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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

Road fatalities and injuries are a challenge to global development. With 1.3 million people killed on the road every year, it ranks as the eighth leading cause of death worldwide. Most importantly, road crashes are the No. 1 cause of death in young people aged between 5 and 29. Almost 90 per cent of the road fatalities occur in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

Beyond the human suffering that this entails, road traffic deaths and injuries cause significant economic losses to individuals and societies. These costs amount to between 3 and 5 per cent of the annual GDP of many countries, and contribute to leaving millions of people in poverty, creating an estimated €1.85 trillion burden on the global economy each year.

The United Nations has invested significantly in tackling the problem of road safety globally. To galvanize intersectoral actions and raise the visibility of road safety, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety in 2015. In 2018, the Special Envoy launched the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) with 14 United Nations organizations.

Following the “Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020”, the United Nations General Assembly, in August 2020, adopted a resolution on “Improving Road Safety”, that reconfirmed its commitment to halving the number of global traffic deaths and injuries and to providing access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.

In July 2022, representatives of Member States, the private sector and NGOs met in New York for the first ever High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety at the United Nations General Assembly, unanimously adopting the “Political Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety”.



This document from the Special Envoy contains the activities which contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate, as implemented between January and October 2022.

The Committee is invited **to take note** of this document 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 subsequently 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 sets a new target to halve the number of road deaths and injuries by 2030. Among key calls for action are a request for further support for the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF), a request to the United Nations Secretary-General to consider extending the Special Envoy for Road Safety function through 2030 and a reaffirmation of 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 resolution A/RES/75/308 on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the High-Level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety (HLM). 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.
5. In December 2021, a high-level preparatory meeting, convened by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), was held and focused on international and domestic financing for road safety.
6. In June and July of 2022, the HLM “2030 Horizon for Road Safety: Securing a Decade of Action and Delivery”, was convened by the President of UNGA. HLM brought together officials of the public and private sectors who committed to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety and adopted the new political declaration to ensure that the road safety-related Sustainable Development Goals targets are met.
7. To date, the Special Envoy has visited 92 Member States, where he held bilateral meetings with 28 Heads of States and more than 220 Ministers.
8. This report of the Special Envoy contains the activities that contribute to the four key priorities of his mandate (see the annex), implemented since the Special Envoy’s previous report (ECE/TRANS/2022/24).

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

9. 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 280 meetings, consultations, and participation in various awareness-raising initiatives, such as the following.

1. Financing for Road Safety

10. In effort to increase and understand domestic investments in road safety, the Special Envoy in October 2021, through official correspondence to Ministries of Finance, encouraged United Nations Member States to share the scale of road safety investments in their governmental budgets. Thirty countries responded, of which 11 were ECE member States. From the responses received to date, most countries spent less than 1 per cent of their national GDP on road safety investments with some countries reporting a declining trend in expenditure in road safety initiatives in 2019 and 2020. The Special Envoy, in partnership with stakeholders, including the United Nations Road Safety Fund and World Bank Global Road Safety Facility, continues to conduct follow-up activities to advocate for the increased engagement of the Finance Ministers on the issue.

11. The Special Envoy has continued to lead fundraising efforts for UNRSF and to serve in his role as Advisory Board member, as well as in the capacity of Advisory Board Interim Chair. The Special Envoy raised the visibility of UNRSF during activities, meetings and missions, as well as during events for the Friends of the Special Envoy global network. In part, by direct advocacy of the Special Envoy, 16 partners including Member States and private sector companies pledged over US\$ 15 million between 2022 and 2025, during the HLM plenary session and the side UNRSF Pledging Conference.

12. In July 2022, the Special Envoy supported the finalization of one of the first UNRSF completed projects: “Scaling Up Safe Street Designs in Ethiopia” by UN-Habitat, a UNRSF-funded project. The closing workshop showcased two online platforms for inclusive citizen participation – developed by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) and the Addis Ababa Transport Bureau (AATB) – which were deliverables of the project.

