

ITF Summit

Ministers' Roundtable on Meeting the road safety challenge: halving the deaths and injuries by 2030

18 May 2022

Summary Report

Introduction

All countries are facing the persistent challenge of road crashes and their consequences. Every year, around 1.35 million people are killed and dozens of millions are severely injured. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals contain two global targets for road safety. Target 3.6 calls for halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes. Target 11.2 calls for providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all. Road safety is critical to achieving other SDGs too, especially climate action and gender equality.

In 2021, the United Nations launched the global plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, which includes the target to reduce by 50% the number of road traffic deaths and injuries between 2021 and 2030.

In June 2022, the President of the UN General Assembly will convene a high-level meeting on “The 2030 horizon for road safety: securing a decade of action and delivery”.

The ITF has taken a lead in international efforts to develop the Safe System approach, which manages all the dimensions of road use in concert. At the ITF Minister's Roundtable, participants discussed the Safe System approach and how it is linked to sustainable development challenges. They exchanged on the implementation challenges that countries face, the need for genuine cooperation between all stakeholders and for adequate budget to meet the ambitious goals set.

Summary of Discussion

Many countries are embarking on a Safe System journey

Building on the successful experiences of pioneering countries like Sweden and Norway, many countries are building their road safety strategy for the new decade based on the Safe System approach, as recommended by the UN Global Plan. The safe system innovates by taking a holistic approach to achieving safe speeds, safe behaviours, safe infrastructure, safe vehicles and effective post-crash care through concerted action by the full range of stakeholders in mobility. It shifts the focus away from concentrating on single aspects of safety, recognising that fatal crashes are usually the result of a combination of failures. It requires rethinking the mobility system to focus on safe mobility for all, with an emphasis on the protection of vulnerable road users and facilitating the use of public transport.

Zero targets are beginning to be achieved, for example with zero deaths among children in Norway. But even in the most advanced countries, much remains to be done to approach zero road deaths and serious injuries. This requires continuous improvements in policy, while exploiting the benefits of the most advanced technologies. A successful safe system strategy also needs to be based on in-depth analysis of data and statistics to identify areas for greatest improvements.

In many countries, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the uptake of non-motorised transport in modal share and the emergence of new mobility forms (such as e-scooters), calling for creation of safe space in particular for cyclists and pedestrians. While separating pedestrians and cyclists from motorised traffic is the desired approach, when this is not feasible, speed must be reduced to take account of the threshold of the human body to damage from crash forces. Road safety policies also need to address emerging issues, including new forms of mobility and changes resulting from the ageing of society.

Participants stressed the importance of transparency and accountability in decision-making, calling for measures based on science and good data, and a systematic monitoring of the results.

Road safety is a human right to be addressed through shared responsibility

Several participants referred to road safety as a human right, calling on governments to engage with stakeholders to create an enabling environment where the individual can exercise their right to be safe. Achieving road safety goals indeed requires a multi-sectoral approach with engagement of a wide range of governmental stakeholders, from transport,

health, environment, infrastructure and finance ministries. A whole of government approach is needed with political leadership from the top.

However, achieving a safe system will not occur only through central government intervention. All actors including local governments, road agencies, the private sector and civil society, must play a role and must assume responsibility. The private sector – through corporate social responsibility strategies, but also its operations and its whole value chain in all countries around the world can have a significant impact. Some companies are well advanced in their safe system thinking, with ambitious internal goals of zero road deaths during their operation, backed up by comprehensive training programmes and awareness campaigns and genuine co-operation with local stakeholders.

Greater investment is needed in safe and sustainable mobility

Funding is critical to accelerating progress, and includes both the effective use of existing funds and securing new funds. All countries are challenged in securing sufficient and especially sustained funds. If some countries manage to secure funding for a short time horizon, this is not enough to meet the long-term challenges. There are nevertheless some promising developments. In the wake of the Covid crisis, some countries have put in place huge investments in transport infrastructure. As an example, the United States recently passed a USD 1.2 trillion infrastructure bill that will mainly focus on transport and Sweden adopted a EUR 90 billion infrastructure budget for 2022-33. These investment packages represent a unique opportunity. Safety and sustainability should be considered as core-values of such investments and be assessed in development projects. In Colombia, road safety investments are secured by compulsory traffic accident insurance, which makes it possible to implement all measures of the national road safety strategy. However, these encouraging developments should not hide the huge difficulties faced by most countries in particular in low and middle-income regions, which critically suffer from a lack of sustained funding to build safe infrastructure and also suffer from the highest road mortality rates. The recently created UN Road Safety Fund is working in partnership with member states and companies to build a fund to support road safety projects in low and middle-income countries; however, the Fund does need many more countries and the private sector to “come to the party” if it is to be a game changer.

Road Safety is an opportunity to achieve other SDGs

Road safety is closely linked to the broader development agenda, as safe mobility and transport are critical to the attainment of goals related to education, poverty eradication and equity. Improved road safety is therefore not just a challenge or another problem to be resolved, but it is an opportunity to achieve many of the SDGs.

People with the lowest incomes are generally exposed to the highest risks. People without access to cars for most of their mobility, predominantly women and children, are particularly exposed where pedestrian space is poorly protected or non-existent. The Covid pandemic has highlighted the important role of cycling and walking in the transport system. Providing safer infrastructure for cycling and walking will contribute greatly to a safer, more equitable and sustainable environment, while benefiting the health of citizens. Speed management is at the core of the Safe System approach. Reduced speed contributes to more liveable cities and reduces pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. It is the number one action to reduce road crashes and their severity. Investing in safe, secure, affordable and accessible public transport can also have a significant impact on road safety, while contributing to several other SDGs.

International co-operation is needed to learn from each other

Participants recognised the importance of international co-operation and the value of fora such as the International Transport Forum to share ideas, exchange good practices and learn from each other. The UN high-level meeting that will take place from 30 June to 1 July will be an important moment to put road safety at the highest level of the agenda of countries worldwide, an important step for engagement in real action to meet the targets for the current decade.

Annex

Participants of the 2022 MRT on Meeting the road safety challenge: halving the deaths and injuries by 2030

Countries

Mr. Diego Giuliano
Secretary of Transportation
Ministry of Transportation
Argentina

Ms. Ángela María Orozco Gómez
Minister of Transport
Colombia

Ms. Hildegard Naughton
Minister of State
Department of Transport
Ireland

Mr. Seung-geun Paek
Chairperson of Metropolitan Transport
Commission
Korea

Ms. Graziella Marok-Wachter
Minister of Infrastructure and Justice
Liechtenstein

Mr. Mohammed Abdeljalil
Minister of Transport and Logistics
Kingdom of Morocco

Mr. Jakob Bjelland
State Secretary
Ministry of Transport
Norway

Mr. Andrzej Bittel
Secretary of State
Ministry of Infrastructure
Poland

Mr. Tomas Eneroth
Minister for Infrastructure
Sweden

Mr. Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
US

International Organisations and Industries

Ms. Nneka Henry
Head
UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF)

Ms. Lotte Brondum
Executive Director
Global Alliance of NGOs for Road
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Mr. Anouar Benazzouz
President
International Road Federation (IRF)

Mr. Nazir Ali
President
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Mr. Michel Charton
Senior Vice President Health Safety
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Mr. Nhan Tran
Head, Safety and Mobility, Department
of the Social Determinants of Health
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