Envoy will raise the visibility and awareness of the United Nations road safety legal instruments, including the Conventions on Road Traffic, and Road Signs and Signals, and the 1958, 1997 and 1998 Vehicle Regulations Agreements as well as other related instruments including driving times and rest periods for professional drivers and transport of dangerous goods. The Special Envoy will also promote the accession to and the improved implementation of these legal instruments by Contracting Parties.

The Special Envoy will report to the Secretary-General on his activities and provide strategic advice. The Special Envoy will work closely with the United Nations secretariat and all other relevant United Nations institutions as well as external partners and stakeholders from the public, private and non-governmental sectors. The Special Envoy will serve in this capacity for an initial period of one year.

Substantive and technical support to the functions of the Special Envoy will be provided by UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and the direct costs of the provision of secretariat support and other logistical costs are to be met from extra-budgetary funding to be mobilised by the Special Envoy. UNECE is one of the five United Nations regional commissions administered by the Economic and Social Council. UNECE Transport Division services among other things the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on Transport of Dangerous Goods, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (the only permanent intergovernmental forum specialized in inland modes of transport), the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (the only permanent United Nations intergovernmental forum on road safety), as well as the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations. These bodies are responsible for administering important United Nations road safety instruments at a global level, such as the Conventions on Road Traffic, and Road Signs and Signals, and the 1958, 1997 and 1998 Vehicle Regulations Agreements. Thus UNECE is best positioned to provide the Special Envoy with secretariat support, which it will do subject to extra-budgetary funding envisaged from public-private partnerships to be obtained by the Special Envoy.