2. Global “Friends of the Special Envoy” for Road Safety Network

13. Since 2019, the Special Envoy has inspired regular exchanges and initiatives to promote road safety among the United Nations and the diplomatic community, with the creation of the first Friends of Road Safety Network in Geneva, by the Special Envoy and the delegation of the European Union. This was later expanded to New York City, Washington D.C., Brussels and Bangkok. With the second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030) and the renewed commitment of the international community, came a stronger call for growth and action from the Friends of Road Safety network. In 2022, the Special Envoy established a “global” Friends of the Special Envoy Network which will build upon the diplomatic hubs to network of “Friends”.

14. The participants of the Friends will promote increased engagement and stronger cooperation for road safety in their nations, companies and institutions, including at the local level, as well as among diplomats and representatives of civil society. The Friends will also be supported by road safety champions in public spheres with celebrities from all over the world. The Friends will join forces to stress the importance of reducing deaths and serious injuries on the roads everywhere.

15. Local hubs will contribute to a worldwide Friends group that draws together interests and expertise to advance global targets. Such hubs, led by the diplomatic community, currently include Geneva, New York City, Washington D.C., Brussels and Bangkok, as mentioned above.

16. In April 2022, Ambassador Lotte Knudson of the European Union hosted an event for the Friends of the Special Envoy in Geneva with participants from developed and less developed nations. At the event, the Special Envoy reminded delegations that road safety is a human right and that investing in safe mobility will address other important issues such as climate change, sustainable transport, and access to education and jobs. The Special Envoy encouraged accession to the United Nations road safety conventions, support to UNRSF and participation at the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Road Safety.

17. In June 2022, the Ambassador of Italy, Francesco Genuardi hosted an event in Brussels to launch the Brussels Friends of Road Safety hub, with representatives of the European Commission, the local private sector and the international organizations. At the margins of the fifteenth edition of the European Development Days “Global Gateway: building sustainable partnerships for a connected world”, the Special Envoy recognized the role of the European Union and advocated for road safety as a priority of development assistance.

18. At the margins of the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Road Safety in June and July 2022, the Ambassadors of Italy, Mariangela Zappia and Maurizio Massari respectively in Washington D.C. and New York organized events for officials from the United Nations, the diplomatic community as well as private and public sector representatives. The Special Envoy highlighted the significance of the of United Nations High-Level Meeting on road safety, encouraged increased support for UNRSF and recommended more international development assistance for road safety.

19. In November 2022, the Ambassador of Thailand, Suphatra Srimaitreephithak hosted an event in Geneva in preparation for the Special Envoy’s missions to Southeast Asia scheduled later during the month. Permanent Representatives of the region and beyond joined the event which focused on drawing attention to the road safety issue.

20. In November 2022, the Ambassador of France in Thailand, Thierry Mathou hosted an event in Bangkok in the context of the Special Envoy’s mission to the country and the region. High-level officials from the National Government and local authorities attended. On the occasion, the Special Envoy reiterated the urgency to take determined and concerted actions to further address the issue, as well as invited support for the Friends of Road Safety Network in the region.

3. Sixth United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety

21. Following the five previous United Nations-wide meetings hosted by the Special Envoy, the Special Envoy held the Sixth Partnership Meeting for Road Safety on 5 December 2022. The annual partnership meetings aim to increase greater strategic coordination efforts on road safety by the United Nations, and was attended by high-level representatives from more than 25 United Nations organizations and departments.

22. The main topics covered during the meeting included the outcomes of HLM, road safety linkages to gender, climate, cities, and youth, as well as regional trends and initiatives, financing for road safety and the United Nations international road safety strategy.

