

---

---

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

26<sup>th</sup> Session  
25 November 2021  
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 crashes are responsible for more than 1.35 million deaths each year, while estimates of non-fatal injuries range from 20 million to 50 million, and cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations. According to some estimations, road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.
2. Several global initiatives have been undertaken to improve the global road safety situation in the last two decades. The General Assembly has adopted a total of nine resolutions<sup>1</sup> since 2004. Three global ministerial conferences on road safety were organized, namely in Moscow, the Russian Federation (November 2009), Brasilia, Brazil (November 2015) and Stockholm, Sweden (February 2020), all of which adopted a declaration urging governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic foundations to cooperate in addressing related issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> Road Safety resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are available at: <https://www.who.int/roadsafety/about/resolutions/download/en/>

3. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the international community clearly placed road safety among the top development issues by setting the ambitious target of halving the global number of road fatalities and injuries by 2020 as part of Sustainable Development Goal target 3.6 on good health and well-being. The issue of road safety is also reflected in target 11.2 which aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all.
4. On 31 August 2020, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 74/299 on improving global road safety which proclaimed the period 2021–2030 as the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety, with a goal of reducing road traffic fatalities and injuries by at least 50 per cent from 2021 to 2030, and in this regard called upon member countries to continue action through 2030 on all the road safety-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 3.6<sup>2</sup>. The Resolution requested to prepare a plan of action of the Second Decade as a guiding document to support the implementation of its objectives. In response to the request, ESCAP and ECE joined a Global Task Force led by the World Health Organization to prepare a Global Plan of Action, which was launched globally on 28 October 2021.
5. 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.
6. The UNRSF has run one pilot call and two more calls for proposals to-date and as a result, is currently supporting 15 projects, spanning 4 regions, showcasing the impact of joint partnerships between the UN and an array of stakeholders.<sup>3</sup> Next call for proposals is in preparation and it should be launched in March 2022.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/299>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unece.org/projects-2>

## **UNECE Road safety activities**

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

7. 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.
8. 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**

9. From the last WG meeting, the number of contracting parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic was changed to 102. One new contracting party joined 1968 Convention on Road Traffic bringing the total number to 85 and the total number of contracting parties to 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals is 68. The number of contracting parties to the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (1970) was increased to 52.
10. 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 is 16.

11. 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. 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.

**C. Technical assistance in the road safety field**

12. Road Safety Performance Review:
  - a. In 2019 the Government of Kazakhstan agreed with UNECE to prepare Kazakhstan Road Safety Performance Review. The project will assist Kazakhstan to strengthen the road safety management capacity and effectively address and improve national road safety record. It will help Government to identify the most critical road safety aspects and priority needs by preparing Kazakhstan Road Safety Performance Review. The discussion how to unblock this project implementation is ongoing.
  - b. Preparation of RSPR for Uzbekistan was one of the topics during the meeting of H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the UNECE Executive Secretary Olga Algayerova in Tashkent in July 2021. Draft Concept note have been prepared and the next step would be appointment of Uzbekistan focal point for project implementation.

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

13. 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<sup>4</sup>.

- In September 2019, the Special Envoy travelled to the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Uzbekistan and discussed how to improve road safety and implement goals of national road safety strategy. During Mr. Todt visit, United Nations Road Safety Fund was presented to the Governments suggesting considering contributions and to submit project proposals.

#### **Road safety in ESCAP region**

14. The Asia-Pacific region accounted for 60.2 per cent of the global road fatalities in 2016<sup>5</sup>. With around 813,000 deaths from road traffic crashes in 2016 and a nearly 11 per cent increase compared to 2013, this trend goes against the target 3.6 of the SDGs which aims for 50 per cent reduction of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2020.

