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**Strategic questions of a horizontal and cross-sectoral policy or regulatory nature:**

**Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Road Safety**

## Activities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

### Note by the secretariat of the Special Envoy for Road Safety

#### *Summary*

Recognizing the need to take urgent action to address one of the most pressing sustainable development challenges of our time, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed on 29 April 2015, Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety.

We enter the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030) standing still at an estimated 1.35 million deaths and more than 50 million severely injured each year on our world's roads. Despite the best practices developed from the First Decade of Action (2011–2020) and the road safety improvements made in some European countries, regrettably we have achieved no decrease in the number of global annual road traffic deaths. Ninety percent of road fatalities occur in lower-and-middle income countries and more than 55 per cent of global road deaths are vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists).

It is within this context that the General Assembly in August 2020 (A/RES/74/299) recommended that the function of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety be extended another ten years to cover the period of the Second Decade. The start of the second decade is very different from the previous. The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented global impact on transport and human mobility, which took a dramatic change. Accelerated and strategic action that adapts to the changing world is needed from the Special Envoy, stakeholders, and governments to ensure that progress is made to reach the revised road-safety related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

This report from the Special Envoy contains the activities which contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate, as implemented between February and December 2021.

The Committee is invited to take **note** of this report and to **express its support** for the continuation of the important work and momentum built so far by the Special Envoy to improve road safety.



## **I. Background**

1. The severe impact of road traffic crashes on the well-being of all people and the huge economic consequences for societies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries prompted the United Nations Secretary-General to appoint on 29 April 2015, Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety, with the secretariat hosted by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The mandate was further extended by the newly elected Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres.
2. In response to the worrying situation of road safety on the development agenda, specific goals on road safety were included in the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. Target 3.6 calls for halving of the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes, and target 11.2 aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.
3. In August 2020, Member States recommitted themselves to urgent action for road safety by adopting the latest General Assembly resolution on Improving Global Road Safety (A/RES/74/299). The resolution calls for a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety, and set a new target to halve the number of road deaths and injuries by 2030. Among key calls for action are further support for the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), request to the United Nations Secretary-General to consider extending the Special Envoy for Road Safety function through 2030 and reaffirming the value of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety. It also asks WHO and the United Nations regional commissions to work with stakeholders to develop a plan for the Second Decade of Action. Most importantly, it invites Member States to invest in road safety at all levels, including by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for institutional and infrastructural improvements for road safety.
4. In July 2021, Member States adopted the resolution on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting on improving global road safety (A/RES/75/308). The objective is to address gaps and challenges, mobilize political leadership, promote multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration, and assess the progress made with the road safety related Sustainable Development Goals. A high-level preparatory meeting, convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly in December 2021, will focus on international and domestic financing for road safety. High-level country participation is highly encouraged.
5. To date, the Special Envoy visited 92 Member States, where he held bilateral meetings with 27 Heads of States and 215 Ministers.
6. This report of the Special Envoy contains the activities that contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate (see Annex), implemented since the Special Envoy's previous report (ECE/TRANS/2021/18).

## **II. Summary and Highlights of the Activities Implemented by the Special Envoy**

### **A. Promoting Global Partnerships to Support the Design and Implementation of Strategies and Activities to Improve Road Safety**

7. This goal has been high on the agenda of the Special Envoy, and in concrete terms, was addressed by the Special Envoy through more than 250 meetings, consultations, and participation in various awareness-raising initiatives, such as the following.

#### **1. United Nations Road Safety Fund**

8. The Special Envoy has continued to lead fundraising efforts, informed the Office of the Secretary-General about the progress of its operations, and served in his role as Advisory Board member. The Special Envoy raised the visibility of the Fund during events for the Friends of Road Safety Network meetings, and during missions to countries. Due to the

Special Envoy's direct advocacy, new donors joined UNRSF, which include a new Member State pledge and contribution from a foundation. Furthermore, Hungary confirmed the Government's continued contributions to the Fund as well as in planning a fundraising gala in February 2022, following the Special Envoy's mission to Hungary in 2021.

