

United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety

Hosted by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

4 November 2020, 15:00-17:00 CET/09:00-11:00 EST

Virtual, Cisco Webex platform

Summary

I. Opening and Welcome

- **Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety**

The Special Envoy welcomed meeting participants, emphasizing the need to take urgent action towards addressing one of the most pressing emergencies of current time. Traffic injuries still claim the lives of 3,700 people on roads around the world each day and road safety constitutes one of the most pressing development challenges of current times, with its significant social and economic consequences. While there has been significant and warranted focus on addressing the COVID-19 crisis, the Special Envoy underlined that it is also of utmost importance that other priorities, like road safety, are not scaled back. The pandemic has taught to align development goals with each other – resulting in higher impacts of policies and programs (climate change, health, human rights, transport, sustainable development and road safety).

Furthermore, the Special Envoy elaborated on the latest UN General Assembly Resolution on Improving Global Road Safety ([A/RES/74/299](#)), through which Member States have pledged to augment efforts during the second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030). Among the key conclusions, it:

- Proclaims a new Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, propelling towards a new target to halve the number of road deaths and injuries between 2021-2030;
- Invites Member States to support the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety, the UNRSF and to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships to address the road safety challenges;
- Requests the World Health Organization and the UN regional commissions, as well as other relevant UN agencies, to continue activities aimed at supporting the implementation of the road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda, while ensuring system-wide coherence.

In summary, the Special Envoy thanked Agencies represented at the meeting for their contribution to advancing road safety and commitment to meet the new relevant targets by 2030. Mr. Todt underlined two key agenda points for discussion: 1) A UN coordinated approach to the new Decade of Action for Road Safety, and 2) maximizing impact of the UN Road Safety Fund.

- **Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General**

The UN Deputy Secretary-General contributed to the meeting through a video message available [here](#).

- **Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE**

The Executive Secretary thanked meeting participants for joining forces towards improving road safety. She briefed on the assistance provided by UNECE to Member States through legal instruments, policy tools, legal workshops, advisory services, research as well as performance reviews.

Additionally, Ms. Algayerova outlined the key role played by the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), hosted at UNECE, and the opportunities which the 2020 Call for Proposal can offer.

The Executive Secretary thanked the Special Envoy for convening the meeting and reiterated UNECE's commitment to work with all UN partners to maximize the impact.

- **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary, ESCAP**

The Executive Secretary referred to road safety as a serious sustainable development challenge that needs greater attention for Asia-Pacific Region which counts the highest number of road fatalities in absolute terms, with almost 60% of global road deaths. Ms. Alisjahbana also shared about the heavy social economic impacts and efforts made by the Commission to include road safety as a strategic priority in its agenda.

- **Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary, UNECA**

The Executive Secretary outlined the importance of the adoption of the latest Resolution on Improving Global Road Safety and the implications of unsafe roads to African economies. Ms. Songwe also thanked the Special Envoy for the joint efforts on the road safety performance reviews in African countries, technical assistance, and in bringing road safety at a higher level.

In conclusion, the Executive Secretary reiterated UNECA's full support to the global issue.

- **Mr. Makhtar Diop, Vice President for Infrastructure, World Bank**

The Vice President offered the commitment of the World Bank, through various mechanisms, including the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF), to promote road safety. Mr. Diop appreciated the already established partnerships with the Special Envoy, UNRSF and WHO within countries at strategic and operational levels. The Vice President also shared about the [Multi-Development Banks' High-Level Joint Statement on Road Safety](#) recently signed and dedication of the World Bank to the cause in the next Decade 2021-2030.

II. Tour de Table

The Special Envoy went through and shared the List of Participants, which is available [here](#).

III. United Nations agenda for the new Decade of Action for Road Safety

Moderated by Mr. Nhan Tran, Head, Safety and Mobility, WHO

The Moderator opened the discussion on the new Decade of Action for Road Safety by informing that the WHO and the UN Regional Economic Commissions, in cooperation with the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and other stakeholders, are drafting a Plan of Action for the new Decade, as a guiding document to support the implementation of its objectives.

