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Executive Summary World Health Organisation global status report on Road safety 2013

GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY 2013

SUPPORTING A DECADE OF ACTION

Executive summary

Road traffic injuries are the eighth leading cause of death globally, and the leading cause of death for young people aged 15–29 (1, 2). More than a million people die each year on the world's roads, and the cost of dealing with the consequences of these road traffic crashes runs to billions of dollars (3). Current trends suggest that by 2030 road traffic deaths will become the fifth leading cause of death unless urgent action is taken (2).

Strategies exist that are proven to reduce road traffic injuries and a number of countries have successfully used these strategies to reduce their road traffic deaths. In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank launched the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* (4). The World report provides extensive information on leading risk factors for road traffic injuries and evidence on effective interventions, and makes recommendations to countries on how to improve national road safety. Progress in implementing the recommendations of the World report was

first reported in the *Global status report on road safety: time for action* (2009) (5).

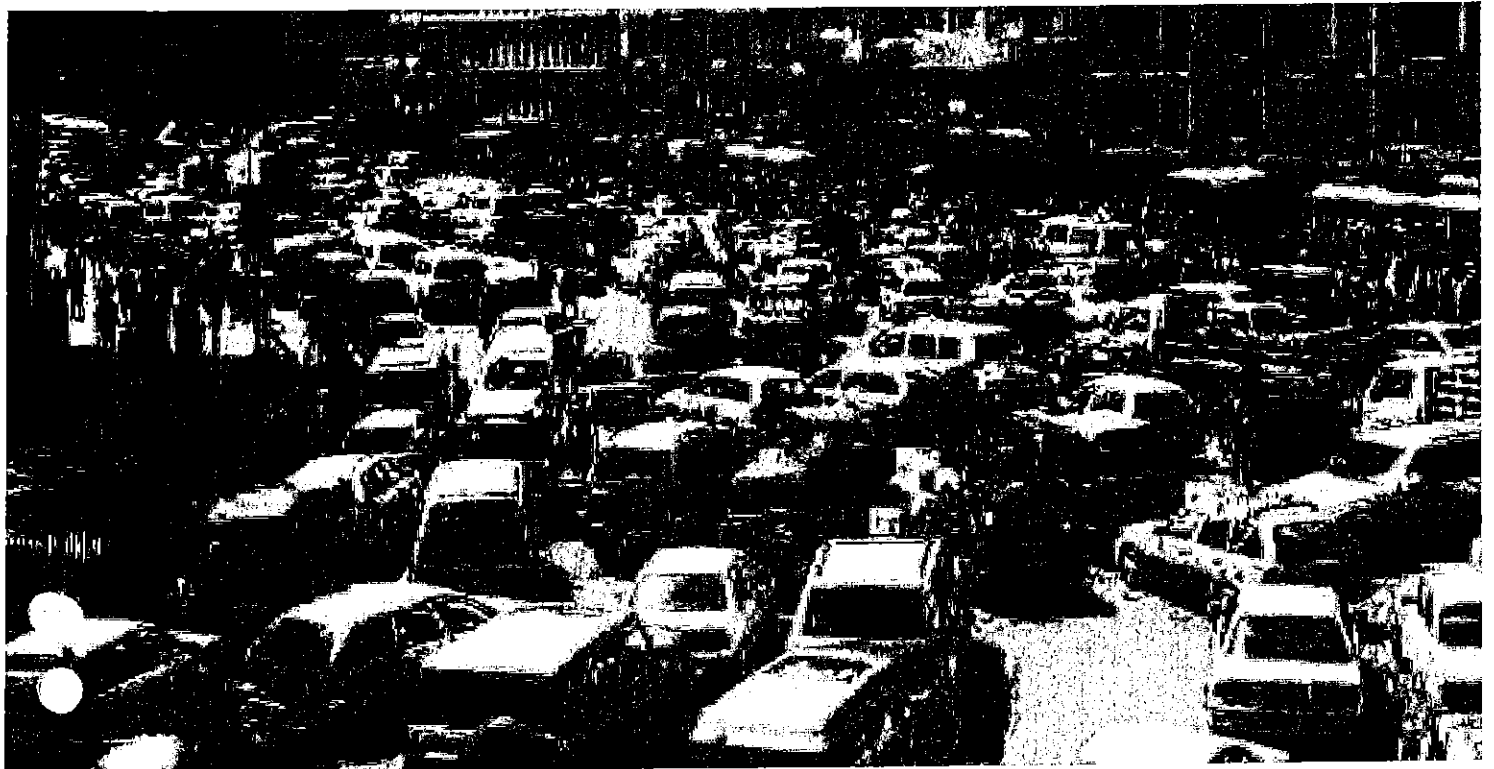
In 2010 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, and for further Global status reports on road safety to monitor the impact of the Decade at national and global levels. This report builds on the 2009 report, and provides additional data in a number of important areas. It serves as the baseline for monitoring the Decade.

