

theRoadAhead

THE WHO NEWSLETTER ON ROAD SAFETY

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Moving forward: road safety within the UN system

An important step towards the implementation of the coordination mandate given to WHO by the United Nations General Assembly (see page 3) took place on 1st October at WHO's headquarters in Geneva. On that day, over 50 participants, representing 11 United Nations agencies (including all five UN Regional Commissions), and 14 other global road safety organizations discussed how they could collaborate on global road safety efforts.

The number of participants and the range of the sectors they represented (transport, health, safety, from both government and nongovernmental organizations) attested to the broad support that exists for this new effort. Participants were enthusiastic about the move towards collaboration on road safety, in order to maximize the effect of individual efforts and minimize overlap.

A main objective of the meeting was to identify concrete products and outcomes of the collaboration. Participants agreed upon the further development of a number of outputs that were proposed at the meeting:

- i the development of a series of 'good practice' guidelines that will assist countries with the implementation of the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* (see page 2).

Although a number of guidelines might be produced in the future, it was agreed that initial efforts would focus on the main risk factors and protective factors identified in the World Report, ie, inappropriate or excessive speed, drinking and driving, seat belt use and helmet use.

- ii the development of a dynamic, web-based global road safety legislation database, based on previous UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) work in this area and with input from WHO and the other Regional Commissions.
- iii the completion and updating of a series of resolutions on road traffic and on road signs and signals adopted in the European region which UNECE proposes to disseminate throughout the world as 'good practice' guides.
- iv a follow-up meeting to the Stakeholder's Meeting was proposed for 2006, to be held possibly in Oman.
- v the collaboration of establishing an annual World Day of Remembrance for road crash victims.

Discussions also focused on identification of an overall mission for the Collaboration, lead agencies to take responsibility for product development and timeframes for their production. The proceedings of the meeting are being written up and will be available on our website at www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_traffic/un_roadsafety_collab/en/

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October 2004



Welcome to the third issue of WHO's newsletter, reporting on global road safety issues. The newsletter has been renamed 'The road ahead'. This issue contains news from the past six months, including the events of World Health Day 2004 and the United Nations General Assembly and World Health Assembly resolutions on road safety. There is also an account of the first collaborative meeting of United Nations agencies and other global organizations working on road safety, held on 1 October 2004 in Geneva.

The road ahead will be produced twice a year in six languages and can be downloaded from our website: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/

To request hard copies of the newsletter, please contact us at traffic@who.int



World Health Organization





Some of the 50 participants at the 1st October meeting on global road safety included, from left to right: Jeff Runge, National Highway Safety Administration; Etienne Krug, WHO; David Ward, FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society; Richard Scurfield, World Bank

The week of the UN meeting was also an important one for the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP1) of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, see www.unece.org/trans/main/welcwp1.html

For the first time, representatives from the four other UN Regional Commissions – Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) – attended the WP1 session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and discussed ways in which these Regional Commissions can collaborate on road safety issues. In view of the road safety situations in different regions, discussions identified ways of information sharing, as well as exploring how WHO regional offices can work with UN Regional Commissions on road safety issues.

The next meeting of the UN Road Safety Collaboration was tentatively set for March 2005, when participants will discuss progress made on implementing activities and provide input into the next report to the UN Secretary General on progress made in global road safety (see page 3).

WHO and the World Bank launch the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*

On 7 April 2004, the World Health Organization and the World Bank launched the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* at the global World Health Day celebration in Paris. The Report was produced in a collaborative process involving policy-makers, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, and academics from around the world.

Stressing the role of public health in the prevention of road traffic injuries, it describes the fundamental concepts of road traffic injury prevention, the impact of road traffic injuries, the major determinants and risk factors, and intervention strategies. The Report's six key recommendations can be found at: www.who.int/world-health-day/2004/infomaterials/world_report/en/recommendations_en.pdf

One vital role of the Report is as an advocacy tool, to help lobby for much greater attention and resources to be allocated to national road safety efforts. Many countries have already held launches of the Report, creating opportunities to increase awareness of road safety, implement new laws or better enforce existing ones, and begin new road safety campaigns. Some countries are now following up on the Report by producing their own national reports and plans of action on road safety.

The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* is currently available in English, French and Arabic. Summaries are also available in these languages as well as in Chinese, Russian and Spanish. For more information, to order a hard copy, or to download the Report, go to: www.who.int/world-health-day/2004/infomaterials/world_report/en/

Further translations of the full report are continuing. The Report will be available in Chinese by mid October, and in Russian and Spanish by the end of November. In addition, the summary is currently being translated into Farsi, Thai and Vietnamese. If anyone is interested in translating the Report or summary into other languages, they should contact the WHO publications office at: pubrights@who.int for copyright permission.

Please note: A corrected version of Table A4 of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* can be downloaded from our website at www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_traffic/en/

World Health Day (WHD) Events

World Health Day is an annual event designed to increase global awareness of a specific health theme, often one that has been neglected. For the first time in WHO's history, World Health Day this year was devoted to road safety, with the slogan '**Road safety is no accident**'. The event provided a stimulus for governments and NGOs to raise awareness on road safety, gain support for existing activities and initiate new strategies for tackling the problem.