Then Mr. Tran invited UN Agencies and departments to share their thoughts on considerations that need to be made for the Global Plan, by answering the following suggested questions:

- What areas of focus should be included in the next Global Plan of Action for Road Safety?
- What role can your institution play in supporting Member States in the implementation of the Global Plan?
- What can be done to ensure greater coordination and alignment within the UN system?

- **Mr. Robert Nowak, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE**

Throughout his [presentation](#), Mr. Nowak elaborated on the First and Second Decades of Action as well as relevant targets. Mr. Nowak highlighted the concerned SDGs 3.6 and 11.2 and also informed that the General Assembly asked for a high-level meeting on road safety by 2022. Purpose of this activity would be to:

- Address gaps and challenges;
- Mobilize political leadership;
- Promote multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Mr. Nowak also advised on the anticipated deadline for the finalization of the Global Plan by the 75th Session of the General Assembly planned for September 2021.

During the below interventions, concerned UN officials provided feedback on their respective UN agency and department's Global Plan by answering the three questions proposed by the Moderator and reiterated full commitment during the Second Decade. All attendees were invited to share their answers with the Moderator and Mr. Nowak via email during the weeks following the meeting. An outline of the draft global plan was circulated with participants for feedback on 30 November 2020.

Requests for the floor:

Below provides a brief overview of each intervention.

- **Mr. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General, ITU;**

The Secretary-General of ITU highlighted that road safety is placed as a main priority in ITU agenda and acknowledged the strong collaboration with UNECE to make transport safer, cleaner and more efficient. New technologies are at the heart of this transformation, and thus should be considered as a key element in the Global Plan of the second Decade of Action for Road Safety. 5G network technologies and AI are expected to highly increase road safety and traffic efficiency, most notably through intelligent services such as cooperative collision warning and autonomous driving. ITU works to ensure that these technologies are deployed efficiently and at scale.

Furthermore, the following efforts were shared:

- In cooperation with the mobile industry, ITU is developing a study (new Report ITU-R M.[IMT.C-V2X]) on the mutual interactions between cellular technology, vehicles and infrastructures using IMT-2020 (5G) systems, as well as communication between vehicles and pedestrians. This effort is led by [ITU-R WP5A](#);
- [Focus Group on AI for autonomous and assisted driving](#) (FG-AI4AD), supporting the establishment of performance evaluation standards for AI systems deployed in autonomous and assisted driving on our roads. ITU FG-AI4AD is discussing what could become the basis for an International Driving Permit for AI.

In closing, Mr. Zhao reiterated ITU commitment in saving lives and shaping the future of mobility as well as invited everyone to join the virtual Future Networked Car Symposium (FNC-2021) from 22 to 25 March 2021, co-organized with UNECE.

- **Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth;**

The Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth highlighted on one focus area – young people’s needs, aspirations and rights – which was missing in the previous plan of action and needs to be reflected in the upcoming plan. Road traffic crashes are one of the leading causes of death globally for youth among 15-19-year-olds. Over 1000 youth die every single day due to road traffic accidents. Since young people are heavily affected by road safety, especially in low and middle-income countries, any Global Plan of Action for Road Safety must reflect the rights and needs of young people at its heart. For a sustainable future, inclusivity and equality have to be ensured in the SDGs agenda and the Global Plan of Action and youth should be part of the building this plan.

The Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth is committed to working with the UN family and its partners to support this, specifically through the implementation of the [UN Youth2030 Strategy](#). Since the institution's first-ever youth strategy was launched, the office has worked to put the Youth2030 Strategy into action, even during COVID-19 times. The 2nd Priority Area of the Strategy reflects the UN's goal to make sure that the system-wide work contributes to Healthy Foundation for all youth.

Ms. Wickramanayake also shared about the 2nd World Youth Assembly for Road Safety which took place on 18 February 2020. On the occasion, 1,500 young people adopted the [Global Youth Statement for Road Safety](#), declaring themselves ready to be part of the solution and considered as equal partners instead of only victims.