15. Vulnerable road users- pedestrians, cyclists and motorized 2 and 3-wheelers represent more than half of all ESCAP region (approx. 55%) road fatalities. The burden of road fatalities is disproportionately high among upper and lower middle-income countries in relation to the size of their populations. The problem is more acute (54.8%) in the lower middle-income countries in the ESCAP region.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unece.org/united-nations-special-envoy-for-road-safety/roadsafetyenvoy.html>

<sup>5</sup> ESCAP analysis of data published by the World Health Organization in the Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018

16. In SPECA region, as far as the rate of road traffic death is concerned, there is significant variation 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<br>(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)

17. In 2018, ESCAP member States adopted Resolution 74/3 on “Improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable transport systems” which emphasized on the need for further strengthening international cooperation and knowledge-sharing on road safety at all levels. It encouraged all members and associate members to intensify national efforts and regional collaboration with a view to meeting the road-safety-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to take steps to improve road safety.<sup>6</sup>

18. Road safety remains a key thematic area under the draft new regional action programme for sustainable transport development for Asia and the Pacific (2022-2026) to be considered for adoption at the 4th Ministerial Conference on Transport in December this year.

19. A new annex to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway network – annex II bis, entitled “Asian Highway design standards for road safety” – was adopted at the seventh meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway in December 2017. As per article 8(5) of the Agreement, this new annex II bis will enter into force 12 months after two thirds of the parties to the Agreement have deposited an instrument of acceptance with the Secretary-General, either directly or through the ESCAP secretariat.<sup>7</sup> The annex hasn’t entered into force

<sup>6</sup> Detailed information on the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (2017-2021) is available at E/ESCAP/73/15/Add.1, annex I.

<sup>7</sup> The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Annex II bis is available at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/intergovernmental-agreement-asian-highway-network>

as of now and those SPECA countries who haven't done so are encouraged to take steps to accept it. ESCAP secretariat stands ready to assist in the process. The entry into force of annex II bis to the Agreement is important as it would trigger an process among member countries towards improving their local infrastructure standards to accommodate new facilities for better road safety.

20. ESCAP is one of the 11 participating UN organizations of the UN Road Safety Fund. Under the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) pilot projects approved in 2019, the ESCAP secretariat in partnership with other partners have been implementing numerous projects. SPECA countries are encouraged to submit project proposals to ESCAP Transport Division in due course of time.
21. The Bangkok Declaration on “City and Transport: Safety, Efficiency, and Sustainability” was adopted at a Regional Meeting entitled “City and Transport: Safety, Efficiency, and Sustainability”, organized by ESCAP in a virtual format on 9-10 June 2021.<sup>8</sup> The Declaration recognized the importance of introducing measures to implement a systematic approach to improve the safety of urban transport systems and, in turn, reduce the number of fatalities and casualties in crashes ("Safe System Approach"). Five SPECA member countries, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting.
22. 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. ESCAP joined the regional initiative of a group of development organizations towards establishing the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO)<sup>9</sup> as regional forum on road safety data, policies and practices across Asia and the Pacific. The objective of the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO) is to better serve and support member countries in their concerted efforts to address road safety data related issues. As of October 2021, 20 ESCAP member countries including five SPECA countries, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan became a member of Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO). The first annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO) members was organized in a virtual

---

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/BangkokDeclarationOnSustainableUrbanTransport\\_10Jun2021-Adopted.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/BangkokDeclarationOnSustainableUrbanTransport_10Jun2021-Adopted.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> A list of the APRSO members can be found at: <https://www.aprso.org/about-aprso>, accessed on 18 October 2021.

setting by the development partners including ESCAP on 21 and 22 April 2021 to discuss the challenge of collecting and collating road safety data for more informed policy making.<sup>10</sup>

**The 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 Second 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
- Encourage those SPECA countries, which haven't done so, to accept the annex II bis to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway network
- Build on the results of Road Safety Performance Reviews, encourage SPECA Member countries to ask for technical assistance in road safety through RSPR
- 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 its activities.

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.aprso.org/event/aprso-annual-meeting-november-2021>, accessed on 20 October 2021.