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**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and  
Connectivity (WG-STTC)**

25<sup>th</sup> Session  
22-23 October 2020  
Virtual mode

**Road safety issues and policy interventions in SPECA countries**

(Item 5.4 of the Agenda)

*Note by ESCAP/ UNECE*

1. While significant progress in improving road traffic safety has been made in some countries in the last decade, the overall global results are far worse, and changes are urgently needed to considerably reduce the number of global road fatalities and injuries. Road traffic injuries constitute the first cause of accidental death globally. Road traffic accidents are responsible for more than 1.3 million deaths each year, while estimates of non-fatal injuries range from 20 million to 50 million.
2. Road traffic accidents cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations. These losses arise from the cost of treatment as well as lost productivity for those killed or disabled by their injuries, and for family members who need to take time off work or school to care for the injured. According to some estimations, road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.
3. In May 2010, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2011–2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The Decade of Action generated new activities, such as:
  - New accessions to United Nations road safety conventions and agreements totalled 41 during the decade.
  - In 2011, UNRSC developed a Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020. The Plan provided an overall framework for activities grouped in “pillars”: road safety management, safe roads, safe vehicles, safe users, and effective post-crash response. Key

activities under each pillar are defined. Countries are encouraged to accede to and/or fully implement the major United Nations road safety legal instruments.

4. In September 2020, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2021-2030 as the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety. The Second Decade has a goal of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50 per cent from 2021 to 2030, and in this regard UN General Assembly called upon Member States to continue action through 2030 on all the road safety-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 3.6, in line with the pledge of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, especially taking into account the remaining decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 in their entirety<sup>1</sup>;
5. In September 2015 in New York, United Nations member States officially adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global leaders reaffirmed their commitment to international development and formally adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set an ambitious target of halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030.
6. At the Meeting of Member States to conclude the work on the development of voluntary global performance targets for road safety risk factors and service delivery mechanisms in Geneva in November 2017, twelve voluntary global performance targets for road safety risk factors and service delivery mechanisms were agreed by consensus. The targets can be seen as an abstract of the 34 activities of the Global Plan.
7. In consideration of the global challenges encountered by the member countries, the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) was established in April 2018 as a multi-partner trust fund to facilitate concrete action toward achievement of the road safety targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Fund aims to help low- and middle-income countries put in place effective national road safety systems to a) substantially curb the number of fatalities and injuries from road crashes, and (b) reduce economic losses resulting from them. Its grants strengthen national and local capacity to manage and improve road safety by providing funding and technical expertise. The Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety guides the Fund's activities, focusing on applying the safe system approach in road safety management: safe users; safe vehicles; safe

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution A/74/L.86. Available at: [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/74/L.86](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/74/L.86)

roads; and effective post-crash response, and addressing them as the essential blocks for developing an integrated and effective national road safety system.

8. At the 3rd Global Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm on 19 February 2020 the UN Road Safety Fund has unveiled ten new projects that will target key gaps in the road safety systems of 12 countries. With a total budget of nearly USD 4 million, these projects will scale the Fund's geographical and programmatic footprint in the coming months. New call for proposals is in preparation and it should be launched in October 2020.

## **UNECE Road safety activities**

### **A. Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)**

9. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) serviced by the UNECE secretariat is the only inter-governmental permanent road traffic safety body in the United Nations system. Participation in WP.1 is open to all countries across the world. Typically, WP.1 meets twice a year in Geneva, Switzerland. The UNECE Sustainable Transport Division provides the group's secretariat support: services sessions, prepares documents, agendas and reports, collects and disseminates information and facilitates the liaison among Governments.
10. Amongst other matters, WP.1 considered amendment proposals to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic with a view to maintaining consistency between the convention and the provisions of vehicle regulations adopted in the framework of the 1958 Agreement, such as light and light signalling. Furthermore, WP.1 is considering a proposal to amend the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and has been discussing issues related to automated driving, the mutual recognition of driving permits, a safe system approach, multidisciplinary crash investigations and distracted driving.

### **B. United Nations legal instruments**

11. From the last WG meeting, the number of contracting parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic was changed to 101. Five new contracting parties joined 1968 Convention on Road Traffic bringing the total number to 84 and another joined 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals bringing the total number of contracting parties to 68. The number of contracting parties to the 1971 European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals was increased to 36.