- **Ms. Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa;**

The Special Adviser on Africa elaborated on how planning and setting up strong institutions are necessary in road design but need to be strengthened in policy making in African countries. In her role, with advisory, coordination and monitoring functions, the Special Adviser confirmed her office’s commitment to bring the issue at a higher level and help strengthening coherence and cooperation in the Africa road safety action plan.

- **Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster-Risk Reduction, UNDRR.**

The Special Representative shared about the Making Cities Resilient ([MCR2030](#)), and its relevance for the second Decade of Action for Road Safety. Ms. Mizutori highlighted that MCR2030 is a unique cross-stakeholder initiative for improving local resilience through advocacy, sharing knowledge and experiences, reinforcing city-to-city learning networks, injecting technical expertise, connecting multiple layers of government, and building partnerships. Through delivering a clear roadmap to urban resilience, providing tools, access to knowledge and monitoring and reporting tools, Ms. Mizutori explained that MCR2030 will support cities on their journey to reduce risk and build resilience. Among the other partner organizations, the Special Representative mentioned UN-Habitat, UNOPS and the World Bank Group.

Ms. Mizutori concluded by sharing the hope that many more countries can include road traffic accidents in their national and local strategy for disaster and risks reduction which is about risk reduction governance. UNDRR is keen to work with local and national governments to address the issue. The Special Representative explained that cost-effective solutions do exist and can be effectively promoted through awareness raising and action at the local level and at a national level in order to reduce the risk of a disaster which can happen to anyone.

- **Mr. Gilles Michaud, Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, DSS;**

The Under-Secretary-General highlighted the work on the internal UN Road Safety Strategy to ensure that the UN is also delivering on strategic priorities to minimize road casualties within UN operations and working towards a Vision Zero. Mr. Michaud encouraged to ensure full transparency and communication in the Global Plan with the Member States in order to avoid any reputational and security risks for the organization.

The USG emphasized that most important role of UNDSS in the Global Plan is to lead by example and to ensure that personnel complies with national road safety initiatives. Furthermore, the Under-Secretary-General recommends that the Working Group on Road Safety, chaired by UNDSS, continues its activities, leveraging comparative advantage within the UN system, enhancing coordination and harmonization of efforts, and facilitating communication.

- **Mr. Soames Job, Global Lead for Road Safety and Head of the Global Road Safety Facility, World Bank;**

Mr. Job reminded on the importance of integrating automated vehicles and technology into the Global Plan, especially in speed management, to make improvements in low- and middle-income countries.

- **Mr. Weimin Ren, Director, Transport Division, ESCAP;**

Mr. Ren shared appreciated the work of the WHO and Regional Commissions taskforce and suggested that working towards establishing road safety culture throughout the world, should be highlighted in the Global Plan.

- **Mr. Justice Tettey, Chief, Laboratory and Scientific Section, UNODC.**

Mr. Tettey raised the issue of drugs use in driving, which leads to a huge number of accidents. UNODC advises to incorporate their data, regularly shared with the WHO, in the discussions so that early warnings can be translated into early actions, in the new Global Plan.

IV. United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF): Positioning for maximum impact

Moderated by Mr. Matthew Baldwin, Chairperson, UNRSF Advisory Board

First, the Moderator thanked the Special Envoy for his leadership on road safety, including in pulling together this very impressive display of commitment from across the UN, and stressed the importance of “partnership” as a key word in the UNRSF’s endeavours. The Fund itself is a partnership between very diverse group of donors, including government bodies, like the European Union, and private sector foundations, and stakeholders from across the world including NGOs. The Moderator expressed appreciation for the existing partnerships supporting road safety efforts within the UN system and the collaboration between the Fund and the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility.

- **Video “Save lives with the UNRSF”**

Because of technical difficulties, this video was brought to the participants’ attention, and is available [here](#).

- **Mr. Romain Hubert, Acting Head, UNRSF**

In his [presentation](#), Mr. Hubert shared information about the UNRSF activities and projects’ status as well as the financing strategy. Mr. Hubert also highlighted the timeline related to the 2020 Call for Proposals and encouraged colleagues to expand partnerships in order to advance interlinkages between road safety and the other core development issues.