WHD: The Global Event: Paris

The global event was celebrated on 7 April 2004 in Paris, France, where the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* was launched. France has typified the approach advocated in the Report's recommendations, combining political will and effective action, with the result that the number of deaths on French roads fell by about 20% in 2003, saving some 2000 lives and preventing thousands of injuries. Participating in this advocacy event were many prominent political figures, including Mr Jacques Chirac, President of France, Dr Jong-wook Lee, WHO Director-General, and ministers of health from numerous countries.

For more information, including a webcast of the global World Health Day ceremony, please go to: www.who.int/world-health-day/2004/activities/global/paris/en

WHD: events around the world

World Health Day 2004, on the theme '**Road safety is no accident**', was celebrated in more than 500 locations spread across 132 countries. The aim of these events was to **raise awareness of road safety issues, stimulate new road safety legislation, create organizations for road safety, and promote further research**. In many places, the events were combined with official launches of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. The record of World Health Day events and subsequent initiatives will be presented in a document on 'one-year milestones', to be published by WHO in mid-2005. The following, though, is a brief summary of a few of these events.

Historic resolutions on road safety at the UN General Assembly and World Health Assembly

Policy-makers capitalized on the report and the events of World Health Day to pass two historic resolutions on road safety. On 14 April 2004, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 58/289 on 'Improving Global Road Safety'. The tabling of this resolution was spearheaded by the Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Sultanate of Oman, His Excellency Fuad Mubarak Al-Hinai.

Several speakers in the debate stressed the urgency of a global effort in tackling road safety, calling for action underpinned by United Nations support. The resolution asked WHO, in collaboration with the Regional Commissions, to coordinate road safety efforts within the United Nations system. For more information on the resolution and speakers at the General Assembly please see: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/media/news/14_04_2004/en/ and www.globalroadsafety.org/

Following the UN General Assembly, road safety received unprecedented attention at the World Health Assembly in May, when Resolution WHA 57.10 became the first resolution on road safety to be passed in 30 years. There was unanimous support from Member States at the Assembly, with 41 countries and several UN organizations declaring their approval of the text's messages.

The resolution's recommendations broadly reflect those of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. The full text of this resolution can be found at: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/media/news/22_05_2004/en/

For Member States, these two resolutions provide important policy and advocacy tools that can be used to place road safety firmly on the public health agenda, at both national and international levels. The resolutions call for increased attention and resources to be directed towards road safety efforts, in addition to specifying particular actions that should be taken to reduce road traffic injuries. For example, they urge that focal points on road safety be appointed and that road traffic injury prevention be integrated into public health programmes. They also call for data collection to be improved, primary prevention and emergency services to be strengthened and for increased capacity to be developed.

Both resolutions call for the progress that is made to be reported back to future sessions of their respective forums. It is therefore important that road safety experts from all sectors assist their governments to move towards implementing these historic resolutions.

- Student art competitions were organized in a number of countries, including 18 Member States from the Eastern Mediterranean Region.
- In Bangalore, India, the Comprehensive Trauma Consortium organized an 'ambulance convoy' to popularize its medical emergency hotline number. The number reaches a free ambulance service staffed by paramedics providing pre-hospital care.
- Engineering students at Malta's College of Arts, Science and Technology carried out free car checks on the campus. These included testing brakes, lights, tyres and seat belts. In doing so, the students highlighted the importance of properly maintaining a car.
- In Cambodia, a televised quiz show on road safety aimed at young people was broadcast on World Health Day. The quiz was chaired by the Secretary of State for Health, Dr Man Bunheng.
- The UN Postal Administration issued road safety stamps commemorating road safety, as did Bangladesh, France, Italy, Kiribati, and South Africa. For further information on the UN stamps see: www.un.org/Depts/UNPA/additional/roadsafety/index2.html
- In Oman, His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, deputy prime minister for the Council of Ministers, presided over a forum on road safety. A 'walkathon' took place in Muscat City, publicizing Oman's ongoing campaign against road traffic injuries.

UN-issued stamps for World Health Day



*“Every sector is important – transport, education, health, law enforcement – in tackling the problem. On this **World Health Day**, I call particularly upon the public health community to increase its contribution... Let’s decide today to end the carnage on our roads.”* Dr Jong-wook Lee, WHO Director-General