The report shows that there has been no overall reduction in the number of people killed on the world's roads: about 1.24 million deaths occur annually. However, this plateau should be considered in the context of a corresponding 15% global increase in the number of registered vehicles, suggesting that interventions to improve global road safety have mitigated the expected rise in the number of deaths. Eighty-eight countries – in which almost 1.6 billion people live – reduced

the number of deaths on their roads between 2007 and 2010, showing that improvements are possible, and that many more lives will be saved if countries take further action. However, of concern is that 87 countries saw increases in the numbers of road traffic deaths over the same period. The report also shows that the highest road traffic fatality rates are in middle-income countries, particularly the African Region. More than three-quarters of all road traffic deaths are among young males. The report notes the need for standardized data collection on fatalities and the need for improvement in the quality of road safety data on road traffic deaths, non-fatal injuries and disability. It also stresses the importance of good post-crash care, both in terms of providing quick access for road traffic victims to health care, and in ensuring the quality of trained hospital trauma care staff in mitigating the negative outcomes associated with road traffic crashes.

The first *Global status report on road safety* highlighted the lack of

Eighty-eight countries have reduced the number of deaths on their roads – but the total number of road traffic deaths remains unacceptably high at 1.24 million per year.



Only 28 countries, representing 449 million people (7% of the world's population), have adequate laws that address all five risk factors (speed, drink-driving, helmets, seat-belts and child restraints).

comprehensive legislation on key risk factors (speed, drink-driving, motorcycle helmets, seat-belts and child restraints) for road traffic injuries (5). Between 2008 and 2011, 35 countries, representing almost 10% of the world's population, passed laws to address one or more of these five key risk factors. The action taken by these countries to implement new laws indicates that – with country commitment – progress is possible. However, there has been no increase in the number of countries with adequate legislation on all five key risk factors – the 28 countries (representing 7% of the world's population) with comprehensive laws remain unchanged from the last evaluation in 2009. The report also highlights that

enforcement of these laws, which is critical to their success, is inadequate.

The report serves as a strong warning to governments to address the needs of non-motorized road users. Twenty-seven per cent of all road traffic deaths occur among pedestrians and cyclists. In low- and middle-income countries, this figure is closer to a third of all road deaths, but in some countries is more than 75%. As the world continues to motorize, walking and cycling need to be made safe and promoted as healthy and less expensive mobility options. However, only 68 countries have national or subnational policies to promote walking and cycling, and just 79 countries have policies that

protect pedestrians and cyclists by separating them from motorized and high-speed traffic. Although governments increasingly recognize the need to promote alternative forms of mobility, more emphasis needs to be given to making these modes of transport safe. Addressing the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists is critical to successfully reducing the total number of global road traffic deaths.

The report further highlights the important role that road infrastructure can play in reducing injuries among all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. It recommends that governments implement regular road

Over a third of road traffic deaths in low- and middle-income countries are among pedestrians and cyclists. However, less than 35% of low- and middle-income countries have policies in place to protect these road users.

safety audits to assess safety levels of both existing and new road infrastructure projects. The report also outlines progress that has been made to implement minimum vehicle safety standards, and encourages governments to work with vehicle manufacturers to ensure that ever-larger proportions of their fleets meet these standards.

Real progress has been made towards improving road safety and saving lives, but what this report shows is that faster and more concerted action is needed to prevent many more lives being

needlessly lost on the world's roads. Therefore the report makes the following recommendations:

- Governments urgently need to pass comprehensive legislation that meets best practice on all key risk factors to address this preventable cause of death, injury and disability.
- Governments should invest sufficient financial and human resources in the enforcement of these laws, as an essential component for their success. Raising public awareness can be
- an important strategy in increasing understanding of and support for such legislative and enforcement measures.
- Concerted effort is needed to make road infrastructure safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The needs of these road users must be taken into consideration earlier, when road safety policy, transport planning and land use decisions are made. In particular, governments need to consider how non-motorized forms of transport can be integrated into more sustainable and safer transport systems.

