
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

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Road safety issues and policy interventions in SPECA countries

(Item 4.8 of the Agenda)

Note by UNECE/UNESCAP

1. About 1.24 million people globally die each year as a result of road traffic crashes—that's nearly 3400 deaths a day. Half of those who die on the world's roads are vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. As reported in the Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013 by the World Health Organization, road traffic injuries is the 8th leading cause of death globally and the number one leading cause of death of young people (15-29 year old). Unfortunately, in the last few years number of road casualties globally does not decrease – mostly due to increase in developing countries at an alarming rate.
2. In its resolution 64/255 of 10 May 2010 on improving global road safety, the General Assembly proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety with a goal to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels.
3. The importance of road safety has been further highlighted at the global Rio+20 Conference in 2012. Road safety has been recognized “as part of our efforts to achieve sustainable development” in the outcome document of the Conference “The future we want”. The Rio+20 outcome document mandated the creation of an inter- governmental Open Working Group that will submit a report to the 68th session of the General Assembly containing a proposal for sustainable development goals. Currently, road safety is presented as sub-goal 3.6 “*By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents*” of Goal 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.

4. On 10 April 2014 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on “Improving global road safety”. The resolution was sponsored by the Russian Federation and co-sponsored by more than 70 countries. Among key decisions, the resolution welcomed the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the 2nd Global High Level Conference on Road Safety in 2015. The conference will be held in Brasilia, Brazil, on 18-19 November 2015 and “Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety” will be adopted as the outcome document.

UNECE Road safety activities

A. Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)

5. The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) serviced by UNECE, the only inter-governmental permanent road traffic safety body in the UN system, met five times between September 2013 to August 2015 (66th, 68th to 70th sessions were held in Geneva, Switzerland, whilst the 67th session was held in New Delhi, India).

6. Amongst other matters, WP.1 together with the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) reviewed and considered amendment proposals to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic with a view to maintaining consistency between the convention and the provisions of vehicle regulations adopted in the framework of the 1958 and 1998 Agreements, such as Advanced Driver Assistance Systems. WP.1 considered a proposal to amend the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals to include variable message signs and discussed issues related to the mutual recognition of driving permits, a safe system approach, multidisciplinary crash investigations and distracted driving.

7. Starting in 2014, WP.1 oversees the work of two new Groups of Experts, the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals, and on Improving Safety at Level Crossings. The mandate of the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals is to review and to suggest ways to facilitate better comprehension of road signs and a more effective implementation of the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and the 1971 European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals. The mandate of the Group of Experts on Improving Safety at Level Crossings is take stock of available data on Safety at Level Crossings to describe, assess and better understand the safety issues at a road/rail interface as well as to develop a multidisciplinary strategic plan aimed at reducing the risk of death and/or injury at level crossings.

B. United Nations legal instruments

8. In the last period, the harmonization of international road traffic safety standards continued at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). At the time of writing, the number of contracting parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic was unchanged at 95. One new contracting party joined 1968 Convention on Road Traffic bringing the total number to 73 and another joined 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals bringing the total number of contracting parties to 63. Two contracting parties joined the 1971 European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic bringing the total number to 35, and by one contracting party joined 1970 European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport bringing the total number to 51 contracting party.

9. Under the administration and responsibility of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted to/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these Prescriptions, and the 1998 Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or used on Wheeled Vehicles, had 49 and 35 contracting parties respectively, covering most of the countries with a major automotive industry. The number of contracting parties to the 1997 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections remained unchanged at 12.

10. WP.29 has recently adopted a considerable number of technical modifications to UN vehicle Regulations related to safety-related performance of hydrogen-fuelled vehicles in case of a crash and provisions regarding their pole side impact performance. Other relevant provisions adopted related to heavy duty vehicle brake systems with automated coupling devices providing for a safe connection of the tractor and trailer braking systems. Furthermore, WP.29 continued to prescribe performance based requirements for intelligent vehicle systems and to incorporate them into the UN Regulations.

11. During the 2014-15, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods adopted several amendments to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) with a view to enhance road safety and security. These amendments entered into force on 1 January 2015. They refer to Parts 8 and 9 of ADR, providing requirements for the

construction, technical inspection and operation of vehicles carrying dangerous goods (speed limitation, use of parking brakes, supervision). A new edition of ADR was published accordingly.

12. In the context of inland transport of dangerous goods a pilot database was developed by UNECE to facilitate reporting and distribution of information regarding incidents and accidents involving dangerous goods. This database is being tested among ADR contracting parties.

13. Furthermore the IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (the CTU Code) was endorsed in 2014 and thus in 2015 it has become applicable. These non-mandatory guidelines seek to increase safety in the handling of containers and reduce the number of incidents across transport modes attributed to poor practices in the packing of cargo transport units, including inadequate securing of the cargo, overloading and incorrect declaration of contents. The CTU Code applies to operations throughout the entire transport chain and provides guidance not only to those responsible for packing and securing cargo, but also to those who receive and unpack such units. It also addresses issues such as training and the packing of dangerous goods.

C. Technical assistance in the road safety field

14. The analysis of road safety policies, measures and their effectiveness, and the creation of road safety scenarios with different policy choices can foster the ability of national and local Governments to improve the road safety situations in their countries. As a highly sophisticated supportive tool for road safety decision makers, a road safety module of the For Future Inland Transport Systems Project (ForFITS) – “SafeFITS” – will be developed, with the primary objective of assisting Governments and decision makers to improve road safety and to assess and choose the most appropriate policies and measures to reach defined road safety targets. Model outputs will show the effects of different national road safety policies and allow decision makers to select suitable targets in national road safety strategy. SafeFITS is an extra-budgetary project benefiting from financial and in-kind support, primarily from the International Road Transport Union (IRU). The project started at the end of 2014 and is expected to bear results by 2016.