- In Thailand the occasion was used to launch ‘The Year of Road Safety’. The aim is for stricter law enforcement, particularly regarding the use of helmets, safer motorcycle behaviour, valid driving licences and speeding, and for increased public awareness of the risks of drunken driving.
- In Ethiopia, events were presided over by the country’s President. As well as a high-level panel discussion on road safety, the ministry of health organized an exhibition on the impact of road traffic injuries, and a ‘traffic education week’ which kicked off with a student parade.
- WHO’s posters on road safety were available on the Internet and could be downloaded free of charge, having been translated into a number of languages.
- An Australian report on road safety was produced by the government to coincide with World Health Day.
- Many countries used the occasion to launch the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*. They included Australia, Belize, France, Kenya, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office translated the World report into Arabic and launched it on World Health Day, both in Oman and at their Regional Office in Cairo. A number of other country launches have been held since World Health Day, or else are planned for a future date, including in China, India and Viet Nam.
- The WHO Regional Office for Europe produced and launched its report, *Preventing road traffic injury: a public health perspective for Europe*. More information can be found at: www.euro.who.int/whd/home
- Representatives of ten sub-Saharan African countries signed a Road Safety Declaration at a conference backed by the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, that took place in Windhoek, Namibia. For more information, please see: www.fiafoundation.com
- In Lima, Peru, the ministry of health organized a march through the city to raise awareness of preventive measures that can reduce road traffic injuries among drivers and pedestrians.
- Hungary’s new seat-belt law was part of a five-month campaign to improve seat-belt use. The national campaign, backed by the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society and the Global Road Safety Partnership, was launched to curb the steep rise in road fatalities seen in recent years. A similar campaign was set up in Costa Rica, where a manual on seat-belt use was published to assist those implementing policy. The manual can be downloaded from www.fiafoundation.com/toolkit.pdf
- The United States held many World Health Day events across almost all 50 states. In addition, the National Institutes of Health launched a new research programme to address the growing burden of morbidity and mortality in the developing world from road traffic injury. The programme provides a financial commitment of US\$ 7 million over five years, and is supported by a number of partners, including WHO.

NGO advocacy network for road crash victims

WHO has been facilitating collaboration among NGOs of road crash victims that campaign strongly for road safety. This growing network took advantage of World Health Day to present the views of victims and their families on road safety and to call for much greater attention to the issue. In the United Kingdom, members of the RoadPeace organization lobbied members of parliament, calling for justice for road traffic victims. A remembrance garden was dedicated to victims in South Africa, while in Sweden, the minister of transport lit candles for victims of road crashes. In Lebanon, the Youth Association for Social Awareness organized a convention on road safety under the patronage of the prime minister, Mr Rafic Hariri.

The network has also been instrumental in establishing a Day of Remembrance for Road Accident Victims, observed on the third Sunday in November each year (falling this year on 21 November). The day is dedicated to remembering the many millions killed or injured in road crashes. An increasing number of countries worldwide is observing this day each year. Advocacy NGOs working with road crash victims hope that this day will be adopted as a ‘World Day of Remembrance’ in the near future.

If you would like to become involved in this network, please contact Dr. Meleckidzedek Khayesi at khayesim@who.int



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World Health Day events
 01 one of the 10,000 entries from an art competition involving 18 member states from WHO's Eastern Mediterranean region
 02 the World Report is launched in Oman
 03 President Jacques Chirac with Dr Jong-wook Lee at the global WHD event in Paris
 04 Peruvian schoolchildren in traffic-stopping outfits raise awareness on road safety
 05 Large WHD displays in Paris catch the attention of passerbys.

Website links

For information on World Health Day activities carried out in WHO regions, please visit the following sites:

- WHO African Region:
www.afro.who.int/whd2004/
- WHO Region of the Americas:
www.paho.org/English/DD/PIN/whd04_main.htm
- WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region: www.emro.who.int/whd2004/
- WHO European Region:
www.euro.who.int/whd/home
- WHO South-East Asia Region:
www.whosea.org/whd/whd2004/en/section260/section261.htm
- WHO Western Pacific Region:
www.wpro.who.int/whd/2004/

Descriptions of events conducted by WHO's global partners can be found through links on the web site: www.who.int/world-health-day/2004/en/

For news of forthcoming conferences and events on road safety, please visit: www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/

Publications and events

Trauma care publication

Guidelines for essential trauma care, released in June 2004, provide clinicians, health planners and administrators with an adaptable template for strengthening country-level trauma treatment systems.

A series of resource tables and associated recommendations point to the human and physical resources that should be in place to assure the optimal care of the injured patient at the range of health facilities throughout the world, taking into account resource availability in low-income and middle-income countries.

Publications can be downloaded from the WHO web site, www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/en/

TEACH-VIP pilot testing

More than 20 sites from around the world have signalled their interest in participating in the TEACH-VIP pilot testing phase.

TEACH-VIP is a modular injury prevention and control curriculum that has been developed over several years by WHO and a global network of injury experts.

The curriculum includes modules on injury surveillance, research methods, policy development and advocacy, and the role of education, law and other disciplines in injury prevention. Pilot testing of the curriculum began in September 2004 and will run until June 2005, with WHO planning to provide a general release of the curriculum in September 2005.

For more information, please go to www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/national_capacity/en/

World Health Day materials

Materials developed by WHO for World Health Day are still available. Groups wishing to sign up to the initiative can download or order the posters free of charge. Information kits can also be ordered from WHO. For more information go to: www.who.int/world-health-day/2004/en/



The latest WHO posters on Road Safety serve as a powerful reminder that road traffic injuries are a major public health problem affecting all sectors: health, transport, education and law-enforcement.