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

1. National level Advocacy with Governments and Other Stakeholders to Increase Attention on Road Safety

23. In 2022, the Special Envoy travelled to 21 countries, eight of which were ECE member States. The Special Envoy meets with high-level government officials in mostly low- and middle-income countries with poor road safety records to raise visibility, prioritization and investment in road safety. Since 2015, the Special Envoy has held meetings with government representatives and relevant stakeholders in 92 countries: 20 countries in Asia/Eurasia/Oceania, 16 countries in Africa, 9 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.

2. Global Awareness Campaign on Road Safety

24. The Special Envoy launched a global campaign with JCDecaux, an international billboard company, to spread awareness on road safety issues around the world. The campaign was launched in New York during the meeting of HLM and will be expanded to 80 countries over the next two years. It features celebrities who give a message of our individual and collective responsibility to change the tragedies in mobility.

3. Kofi Annan Road Safety Award for Africa

25. In March 2022, the Special Envoy launched the first Kofi Annan Road Safety Award in Accra with the President of Ghana, Executive Secretary of ECA and the Chair of the Kofi Annan Foundation. The Award aims to motivate key stakeholders – governments, private sector, and civil society organizations – to develop and implement innovative and outstanding ideas/initiatives to save lives on Africa’s roads. The Award recognizes the contributions of the late United Nations Secretary-General and founder of the Kofi Annan Foundation in the area of road safety. Mr. Annan brought the issue of road safety and road traffic victims onto the United Nations agenda at the beginning of the 2000s.

26. Five countries received the Award for outstanding performance based on an evaluation of the regional road safety action plan of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011 – 2020.

- Ghana: Excellence in implementing the Africa Road Safety Action Plan
- Morocco: Leadership in Road Safety Data Management
- Namibia: Leadership in the Ratification of the Africa Road Safety Charter
- Nigeria: Excellence in Road Safety Management
- South Africa: Leadership in Mobilising Resources for Road Safety

27. The regional awards will be given annually throughout the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030).

C. Participation in Global or Regional Conferences and Meetings on Road Safety

28. 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-fourth annual session of the Inland Transport Committee
- ITU: Global Standards Symposium 2022: “International standards to enable the digital transformation and achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs)”
- FISEVI: Fourth International Children’s Road Safety Forum
- UNRSF: African Youth Sustainable Development Goals Summit
- UNRSF: Reclaiming Streets for Pedestrians and Cyclists in Africa
- Province of Buenos Aires: First Congress for Road Safety and Education
- ITU and ECE: Symposium on the Future Networked Car

- ECA-AU-ADB-SSATP African Road Safety Observatory: Second General Assembly
- ESCAP: Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport
- ECE: Second Forum of Mayors
- ECE: Regional Collaborative Platform
- Governments of Sweden-India: Conference on Road Safety
- Imola Living Lab Project Event
- UN-Habitat: High-Level meeting on the New Urban Agenda
- Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety Week of Action for the campaign #CommitToAct
- Kenya: Fourth National Helmet Wearing Coalition Meeting
- TÜV Mobility Conference, Part 1 “A current view on global road safety status”
- AfriCities Ministerial Roundtable, and UN-Habitat and UNRSF side event: Championing Safe and Green Mobility
- World Economic Forum 2022: Davos-Klosters, Switzerland
- Luigi Guccione Foundation: Road Safety National Event
- World Bank: Event on Mobilizing Private Financing for Road Safety in LMICs
- Brescia University: International Conference on Road Safety
- European Development Days: High-Level Panel on “Safe and green mobility in low- and middle-income countries”, including the launch of the Special Envoy’s book, “The Road Ahead, 26 voices for Safe and Sustainable Mobility” (The book includes a selection of essays from leading specialists, members of government, public figures, and other promoters of road safety.), held in Brussels
- FIA Foundation: Twentieth Anniversary Forum on Safe & Healthy Mobility “Design for Life. For People & Planet”, held in London
- UN-Habitat: Eleventh World Urban Forum
- OECD: International Transport Forum Day
- Ethiopia: National Road Safety Strategy Launch
- Manifesto “Città 30 e Strade Sicure e Vitali”, launched in Rome
- Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries – Session 6: Strengthening partnerships for capacity-building, sustainable transport, data initiatives and road safety
- Presentation of the Youth Driver’s license Program Pilot Program in Buenos Aires
- Green Peak Festival in Vienna
- UNHCR: Award Ceremony Road safety training Driving and Road Safety Project in Athens
- UNRSF and NETS: Private Sector Benchmarking Event
- UNRSF Project: “Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa” Joint Importers & Exporters Meeting
- WFP UN: Booking Hub Passenger Mobility & Carpooling Solution Meeting
- ECE: Eighty-fifth Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety
- Monza Safety Vision 2022: A new vision for road & rail safety
- UN-Habitat World Habitat Day 2022: “Mind the gap. Leave no one and no place behind”

