

# theRoadAhead

THE WHO NEWSLETTER ON ROAD SAFETY

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## UN passes new resolution on road safety

The United Nations General Assembly adopted another resolution on road safety on 26 October 2005 which invites Member States to implement the recommendations of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*; to participate in the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week; and to recognize the third Sunday in November of every year as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

The resolution and related discussions at the UN General Assembly, spearheaded by His Excellency Ambassador Fuad Mubarak Al-Hinai, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, commends the United Nations Secretary General for his report on road safety. Several speakers expressed strong satisfaction with the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration – an alliance of over 50 organizations – and the products it has delivered so far.

Further, the resolution underlines the importance for Member States to continue using the WHO/World

Bank's *World report on road traffic injury prevention* as a framework for road safety efforts. It calls particular attention to the five identified risk factors: safety belts and child restraints, drinking and driving, helmets, inappropriate and excessive speed and infrastructure.

The resolution also hails and endorses the proposal of the Economic Commission for Europe, in collaboration with WHO, to host the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week in Geneva in April 2007 targeted at young road users, including young drivers.

"We are very encouraged by this historic resolution," said Etienne Krug, Director of the Department of Injury and Violence Prevention at WHO. "The content shows an evolution in thinking and a growing awareness of the need for continued efforts to improve road safety globally."

The UN Resolution encourages Member States and the international community, including international and regional financial institutions, to lend financial, technical and political support to the United Nations and its agencies, including the World Health Organization, for their efforts to improve road safety.

The resolution may be downloaded from [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/road\\_traffic/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/en/)

**Welcome** to the fifth issue of WHO's newsletter reporting progress on global road safety initiatives. This newsletter updates readers on the progress of the United Nations road safety collaboration in implementing United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/289 on Improving global road safety.

*This issue contains news on some road safety events from the past six months, including the passing of a new UN resolution on global road safety; road safety undertaken by the Regional Commissions in Africa and Western Asia; country work in Poland; the UN Fleet Forum; and the work of the nongovernmental road safety organization Drive Alive. This issue profiles the Road Traffic Injury Research Network, a global partnership for research capacity development.*

*The road ahead can be downloaded from our website: [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/en/) and is available in six languages. For hard copies of the newsletter, please contact us at [traffic@who.int](mailto:traffic@who.int)*



His Excellency Fuad Mubarak Al-Hinai, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, introduces the new UN resolution in New York



## Global road safety week

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/60/L.8 adopted in October 2005 invites WHO and the United Nations Regional Commissions to jointly organize the **first United Nations Global Road Safety Week** to serve as a platform for groups at all levels of society to raise awareness about road safety issues. The theme of the week will be dedicated to young road users, including young drivers, as they constitute a major group at risk of death, injury and disability on the road. The concrete actions resulting from the week will, however, be designed to benefit road users of all ages. To be held from 23-29 April 2007, the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week will be modeled after World Health Day 2004 "Road Safety is No Accident" and previous road safety weeks hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, as well as experiences learned from various countries about such high-profile advocacy events. Key events may include a

World Youth Assembly for Road Safety and a Second Stakeholders Forum. A large number of partner agencies will be invited to join WHO and the United Nations Regional Commissions to prepare these events and others, and participate in their roll out. The week will be one of the major events of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration. For more information, please contact Laura Sminkey: [sminkeyl@who.int](mailto:sminkeyl@who.int)

## Road safety in Africa: can a vision be translated into action?

African countries are paying a high social and economic price for their unsafe roads. The *World report on road traffic injury prevention* indicates that Africa had the highest road traffic injury-related mortality rate in 2002, at 28.3 per 100 000 population compared to 26.4, 18.6 and 17.4 per 100 000 population for the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia, and European regions,

respectively. Other studies also show that road traffic injuries are the second leading cause of death for the 5 to 44 year age group in Africa. This is alarming given that approximately 50 per cent of the African population is below the age of 16 years.