12. Under the administration and responsibility of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be Fitted and/or be Used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these United Nations Regulations (Revision 3), and the 1998 Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or used on Wheeled Vehicles, have 54 and 38 contracting parties respectively, covering most of the countries with a major automotive industry. The number of contracting parties to the 1997 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections was increased to 16.
13. The World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) has recently adopted a considerable number of technical modifications to United Nations vehicle Regulations related to safety and environmental aspects with focus on modern driver assistant systems for protection of vulnerable road users (Blind Spot Information System for the Detection of Bicycles; Reversing Motion Warning Systems and Moving Off Information Systems ) as well as a first set of UN Regulations for automated vehicles (Automated Lane Keeping System, Cyber Security and Over the Air Software Updates). The work related to automated/autonomous vehicles is governed by the WP.29 Framework Document on Automated/Autonomous Vehicles, which has been endorsed by ITC in 2020. Furthermore, WP.29 has adopted, among others, amendments to ECE Regulation No. 22 on Motorcycle Safety Helmets to further enhance the safety of riders of powered two wheelers but also to enhance their wear-ability in areas with high temperature / high humidity climate. In addition, the requirements for periodic technical inspection of vehicles have been extended by two new Rules on testing of LNG/LPG/CNG fuelled vehicles and on testing of electric and hybrid-electric vehicles. The 1997 Agreement was amended with elements on conformity of technical inspection process requirements and thus strengthening the quality of periodic technical inspection regime, which finally entered into force in November 2019.

**C. United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for on Road Safety**

14. On 29 April 2015, Mr. Jean Todt was appointed Special Envoy for Road Safety by the United Nations Secretary-General. In this role, Mr. Todt is helping to mobilize sustained political commitment towards making road safety a priority; advocating and raising awareness about the

United Nations road safety legal instruments; sharing established road safety good practices; and advocating for adequate global funding for road safety. Along with UNECE, the Special Envoy established and launched the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund in April 2018. To date, the Special Envoy met with 26 Heads of States and more than 180 government officials in 87 Member States, encouraging high-level political commitment to road safety, especially in the most affected areas. ECE hosts the secretariat (<http://www.unece.org/united-nations-special-envoy-for-road-safety/roadsafetyenvoy.html>). Below is the summary of Mr. Todt's engagement with SPECA countries in 2019-2020.

- In September 2019, the Special Envoy travelled to the Republic of Kazakhstan (meetings with First Deputy Prime-Minister; Deputy Chair of Senate; Minister of Health, Minister of Interior, Vice-Minister of Culture and Sport; as well as Mayors of Nur-Sultan and Almaty). In the course of his meetings, the Special Envoy encouraged stronger commitment to the issue and coordinated efforts towards implementing the National Road Safety Strategy aimed at achieving no more than 12 road traffic fatalities per 100,000 population by 2020 as well as contributing to the road-safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda. As Kazakhstan is already a contracting party to seven United Nations road safety conventions, the Special Envoy encouraged their successful implementation. Furthermore, the discrepancy in the nationally reported road traffic fatality numbers and WHO-estimates was emphasized during the meetings, and relevant officials were strongly encouraged to address the issue by improving road safety data collection. The Special Envoy shared about Road Safety Performance Reviews, which will be initiated by UNECE later in the year and presented the United Nations Road Safety Fund, encouraging support and submission of project proposals during the first formal call in October 2019.
- In September 2019, the Special Envoy travelled to the Republic of Uzbekistan for the first time (meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs; Chair of Senate; Deputy Ministers of Health, Transport and Interior; as well as Deputy Mayor of Tashkent). During his meetings, the Special Envoy congratulated on Uzbekistan ranking as the best performing country on road safety in Central Asia, encouraging sustained commitment and efforts to further advancing road safety. Among recommended measures, the Special Envoy emphasized the importance of stronger law enforcement, better education, safer vehicles and infrastructure as well as efficient and timely post-crash care. Given the substantial differences in in WHO-

estimated and nationally reported road traffic fatalities, stakeholders were encouraged to strengthen data collection and greater coordination of data between relevant stakeholders. As Uzbekistan is a contracting party to four out of seven United Nations road safety conventions, the Special Envoy advocated for successful implementation of those and accession to of the remaining three. The recently established United Nations Road Safety Fund was presented to the Government of Uzbekistan suggesting to consider contributions and to submit project proposals.

### ESCAP road safety activities

1. An estimated 1.3 million people are killed, and up to 50 million injured, on the world's roads every year. Without decisive intervention, the annual fatality toll is forecast to increase to more than 1.8 million by 2020.<sup>2</sup> The ESCAP region accounted for 60 per cent of the global road crash fatalities in 2016. Moreover, the Vulnerable Road User fatalities are a major concern for the region.
2. The Global Status Reports on Road Safety (World Health Organization, 2018) highlights that the number of annual road traffic deaths has reached 1.35 million globally.
3. Whereas the global rate of road traffic death is 18.2 per 100,000 population, there is significant variation across SPECA countries with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan having the highest rate and Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan the lowest (Table 1).