- NETS: Annual Fleet Safety Benchmark Conference
- ECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management: Eighty-third session – Panel on urban planning for climate-neutral and circular homes and Cities along with side event “Urban Mobility and Road Safety”, in San Marino
- Future Investment Institute: Sixth edition, in Riyadh
- Midlands State University African Continental Free Trade Area Seminar
- OACPS and the European Union: Forty-second Joint Parliamentary Assembly – Strengthening parliamentary solidarity and political will for road safety in member countries, including safe transport infrastructure

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

29. 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, prepares a briefing 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

30. The Special Envoy promotes seven of the 59 United Nations transport-related legal instruments that specifically focus on improving road safety, using materials that have been translated into French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. Information about the legal instruments is distributed and used at meetings worldwide. As a result of the Special Envoy’s advocacy, 44 contracting parties to the seven legal instruments are new since his appointment. The following countries becoming contracting parties in 2022:

- March 2022 – Saudi Arabia: 1968 Convention on Road Traffic
- April 2022 – Armenia: Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR)
- July 2022 – Benin: 1968 Convention on Road Traffic; and 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals
- August 2022 – Uganda: 1968 Convention on Road Traffic; 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals; ADR; 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts; 1998 Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles; and 1997 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections
- November 2022 – Philippines: 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

2. Capacity-Building Support

31. The Secretariat of the Special Envoy finalized and launched the fourth road safety performance reviews in in Africa, including an evaluation of the status in Zimbabwe:

- United Nations Road Safety Performance Reviews are requested by various Governments. The reviews, supported by the Special Envoy, are carried out by the Special Envoy's Secretariat in collaboration with ECE, ECA and 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 ESCAP and ECLAC. The Road Safety Performance Reviews 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.
- The United Nations Road Safety Performance Reviews pay special attention to regulatory governance for road safety, and start with an assessment of the needs of the country in review. In practice, a Road Safety Performance Review assesses the current status of the national road safety system that is in place, helps the Government identify the most critical safety aspects and recommends actions to be taken to address the gaps. The project thus raises the 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. When the road safety performance review report was finalized, the Special Envoy, jointly with the Executive Secretary of ECA, publicly launched the report of Zimbabwe in January 2022: to promote findings and recommendations with the highest levels of Government, to provide capacity-building and to support the recommendations of the report.

III. Conclusion

32. Over the past year, with a combination of building global initiatives, in-person and virtual meetings and events, as well as missions to affected countries, 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 remains committed to raise the visibility of road safety and of the United Nations road safety legal instruments, to support countries to build capacity as well as to inspire stronger action from governments, private sector, international organizations and civil society, including through contributions to UNRSF. The Special Envoy's main calls for action in the immediate future are to support the outcomes of HLM and its political declaration, promote the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action as a basis for required actions, advocate for increased financing for road safety, as well as raise the profile of road safety in its linkages to other global agendas. Furthermore, the Special Envoy plans to launch the second phase of the global awareness campaign and expand the Friends of the Special Envoy. The annual Kofi Annan African Road Safety Award will be organized in 2023 to celebrate and encourage more 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.