The average annual economic cost of road traffic collisions has been estimated to approach 2 per cent of the Gross National Product of countries in Africa. Moreover, road crashes also place a heavy burden on households. For instance, more than 75% of road traffic casualties in Kenya are among economically productive young adults. Families are often thrown into poverty after losing a breadwinner in a crash.

An African road safety working group met in Addis Ababa in October 2004 and identified the principal causes of road traffic collisions in the continent, including the improper training of drivers; ease with which people obtain driving licenses; pedestrians' ignorance of the highway code; poor state of vehicles and road transport infrastructure; excessive speed and overloading of vehicles; lack of or poor institutional frameworks for road safety; and lack of enforcement of existing rules and regulations. The inadequacy of transport infrastructure such as sidewalks and pedestrian crossings has resulted in pedestrians being a highly vulnerable group. Indeed, these problems are well known and several African countries have already put in place road safety coordinating bodies that are engaged in activities such as improving road designs, initiating traffic engineering schemes in urban areas, highway legislation, traffic law enforcement, vehicle inspection, road safety training and education and post-crash assessment and assistance.

## IN MEMORIAM

The UN Road Safety Collaboration mourns the loss of Bernard Périsset, a founding member of the Collaboration.

Bernard, a lawyer with the Swiss federal road authority, had been Chairman of UNECE's Working Party 1 on road safety since 1999. He died suddenly on Sunday 16 October 2005. He will best be remembered for both his tireless enthusiasm for road safety in Europe and his infectious personality. The UN Road Safety Collaboration has lost a tremendous and energetic advocate and we have all lost a dear friend.

We owe it to him to continue the work he helped start and defended so well. RIP.



© C. Simone, Task Force for Child Survival, 2004



Above: Different types of users share the road in Dakar, Senegal

Left: Poor infrastructure and vulnerable road users in Malawi

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is a major advocate of road safety in Africa. It organized three Road Safety Congresses between 1984 and 1997 in collaboration with other institutions, during which problems were identified and quantified, strategies to solve the problems developed, and progress evaluated. ECA plans to organize the *Fourth African Road Safety Congress* in 2007.

ECA has also undertaken a study to improve the safety of pedestrians and children in traffic in urban areas, and has produced a guide for drivers of heavy goods vehicles, in collaboration with the UK Transport Research Laboratory.

Recently, ECA's involvement in road safety has been within the framework of the Sub-Saharan African Transport Policy Programme (SSATP). The SSATP's work programme for 2005 seeks to improve road safety knowledge sharing among partner countries, and to harmonise basic road safety standards and measures at regional level. Accordingly, activities in the programme include the publication of good practices; promoting the preparation of appropriate design and safety standards; and the adoption of common regulatory arrangements.

Road safety initiatives in some African countries are already yielding positive results. For example, the strict implementation of existing traffic regulations in

Kenya led to a dramatic reduction in both fatal collisions and crashes resulting in serious injuries in 2004.

In Mozambique, road traffic collisions along the toll road linking Maputo to South Africa (N4) have been reduced by constantly monitoring, investigating and addressing "black spots" on the road, and organizing safety weeks on a regular basis.

Overall, African countries must intensify their efforts to reduce road traffic injuries and deaths. In the past, discussions on the causes and solutions of crashes have been the subject of numerous stakeholder meetings. What is urgently needed now is to translate the vision of road safety into action.

ECA is the regional office of the United Nations for Africa, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. For more details see [www.uneca.org/](http://www.uneca.org/)  
*Article contributed by Joseph Atta-Mensah, ECA.*

## World Bank creates global road safety facility

The World Bank is investigating the establishment of a global road safety facility to fund those areas of road safety for which there are currently limited resources, both at a global and national level.