9. In October 2021, the Special Envoy delivered opening remarks during the Advisory Board's fifth session – welcoming the planned UNRSF fundraising efforts at the level of countries, corporates and citizens – and advising on fundraising priorities. The Special Envoy also held monthly follow-up meetings with the Chair of the Advisory Board exchanging updates and discussing the way forward, specifically for fundraising, as well as contributed to the UNRSF #moments2live4 campaign.

## **2. Cultivation of the Friends of Road Safety Network in Geneva and New York**

10. The delegation of the European Union in Geneva and the delegation of Italy in New York launched an informal network of Friends of Road Safety in March and June 2019 respectively. The aim of the network is to increase engagement of the diplomatic corps and relevant organizations in both locations through awareness-raising, mobilizing funding and increasing development cooperation for road safety.

11. In October 2021, the Special Envoy along with Ms. Lotte Knudsen, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the European Union delegation in Geneva and Mr. Georges-Rémi Namekong, Minister Counsellor, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the African Union (AU) delegation in Geneva, hosted the Geneva Friends for Road Safety Network event "Two-wheeler safety in Africa: safe and affordable helmets". This occasion was an opportunity for the Friends to further strengthen efforts in promoting road safety as members of the network during the Decade of Action (2021–2030) just commenced. More than 40 participants, among Ambassadors, United Nations officials and stakeholders, joined the event, representing 26 Member States and six different organizations and departments.

12. In summary, the diplomatic corps are encouraged to contribute by: (a) promoting the UNRSF call for proposals towards the capitals and respective national bodies, particularly, submitting project ideas according to the provided guidelines, (b) supporting United Nations General Assembly resolutions on improving road safety and promoting calls of action in capitals, (c) proactively engaging with capitals, colleagues and international and national actors on the issue of road safety, and linking international efforts with national initiatives, including accession to the United Nations legal instruments and implementation thereof, and (d) promoting greater mobilization of funds for road safety, both to support UNRSF and also to place a higher priority on road safety in developing cooperation spending.

## **3. Fifth United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety**

13. Following four previous United Nations wide meetings held by the Special Envoy that were in the spirit of greater strategic coordination efforts on road safety by the United Nations, that the Special Envoy convened the Fifth Partnership Meeting for Road Safety on 9 December 2021. The event was held virtually and attended by a significant number of high-level representatives from United Nations organizations and departments, including the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed who contributed through a video message.

14. The main topics covered during the meeting were the preparations for the 2022 High-Level Meeting on Road Safety, the replenishment of UNRSF, the AI for Road Safety initiative<sup>1</sup>, the internal United Nations road safety strategy, as well as the sharing of participating agencies on their global efforts.

15. High-level engagement included the personal participation of nearly all the Executive Secretaries of the United Nations regional commissions, the Under-Secretaries-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and of the Department of Safety and Security, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Vice-President for Infrastructure of the World Bank.

<sup>1</sup> <https://aiforgood.itu.int/about/ai-ml-pre-standardization/ai4roadsafety/>

## **B. Advocating with Governments, Civil Society and the Private Sector for the Promotion of Road Safety, Particularly in Countries with a High Rate of Road Fatalities and Injuries**

### **Advocacy with Governments and Other Stakeholders to Increase Attention on Road Safety**

16. The Special Envoy meets with high-level government officials in mostly low- and middle-income countries with poor road safety records. Since 2015, the Special Envoy has held meetings with government officials and relevant stakeholders in 92 countries: 20 countries in Asia/Eurasia/Oceania, 16 countries in Africa, nine countries in the Middle-East, 26 countries in Europe and North America, and 21 countries in Latin American and the Caribbean. These discussions focused on the status of the road safety situation in each country and encouraged accession to and implementation of the United Nations road safety conventions. The Special Envoy continues to keep the United Nations road safety conventions, the importance of strong governance and the need to build complete national road safety systems on the agenda of his bilateral meetings and on messages in his speeches at conferences.