Table 1: Estimated road traffic death rate in SPECA countries

No.	Country	Estimated road traffic death rate (per 100 000 population)
1.	Afghanistan	15.1
2.	Azerbaijan	8.7
3.	Kazakhstan	17.6
4.	Kyrgyzstan	15.4
5.	Tajikistan	18.1
6.	Turkmenistan	14.5
7.	Uzbekistan	11.5

Source: WHO. Available at: [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2018/Table\\_A2\\_Road\\_Traffic\\_Deaths.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/Table_A2_Road_Traffic_Deaths.pdf?ua=1)

4. In support of UN GA resolutions, as well as Commission resolution 66/6 on “Improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific” and resolution 73/4 on “Implementation of the Ministerial

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. 2010. Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020. New York; and WHO. 2011. Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011–2020: Saving Millions of Lives. New York.

Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific”, updated Regional Road Safety Goals and Targets for Asia and the Pacific 2016-2020, ESCAP continues to provide assistance to member countries in meeting their commitments with the goal to halve number of road traffic injuries and fatalities in line with target 3.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Regional Action Programme on Sustainable Transport Development (2017-2021) adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Moscow in December 2016, through raising awareness and enhance the capacities of member countries in relevant road safety issues.

5. An effective monitoring and evaluation of progress on road safety is contingent upon accurate data systems to measure and monitor road traffic deaths, injuries, and crashes. This is proving to be a formidable challenge in the SPECA member countries. Underreporting of the road crashes is a significant problem, and this is a critical inhibiting factor in understanding the scale and impact of the problem. A comparison between government-reported road crash fatalities and fatalities estimated by the World Health Organization in 2016 indicated underreporting in the low-income countries by 84 per cent followed by the middle-income countries by 51 per cent.<sup>3</sup>
6. In response to this data discrepancy, in early 2019, ESCAP joined the initiative towards the establishment of a road safety observatory for the Asia-Pacific region. The Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory was launched by the Asian Development Bank, the Fédération Internationale de l' Automobile, the International Transport Forum, ESCAP, and the World Bank, with support from the World Health Organization and the Global Road Safety Facility. It aims to become the regional forum on road safety data, policies and practices across Asia and the Pacific, and will provide a platform for decision-makers from countries in the region to learn more on the importance of accurate and harmonized crash data, but also to foster the development of a synergistic environment to empower countries to collect useful and timely information to address the ongoing road safety crisis.
7. The kick-off workshop under the Observatory was hosted by the World Bank in Singapore in March 2019, whereas a second workshop was hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok in December 2019.

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<sup>3</sup> The World Bank and Global Road Safety Facility, “A Guide for Road Safety Opportunities and Challenges”, 2020. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/447031581489115544/pdf/Guide-for-Road-Safety-Opportunities-and-Challenges-Low-and-Middle-Income-Country-Profiles.pdf>

Four SPECA member countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) participated in the workshop.

8. In December 2019, the Asian Development Bank, acting as Secretariat for the Observatory, sent an invitation letter to member countries to determine their interest in joining. Membership would have the benefit of improving collection and analysis of road safety data and would entail an annual meeting. As of end-July 2020, six member countries including three SPECA member countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan) have confirmed their membership to the Observatory.
9. The establishment of the Observatory was officially announced at the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Stockholm in February 2020. A first workshop on implementation of the Observatory was organized virtually on 26 August 2020 by the Asian Development Bank in collaboration with ESCAP and other development partners. Participants from four SPECA member countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) participated in the workshop.
10. For the Observatory to become a functional regional tool for improving road safety, it will be important to ensure its regional acceptance and wide-spread use.

**The Thematic Working Group may wish to:**

- Continue their efforts to develop and implement national road safety strategies and action plans, strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation to achieve goals and targets in line with the БҮСЦТБ Decade of Action for Road Safety as well as road safety-related SDGs;
- Efficiently implement United Nations legal instruments on road safety;
- Consider activities under the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF);
- Ask for political support and commitment as well as scaling up of funding for road safety endeavors in the SPECA countries, including infrastructure improvements and advocacy programs;
- Ensure the collection of quality road safety data and request technical assistance in data collection to facilitate the regular monitoring of road safety at the national and regional levels;



- Encourage those SPECA countries. which haven't done so, to join the The Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory and actively participate in it activities