Globally this will include coordination, advocacy, knowledge management, and research and development of tools and products. Nationally it will include the development of institutional capacities, road safety strategies and other national projects. The three year project will disburse \$5 million through two funding streams, one for global work and one for national projects. The facility will initially be managed by the World Bank, with advisory input from donor and partner organizations. For more information, please contact Tony Bliss: [abliss@worldbank.org](mailto:abliss@worldbank.org)

## African Union takes on road safety

African Ministers responsible for transport and infrastructure met in April this year in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to consider the importance and role of transport in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Declaration that resulted from the meeting recognized the need to improve road safety in order to attain the MDGs. To this end the Declaration **sets a target of reducing the rate of road traffic and transport fatalities by 50% by the year 2015**. It also notes the need to improve the emergency medical care response to incidents such as those occurring on the roads, particularly in rural areas.

# Road research: strengthening capacity in Africa and South-Asia

The Road Traffic Injuries Research Network (RTIRN) is a global partnership of more than 150 individuals in 30 countries that aims to reduce the global burden of road traffic injuries – particularly in low- and middle-income countries – through the promotion, conduct, and utilization of research.

The RTIRN hosted its first international conference plenary session at the recent Forum-9 meeting of the Global Forum for Health Research in Mumbai, India. The session highlighted the link between road traffic injuries (RTIs) and poverty: the poor and those living in low- and middle-income countries are most vulnerable to RTIs. The panelists also emphasized that while much is known about effective measures to prevent RTIs in high income countries, there is a dearth of knowledge about strategies for the application of effective RTI interventions in low- and middle-income country settings.

In 2002, with funding from the Global Forum for Health Research, the Road Traffic Injuries Research Network launched three small studies in Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda. These studies examined the feasibility of road traffic safety interventions in low- and middle-income countries by studying community preferences, implementation strategies, and the utilization of existing data sources. These studies have helped to grow the body of knowledge in this field and more importantly, have strengthened research capacity in these countries.

For more information go to [www.rtirn.net](http://www.rtirn.net)

*Articles contributed by Adnan Hyder and Nhan Thanh Tran, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.*

## Prevention of road traffic injuries through a participatory process in the identification and implementation of interventions in Kenya

The goal of this study was to identify feasible and effective interventions for the prevention of road traffic injuries using participatory methods with stakeholders. A purposive sampling of stakeholder groups involved in the field of urban transport and public health was carried out. Qualitative methods including focus groups, key informant interviews and consensus workshops were used to identify stakeholder perceptions

on the causes of road traffic injuries and strategies for the prevention of these injuries.

These results were then compared to the evidence collected through a systematic review of the current literature on road traffic injuries. The causes of road traffic crashes identified by study participants ranged from individual behaviour to inadequate urban infrastructure. Proposed interventions included additional training for drivers and enhanced law enforcement. The views and perceptions of the stakeholders closely matched those found in the literature reviewed on the causes and interventions for road traffic injuries.

The results of this study suggest that a multi-faceted approach involving all stakeholder groups in preventing road traffic injuries must be adopted in Kenya. Furthermore, networking and collaboration among stakeholders needs to be improved to prevent duplication of services, and to foster the creation of a unified voice in road safety.



Matatas in Nairobi, Kenya,



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Clockwise from left: vulnerable road users are at particular risk for road traffic injuries in Africa; a busy bus terminal in Quetta, Pakistan; and Ugandan motorcyclists get attention with their reflective vests.

## Application of guidelines for the estimation of the burden of road traffic injuries in Pakistan

The goal of this study was to develop and apply a methodology to estimate the risk and magnitude of RTIs from available data sources, which would be applicable and affordable in low- and middle-income countries.