17. Furthermore, during his visits and bilateral discussions, the Special Envoy has persistently encouraged contributions to UNRSF, resulting in a pledge from Luxembourg in 2021.

18. Given that private sector engagement is a high priority of the Special Envoy, meetings with key partners are arranged during his missions. In 2021, contributions were made to UNRSF by the Keep Fighting Foundation. The Special Envoy has also engaged the International Automobile Federation (FIA) High Level Panel for Road Safety, comprised of an array of private sector stakeholders in discussions and potential contributions to UNRSF.

## **C. Participation in Global and Regional Conferences, and Meetings on Road Safety**

19. The Special Envoy participated in in-person and online meetings and conferences in efforts to highlight road safety, comprising events where road safety may not have been previously covered. These include:

- ECE eighty-third annual session of the Inland Transport Committee
- ITU and ECE Symposium on the Future Networked Car 2021: “Moving towards automated driving”
- ECE eighty-second session of the Working Party 1, the meeting of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety with the European Union Heads of Missions in Geneva
- Cambridge Union Event
- Round Table with the Kenyan Inter-Ministerial Committee on Action for Road Safety
- Kapuscinski Development Lecture in partnership with UNDP and the European Commission
- WHO information session on the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety
- International Transport Forum (ITF) Summit
- Support to the Sixth United Nation Global Road Safety Week through different initiatives and efforts
- ESCAP Regional Meeting for the Asia-Pacific
- Launch of Western Balkans Regional Road Safety Observatory: European Commission Transport Community Ministerial Council
- United Nations High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development

- Canadian Association of Road Safety Professionals (CARSP): 2021 Virtual Conference
- ESCAP Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) Meeting
- Climate Chance Summit Africa 2021 – High-level plenary “From Glasgow 2021 to Dakar 2022: Priorities for Climate Action and Sustainable Mobility Africa”
- Launch of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030
- Global Observance of the World Habitat Day celebration with UN-Habitat, the Government of Cameroon and the city of Yaoundé
- Global Observance of the World Cities Day celebration with UN-Habitat, the Government of the Egypt and the Shanghai Municipal People’s Government of China
- Fifteenth International Seminar for Road Safety by the Municipality of Bogota, Colombia
- AI for Road Safety Launch Event with ITU and 38 United Nations partners
- Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference
- Round Table with the Vice-Presidents of the World Bank
- TransMEA 2021: the fourth Smart Transportation & Logistics Fair and Forum for the Middle East and Africa organized by the Government of Egypt
- ECE RCP Meeting
- Tenth Anniversary of the Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety
- European Union Excellence in Road Safety Awards
- Launch of Imola Living Lab developed by the University of Bologna, the Monte Catone Rehabilitation Institute, and the Bellaria Spinal Cord Trauma Institute (Italy)
- Fourth Africa Sustainable Urban Mobility Course Abuja, managed by Ochuenel Nigeria in collaboration with the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI), the Nigerian Transportation Growth Initiative, the UN-Habitat Africa Regional Office of Kenya, the National Open University of Nigeria and the Institute for Transport and Development Policy (ITDP) of Kenya
- African Road Safety Day with AU, ECA and the World Bank Africa Transport Policy Programme (SSATP)
- 2021 European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction organized by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Regional Office for Europe, the Portuguese National Authority for Civil Protection, the European Commission and the Council of Europe
- Second Meeting of Western Balkans Road Safety Observatory supported by the European Commission, FIA and the World Bank
- Support event for the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on improving global road safety, convened by the President of the General Assembly
- Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport – Side event “Saving lives on the Asia-Pacific roads” co-hosted by ESCAP and the Special Envoy

#### **D. Advocating the Accession to, and More Effective Implementation of the United Nations Road Safety Legal Instruments**

20. This objective has been addressed at meetings of the Special Envoy with governments, representatives of international organizations and United Nations system organizations, as well as civil society representatives in countries he visited in his capacity as the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, as highlighted above. For this purpose, the Special Envoy’s secretariat, hosted by the ECE Office of the Executive Secretary, prepared a briefing

package for each mission with the road safety profile of the country, the main road safety legal instruments, specially designed and customized policy messages, and other details relevant for the meetings of the Special Envoy with the officials.