Requests from the floor:

- **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat**

As a recipient of pilot project financing from the UNRSF, UN-Habitat has been implementing a successful project in Ethiopia where one of the key results was the launch of Ethiopia's Non-Motorized Transport strategy. The Executive Director shared their experience in implementing this UNRSF project and how this UNRSF project helped to pave the way for the Agency's future support to the country. The project aimed to introduce integrated public transport system with better facilities for walking and cycling. COVID-19 crisis has further shown that these improvements and modernized public transport are urgently required in Ethiopia. From the UNRSF support, UN-Habitat is able to actively collaborate with the Government which launched the [National Non-Motorised Transport Strategy](#) to provide the political framework for the country during the next ten years.

UN-Habitat currently works on building an interactive platform which would allow the Government, NGOs and other practitioners to access the harmonized streets design standards to be applied when implementing projects. Furthermore, UN-Habitat is engaged in the implementation of a web application providing information on cycling corridors, location and parking stations, etc.

UN-Habitat looks at capacity building across the whole country to ensure the launch of the National Non-Motorised Transport Strategy not only in the major cities but also in the smaller towns. This would lead to an improvement in designing and implementing the good quality of footpaths and cycling.

The Executive Director also focused on the importance of political will, learned from the implementation of the project. A strong technical support, capacity building and effective communication are crucial to engage citizens and for projects' success.

In conclusion, Ms. Sharif shared about Africities Conference – Transport and Cities: Connectivity, Integration and Sustainable Health System, organized by United Cities and Local Government and the Government of Kenya in collaboration with UN-Habitat and to be tentatively held in Kisumu, Kenya, in November 2021. Road safety features and capacity building will be the main topics of discussion at the conference.

The Executive Director shared about UN Habitat's commitment to safer urban mobility, especially as reflected in the New Urban Agenda.

- **Mr. Nhan Tran, Head Safety and Mobility, WHO**

The latest Resolution on Improving Global Road Safety calls for a second Decade of Action and asks WHO (with the UN Regional Commissions and other relevant UN agencies), to continue activities aimed at supporting the implementation of the road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda, while ensuring system-wide coherence. It was in this context that Mr. Tran elaborated on the possible role of the UNRSF in this new and invigorated road safety landscape. Mr. Tran highlighted that the UNRSF could play a key role in aligning its strategic priorities and activities to support the Global Plan for the implementation Second Decade of Action, thus also coordinating actions within the UN system. Mr. Tran explained that what makes the UNRSF unique and a real added value is the fact that as a UN Trust Fund, it can leverage the collective inputs of the UN agencies and organizations.

V. Open Floor to Participants

Requests for the floor:

- **Ms. Aditi Maheshwari, Director for Climate Action, UN;**

Ms. Maheshwari highlighted the opportunity to build back better transport infrastructure after the COVID-19 crisis for a safe and sustainable mobility. The Director emphasized that investing in resilient infrastructure should be an absolute priority and public policy should heavily focus on coping with climate change. Ms. Maheshwari further explained that sustainable transport encompasses zero emissions transport but also includes safety and accessibility. The Director encouraged the community to work closely with key actors to ensure that safe transport reflects sustainable transport: actions must not only reduce deaths on roads but ensure that actions are pursued in a sustainable way. Moreover, Ms. Maheshwari recommended that cities should set climate targets as well as organize and improve public transport as well as enhance infrastructures for pedestrians and bicycles. Recognizing the role of electric vehicles in sustainable mobility, the Director referred to several initiatives advanced by the climate groups demanding for electric cars' use.

- **Mr. Alex Mejia, Director, Division for People and Social Inclusion, UNITAR;**

Mr. Mejia elaborated on UNITAR [Road Safety Global Training Initiative](#), aimed to support governments to help reach the [Global Road Safety Performance Targets](#) and advance towards the achievement of the SDG 3.6 – “Reduce by half road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030”. The Initiative includes 3 components: capacity building, public awareness and partnerships.