A systematic review of peer-reviewed and grey literature on RTIs and Burden of Disease (BOD) studies was carried out in order to identify variables and available data sources for road traffic injuries in low- and middle-income countries. Leading public health and transportation experts were then consulted regarding the management of the various types of data. These activities resulted in the following guidelines:

- Identify all existing data sources and variables
- Evaluate data sources
- Examine data with respect to its validity and reliability
- Decide on the inclusion or exclusion of data
- Standardize the data
- Compile national level estimates

In Pakistan, after a literature review was conducted, relevant ministries, police, hospitals, and nongovernmental organizations in

the country were solicited for routine data on RTIs. Once all the available data had been collected and tabulated, it was carefully examined by the study team and local experts who assessed the validity and reliability of the data. Decisions were then taken to include or exclude the data based on the evaluation. All data included in the study were then standardized to common denominators and used to compile estimates of the burden of road traffic injuries in Pakistan. The results of this study demonstrate the feasibility of generating national estimates of the burden of RTIs in settings with limited data sources.

## Protecting vulnerable road users through visibility improvement: An Ugandan pilot study

The goal of this study was to evaluate the feasibility of visibility enhancement materials (VEMs) as an intervention for road traffic injuries among motor- and pedal-cyclists in Uganda. A cross sectional sample of motor- and pedal-cyclists in the community of Kampala, Uganda was taken. Qualitative methods such as focus groups and in-depth interviews were used to solicit community preferences for visibility enhancement materials as well as strategies for the distribution of VEMs in Uganda.

Among the range of VEMs currently available in Uganda, the two types of VEMs most preferred by cyclists were aprons worn by the riders and reflective tapes installed onto the bike. Aprons were preferred because riders could wear them over any clothing while tapes were preferred because they stayed in place at all times. When asked why riders did not use VEMs, respondents cited the lack of awareness of VEMs and their effectiveness, discomfort of wearing VEMs in certain weather conditions, and the lack of legislation mandating VEM use. Strategies proposed for the distribution of VEMs on a large scale included the use of administrative chairpersons of cyclist parking centers and city council authorities. Additionally, the participants emphasized the need to involve local bike manufacturers and distributors as well as the need to make VEMs affordable for the poorest segments of the population.

This study also revealed that measuring crash rates through the use of police data and self-reports is a good means of evaluating the effectiveness of VEMs, while the use of hospital data is challenging due to the fact that injuries are not always recorded by cause.



## International Conference on Road Safety

The 13th International Conference on Road Safety on Four Continents was held in Warsaw, Poland, between 5-7 October 2005 co-organised by the Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute and the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure. Other organizations actively involved in the conference were the Global Road Safety Partnership, the Forum of European Road Safety Research Institutes, the Transportation Research Board, the South African Centre for Industrial and Scientific Research, and the European Conferences of Transportation Research Institute. The conference was cohosted by the Polish National Road Safety Council and Gdansk University of Technology. For more information about this conference see [www.vti.se/templates/Page\\_\\_\\_3566.aspx](http://www.vti.se/templates/Page___3566.aspx)

### Drive Alive

In South Africa a road traffic crash occurs every four seconds. The nongovernmental organization *Drive Alive* tries to improve road safety in South Africa by creating awareness campaigns in the media. They advertise in high school magazines, on community radio stations and in newspapers to encourage drivers to adopt safer driving habits.

*Drive Alive* publishes road safety information and driving tips and also lobbies for stricter road safety legislation. Their aim is to create a climate where the government recognizes the necessity for visible policing and increased traffic penalties.

A recent *Drive Alive* project is the "Thubatse project". This project is part of an ongoing drive to involve schools in pedestrian road safety education. It involves five senior and 15 primary schools in the Limpopo province. Children's awareness about road safety is enhanced by theatre productions, music workshops and art competitions. In addition, *Drive Alive* gives each school pupil a reflective backpack. They are currently discussing the possibility of incorporating reflective material in all school uniforms as a preventive measure. For more information visit [www.drivealive.org.za](http://www.drivealive.org.za)

Article contributed by Moira Winslow, *Drive Alive*.