## **1. Promotion of the United Nations Road Safety Conventions**

21. The Special Envoy produced brochures which summarize seven of the 59 United Nations transport-related legal instruments that specifically focus on improving road safety, and that have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. The brochures overview the seven, core United Nations road safety conventions, the accession status of each Member State and the steps needed for accession. The brochures are distributed and used at meetings worldwide. As a result of the Special Envoy's advocacy, in August 2021, Kyrgyzstan became contracting party to the 1970 European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) and Ethiopia acceded to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic.

## **2. Capacity-building**

22. The Special Envoy continued to support performance reviews in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe to further achieve this objective:

- Two United Nations Road Safety Performance Reviews were supported in Africa, namely Ethiopia and Zimbabwe at the request of the respective Governments. The reviews, supported by the Special Envoy, are carried out by the Special Envoy Secretariat in collaboration with ECE and ECA, as well as other partners. These were in synergistic relationship with the United Nations Road Safety Performance Reviews implemented in the framework of the UNDA-funded project led by ECE in collaboration with and ESCAP and ECLAC.
- The United Nations Road Safety Performance Reviews pay special attention to regulatory governance for road safety, and they start with an assessment of the needs of the country in review, using the UNRSF Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety. In practice, a Road Safety Performance Review assesses the current status of the national road safety system in place, helps the Government to identify the most critical safety aspects and recommends actions to be taken to address the gaps. Based on the identified priority needs, capacity-building seminars and workshops are organized for national road safety stakeholders. The project thus raises general awareness of road safety issues by sensitizing experts as well as the public sector and non-governmental sectors, of the need to set ambitious road safety targets and to implement specific measures to improve road safety. Following the finalization of the road safety performance review reports, the Special Envoy, jointly with the Executive Secretary of ECA, publicly launched the report for Ethiopia in January 2021, to promote findings and recommendations with the highest levels of Government and to provide capacity-building to support the recommendations of the report.
- The Road Safety Performance Reviews which are supported by the Special Envoy, also include the WHO Emergency Care Systems Assessment, that helps to assess national or regional emergency care systems, identify gaps and set priorities for system development.
- A two-day national road safety workshop was conducted virtually with stakeholders in Botswana on 11 and 12 November 2021. The Special Envoy followed by the Honourable Thulagano Merafe Segokgo, Minister of Transport of Botswana, delivered online opening remarks. Then presenters shared information about the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, the United Nations road safety related legal instruments, the road safety data issue as well as the funding one. Recommendations for improvements were provided. Nearly 30 representatives of national and local government attended the workshop.

### **III. Conclusion**

23. With a mix of in-person and virtual meetings and events, as well as missions to most affected countries (as the COVID-19 situation allowed), the Special Envoy was successful in continuing to deepen engagement and increase visibility of the cause among governments, the private sector, the United Nations system and other stakeholders. The Special Envoy will prioritize support to regional and national capacity-building workshops, in-country missions as well as ensure that road safety stays relevant in the changing global context. The Special Envoy remains committed to raising the visibility of road safety and of the United Nations road safety legal instruments, and to inspiring stronger action from governments to address road safety, including through contributions to the United Nations Road Safety Fund. The Special Envoy's main calls for action in the immediate future is to encourage high participation in and outcomes from the high-level meeting on improving global road safety to be held in July 2022, to promote the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action as a basis for required actions that need to be implemented at the national and regional levels, to advocate for increased financing for road safety at the international and domestic level as well as raise the profile of road safety in its linkages to other global agendas. Furthermore, the Special Envoy plans to launch the bi-annual Kofi Annan African Road Safety Award in Accra in early 2022 with the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Government of Ghana to celebrate and encourage progress in the region.

## Annex

### **Priorities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety (Extract from the Terms of Reference)**

**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 the transport of dangerous goods. The Special Envoy will also promote the accession to and the improved implementation of these legal instruments by contracting parties.

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