- **Ms. Sara Adam, Director, Management Services Division, WFP;**

Ms. Adam first congratulated Jean Todt for the inspiring work thus far and extension of the important mandate. She informed the meeting of WFP's key Road Safety Initiatives and Resources categorised under three pillars.

Under Pillar one, she shared that WFP set up a Cross Divisional Working Group to address road safety issues with holistic perspectives and to jointly identify key areas of intervention. Firstly, a new WFP road safety policy was developed and will be launched in 2021. The policy's aim is to promote awareness and safer behaviour on the road. Secondly, a new online road safety incidents reporting tool was designed within the Occupational Health & Safety system to ensure accurate reporting of incidents. Within pillar two, WFP led the development of a detailed guidance on safer fleets including vehicle specifications, safety equipment and fleet management practices to assist Agencies in selecting and operating safer vehicle fleets.

Furthermore, under pillar three, Ms. Adam reported that WFP has a well-established and organized road safety training centre which was the first one in the UN to be certified by the [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#).

In the first 2 months of 2020, WFP carried out armoured vehicle driver training and 4-wheel driver training for 146 Drivers, 53 of which were non-WFP. During COVID-19 travel restrictions, WFP Road Safety Training Centre rapidly adapted its training curriculum by developing a “Technology Enhanced Learning” (TEL) project, to provide a portfolio of flexible road safety e-learning resources for WFP personnel.

Beyond that, it is important to also note that WFP has developed a corporate Mobility Service on the Humanitarian Booking Hub allowing to book drivers and light vehicles online, which is currently being used by 5 different UN Agencies in 280 locations and has served 25,000 clients. This people focused tool helps to track customer demand to improve planning and service delivery; it helps to keep control of driving hours to avoid excessive fatigue by drivers and includes the instant customer feedback feature to improve customer experience and promote safe driving behaviour.

- **Mr. Dominic Grace, Chief, Global Mobility and Infrastructure Service, UNHCR.**

Mr. Grace reiterated UNHCR's commitment to Vision Zero. As part of the Agency's road safety strategy, mandatory road safety courses for staff were launched in July 2020 (already 600 UNHCR staff trained worldwide so far), as well as a country-based specific training program for drivers was implemented. Mr. Grace also reported that UNHCR is also looking at technology for solutions. One of the relevant efforts is the implementation of a driver ID system, a technology approach which enables to determine the status of a vehicles before an accident happens.

- **Mr. Yarob Badr, Regional Advisor, Transport and Logistics, ESCWA;**

Mr. Badr conveyed the apologies of Ms. Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary, ESCWA, for not being available to attend the meeting due to unexpected major circumstances. Furthermore, Mr. Badr confirmed the active participation of ESCWA to the task force on the Global Plan of Action and the full support on the UNRSF activities. Additionally, the Commission has placed road safety issues in the agenda of the yearly Committee on Transport and Logistics. The 21st and next session will be held virtually on 24 November 2020. Further information are available [here](#).

- **Mr. Alexis Laffittan, Partnerships Development Specialist, UNDP.**

Mr. Laffittan reiterated UNDP's commitment in road safety, climate, energy and sustainable cities. Mr. Laffittan shared about UNDP's participation in the 2019 UNRSF Call for Proposals which led to two road safety projects being selected, respectively in Zambia – in collaboration with WHO and UNEP – and Azerbaijan. UNDP is actively engaged with institutions from the civil society and Academia to collaborate on interagency road safety initiatives. Mr. Laffittan was also proud to report that a training initiative for UNDP drivers has been launched and will start from the Asia-Pacific Region.

VI. Closing

- **Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety**

In conclusion, the Special Envoy encouraged strengthening partnerships for sustainable results during the second Decade and thanked all the attendees for their unwavering dedication to addressing the issue.

Following the Partnerships Meetings, the Special Envoy looks forward to continuing to cultivate dialogue and collaboration within the UN system for collective goal of safe mobility for every citizen on the planet.