### Building partnerships for road traffic injury prevention in Poland

The World Health Organization (WHO) is currently collaborating with the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) on improving the quality of emergency medical and rescue services in Poland. Other partners are the Red Cross (Austria and Poland), Holmatro, World Rescue Organization, Ministry of Health (Poland), National Road Safety Council of Poland, Fire Brigade (Poland) and Police (Poland). Poland became the first GRSP focus country in late 1999. The original partnership focused heavily on the transport and automobile sectors and gradually spread to include other sectors such as insurance, research, education and health. As the partnership expanded, a system for commonly developing, monitoring and evaluating projects was introduced.

In 2002, WHO began working with GRSP on the issue of emergency medical services in Poland. A project proposal was finalized and implementation began in 2004. The initial stage of implementation involved a situational assessment of the rescue services in two counties. This has been completed and it has revealed that major constraints

facing this service are poor coordination among the individual subdivisions of the rescue system at the scene of crashes, and deficiencies in the training and supervision of personnel. The next stage in the project will consist of taking steps to address these shortcomings. For further information contact Melecki Khayesi: [khayesim@who.int](mailto:khayesim@who.int) or Kathleen Elsig: [Kathleen\\_elsig@yahoo.com](mailto:Kathleen_elsig@yahoo.com)

### Fleet Forum 2005

Forty humanitarian and other partner organisations met on 27-28 October 2005 to discuss common challenges and solutions in fleet safety.

The key objective of the *UN Fleet Forum* is to increase safety and security. The humanitarian community often operates in extreme environments both geographically and politically. In these conditions, road safety is a critical issue to drivers, passengers and other road users; equally, security in hostile environments is of the utmost importance. The *UN Fleet Forum* collaborates with suitable entities in order to coordinate and promote training programmes to raise the skill and awareness of humanitarian transport staff.



Opposite page: School children watching a road safety open air show.



Above, left to right: A Polish ambulance; President Abel Pacheco of Costa Rica launched the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*; road traffic collisions are the number one cause of injuries among humanitarian workers.



The *UN Fleet Forum* is an initiative launched by the International Federation of the Red Cross, the World Food Programme, World Vision International and TNT, an international transport/logistics company. It works with partners to develop humanitarian transport standards that will improve capabilities through the professionalisation of vehicle fleet management. Fleet Forum 2005 is the third annual meeting and a permanent Secretariat in Geneva provides support and information to an increasing number of participant organisations, commercial partners and other interested parties. For further information see [www.fleetforum.org](http://www.fleetforum.org)  
*Article contributed by Rob McConnell, UN Fleet Forum.*

## Costa Rica launches traffic report

Costa Rica is a leading country in Central America on road safety promotion. The mortality rate from vehicle crashes has decreased continuously over the last five years from 20 to 14 per 100 000 inhabitants.

On the 20 June 2005, President Abel Pacheco of Costa Rica launched the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*

accompanied by the Minister of Transport and the Deputy Director of the Minister of Health. In the audience were a mix of staff from different ministries as well as police officers and students from a public school. Students who excelled in road safety received an award from the President.

The launching of the Report was the first public event during Costa Rica's *Safe Roads Week*, organized by the National Council on Road Safety (COSEVI). COSEVI is responsible for developing and implementing policies for safer roads. It is composed of representatives from both governmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as from the private sector.

As an outcome of the launch of the Report and the Safe Roads Week, the Ministry of Transportation has asked WHO to co-sponsor a Central America road safety conference. Dr. Mirta Roses, the Regional Director of WHO in the Americas is very supportive of this initiative. For more information contact Alberto Concha-Eastman: [conchaal@paho.org](mailto:conchaal@paho.org)

## ESCWA's role in road safety

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has just completed

a study on road safety in the region. The study covered in detail the current traffic legislations, traffic collision statistics, licensing of vehicles and drivers, traffic education and the role of civil societies. It identified the major problems in each of the above and highlighted good practices that are being implemented. The study covered 7 of the 13 member countries in the ESCWA region and plans are underway to cover the remaining countries between 2006 and 2007.