15. Accession to road safety related UN Conventions and Agreements are considered to be an essential step towards enabling a country to improve its national road safety record. Aware of this, UNECE organized several global/regional events to raise awareness of the above UN international conventions and to provide technical assistance for accession:

- UN Road Safety Treaty Day on 5 June 2014 in collaboration with the UN Office of Legal Affairs, the Regional Commissions New York Office and the International Road Transport Union, at UN Headquarters in New York; and
- Two workshops on improving road safety in Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking. One workshop was for English-speaking countries (12-13 November 2014), and the other for French-speaking countries (7-8 July 2015).
- In 2014 UNECE co-organized with the International Telecommunication Union symposiums on “The Future Networked Car” during the annual Geneva motor show. In November 2014, UNECE and the Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport of Belgium organized a workshop on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), exploring the topic: “Towards a new transportation culture: technology innovations for safe, efficient and sustainable mobility”. The workshop followed the UNECE Road Map for promoting ITS, which includes global actions ranging from harmonizing policies to improving road safety and ensuring data security.
- To strengthen national capacities on road safety management systems, UNECE joined forces with the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in organizing a regional road safety workshop in Belgrade on 15–16 October 2014. A good example of best practice sharing at the workshop was the presentation of four background studies covering road safety management systems, prepared for Eastern and Central European and CIS countries, which will also serve in the preparation of a road safety capacity-building workshop for the SPECA countries in September 2015.
- The launch of a film on "Saving Lives at Level Crossings" on the occasion of International Level Crossing Awareness Day 2014 (3 June 2014) which was produced in partnership with the International Union of Railways and the Swiss Federal Office of Transport. Targeted at policy makers, the objective of the film was to promote greater awareness of the risks associated with level crossings, and to provide ideas on how the various aspects of level crossing safety could be improved;
- A special one-day round table on exploring the use of road safety legal instruments to address powered two-wheeled vehicles safety policies in low and middle income countries. The round table was held in March 2015 in conjunction with the 70th session of WP.1. Speakers and

participants included government officials from South East Europe, Central Asia, South East Asia and India.

16. In April 2015, the UN Secretary-General appointed Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety. As the Special Envoy operating with the support from the UNECE, Mr. Todt will help to mobilize sustained political commitment towards making road safety a priority; to advocate and raise awareness about the United Nations road safety legal instruments; share established road safety good practices; and generate adequate funding for advocacy efforts through strategic partnerships between the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

Road safety activities by the UNESCAP

17. In support of the Commission resolution 66/6 on “Improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific” and resolution 68/4 dated 23 May 2012 which endorsed the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP continues to provide technical assistance to member countries in meeting their commitments under the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020 through the organization of workshop, seminar and training to raise awareness and enhance the capacities of member countries in relevant road safety issues including the road safety and safety management, the accession and implementation of UN international and road safety best practices.

- A training course in road safety and traffic management was conducted for officials of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in Bangkok from 10 February to 6 March 2014. The training course that was delivered with technical assistance from Asian Institute of Technology had enhanced knowledge on road safety and traffic management in designing and planning safer roads and effective traffic management measures as indicated by the participants.
- A seminar on road safety best practices was organized in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2-3 October 2014 in collaboration with the Korean Transportation Safety Authority (KOTSA) and the Ministry of Transport of Sri Lanka. The seminar aimed to raise awareness and strengthen capacities of related transport officials to implement policies to improve road safety in the country. A black spot site survey was conducted after the seminar. ESCAP and KOTSA had produced a study on best practices which include a set of recommendations for the improvements of the black spots and shared with the Ministry for their future implementation.

- Two national workshops on the Convention on Road Traffic and the Convention on Road Signs and Signals were organized in Quan Ninh and Nha Trang, Viet Nam on 3-4 March 2015 and 26-27 July 2015, respectively. These two workshops were organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport in order to enhance knowledge on the conventions and finalize the road map for their implementations following the accession to these two conventions by the Government of Viet Nam in August 2014.
- A regional seminar on safe transport for sustainable development is being planned in Nepal in November this year. The regional seminar will invite all ESCAP member countries including SPECA countries to discuss the post-2015 approach in improving road safety and other transport safety in line with the final decision on the SDGs.

Joint road safety activity by the UNECE and UNESCAP

18. UNECE in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), under the 9th tranche of the UN Development Account Fund (UNDAF), is undertaking the project “Strengthening of the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition”. The project aim is to assist four countries to address their priority road safety needs by undertaking Road Safety Performance Reviews. The reviews will be followed by capacity-building workshops on relevant priority areas (road safety management systems, road safety statistics, road signs and signals, road safety targets, vehicle safety, transport of dangerous goods, etc). The project has started recently and implementation is scheduled from 2015 to 2017.

The Project Working Group may wish to:

- Continue its efforts to develop and implement national road safety strategies and action plans with goals and targets in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety;
- Efficiently implement UN legal instruments in road safety;
- Ask for political support and commitment as well as scaling up of funding for road safety endeavors in the SPECA countries, including infrastructure improvements and advocacy programs;
- Ensure the collection of quality road safety data and ask for technical assistance in data collection to facilitate the regular monitoring of road safety at the national and regional levels.
- Build on the results of Road Safety Capacity Building Workshop held in Almaty on September 11th and encourage other Member countries to volunteer for hosting road safety awareness events under SPECA PWG TBC umbrella.