ESCWA has finalized plans to conduct a regional workshop on the implementation of good practices in road safety. The workshop will be held in cooperation with the FIA Foundation and will be held in Muscat, Oman from 28-29 November 2005. The workshop will expose participants from traffic departments and other concerned agencies to some good practices in road safety such as the introduction of e-education road safety programme for children in Jordan and the creation of driving gardens for children in Bahrain. It will also highlight some poor practices that should be avoided. The goal is to develop a strategy for improving and monitoring the traffic safety profile in the ESCWA region.

ESCWA has also prepared an action plan for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq which entered into force on 19 October 2003. It covers more than 31 000 kilometers of roads in the ESCWA region. Special road numbering and signage were agreed upon. Once fully implemented, the Agreement will have positive implications on road safety standards that will contribute to decreasing the number of deaths on the roads in this region. For more details about ESCWA see [www.escwa.org.lb/](http://www.escwa.org.lb/)  
*Article contributed by Bassam Anani, ESCWA.*

### Achieving ambitious road safety targets

Many European countries have set road safety targets for 2010-2012. The Joint Transport Research Centre (JTRC) Programme (2004-2006) – approved by the Transport Ministers of OECD and ECMT countries – includes a research Working Group project on *Achieving Ambitious Road Safety Targets*. This project, which began in 2005, focuses on research that can assist high level decision making and contribute to achieving national road safety targets. The tasks include: a) identifying the road safety priorities; b) considering the strategies being pursued; c) researching the additional measures required to meet national safety targets; and d) analysing funding and resource allocation issues and identifying possible improved arrangements. Responses have been received from 35 countries on their road safety targets, performance and key issues. Analysis undertaken

to date indicates that in many cases simply continuing current strategies will not be sufficient to achieve the targets that have been set. The study will build on other current and recent OECD/ECMT work, consider other higher risk groups and research areas resistant to fatality reductions in identifying the innovative approaches that will be needed. The study will then draw research-based conclusions on the best future approaches to achieving the further reductions in fatalities required, as well as on road safety funding and resource allocation between crash prevention and dealing with the consequences.

The JTRC project work is being undertaken with WHO and World Bank participation and in consultation with the ECMT's road safety group which reports annually to Ministers on progress towards the safety targets set. The project's preliminary findings will be considered for submission to the next ECMT meeting, which will be held in Dublin in May 2006 and will be attended by Transport Ministers from OECD and ECMT countries. For more information, contact John White: [john.white@oecd.org](mailto:john.white@oecd.org)

### Publications and upcoming events

The Secretary General's report on the Global road safety crisis may be downloaded from [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/media/news/1\\_9\\_2005/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/media/news/1_9_2005/en/index.html)

The latest UN Resolution on Improving global road safety (A/60/L.8) may be downloaded from [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/road\\_traffic/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/en/index.html) in the six official UN languages.

Workshop on the implementation of good practices in road traffic safety – Muscat, Oman, 28-29 November 2005. Co-sponsored by ESCWA and the FIA Foundation. Contact Bassam Anani ([anani@un.org](mailto:anani@un.org)) for more details.

PAHO/WHO will be hosting a regional conference on road safety in Brasilia on 8-9 December 2005. For more information contact Alberto Concha-Eastman ([conchaal@paho.org](mailto:conchaal@paho.org)).

The new secretariat for the Road Traffic Injury Research Network (RTIRN) will be launched in Candy, Sri Lanka on 4-6 January 2006. For more information, contact Adnan Hyder ([ahyder@jhsph.edu](mailto:ahyder@jhsph.edu)).

The 8th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion will be held in Durban, South Africa from the 2nd to 5th April 2006. For more information, see [www.safety2006.info/](http://www.safety2006.info/)

The next meeting of the UN Road Safety Collaboration is scheduled for March 2006.

### contact

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