

An Urgent Call to Action for Latin America

RATIONALE

The world suffers an estimated 1.19 million road traffic deaths (2021), corresponding to a rate of 15 road traffic deaths per 100,000 population¹. Without serious action, road crashes will cause an estimated 13–17 million more deaths and 500 million more injuries in the current decade².

UN Member States have adopted a resolution 74/299 *Improving Global Road Safety*³ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (target 3.6)⁴ and are therefore mandated to reduce road deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030. We know what works to achieve this target: the actions needed are set out in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030⁵.

Every person must be guaranteed safe, affordable, accessible, sustainable mobility using the road system. It ensures access to education, work, and the choices that enable any individual to achieve their maximum potential, leaving no one behind. This is fundamental to creating a fair, healthy, prosperous society.

Safe mobility is our right.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The road traffic fatality rate in the Americas is close to 16 people per 100,000 inhabitants, which is lower than in Africa and Asia but higher than in Europe⁶. Road crashes are the leading cause of death for children aged 5–14 years old in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay, and the second leading cause of death for 5–14-year-olds in

1 - World Health Organization. (2023). *Global status report on road safety 2023*. WHO, Geneva. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA

2 - WHO & UN Regional Commissions. (2021). *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>; Job, RFS. (2019). Development of a Safe System Approach, Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, 13 January 2019, Washington DC.

3 - United Nations General Assembly. (2020). Resolution A/74/L86 Improving Global Road Safety. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/226/30/PDF/N2022630.pdf?OpenElement>

4 - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

5 - WHO & UN Regional Commissions. (2021). *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>

6 - International Transport Forum. (2017). *Benchmarking Road Safety in Latin America* <https://www.itf-oecd.org/benchmarking-road-safety-latin-america>



Colombia. For 15–49 year olds, they are the leading cause of death in Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Paraguay, the second leading cause of death in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay, and the third leading cause of death in Cuba⁷.

Road traffic injury rates in the Latin American region vary from one country to another. The Andean Subregion (23.4) and the Southern Cone (21.0) show death rates considerably higher than the regional average⁸. Between 2010 and 2018, Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay have achieved more significant road safety improvements than Colombia, Costa Rica and Argentina⁹. The rate of motorization in Latin American countries will continue to increase in this decade, in particular, the exponential increase in the number of motorized two-wheelers, due to increase in demand for individual transport as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other factors. Users of motorized two-wheelers account for an average of 45% of road fatalities in the region¹⁰.

Countries in the region not only failed to achieve the objectives of the first Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2021, but many of them are far from stabilizing and containing this crisis. The international road safety community has made multiple recommendations¹¹, based on evidence, and has identified the measures that have been shown to be effective¹².

CALL TO ACTION

After a decade of collective failure, we urge the governments and public authorities of Latin American countries to make road safety policy a national priority, adopting the Safe System approach. We urge them to mandate and guarantee the protected legal right to safe, sustainable and inclusive mobility, that transcends government terms and incorporates targets and results indicators, and to implement evidence-based actions, with particular emphasis on speed management, safety of motorized two-wheeler users, and comprehensive support for road victims and their families.

We demand:

- 1 Evidence-based actions:** Prioritize interventions that have been proven to save lives and reduce injuries and other consequences of unsafe roads, with a particular focus on those

7 - Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. (2016). Global Burden of Disease Study. <https://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/gbd-2016-cause-specific-mortality-1980-2016>

8 - Pan-American Health Organization. (2016). Road Safety in the Americas. <https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/28564/9789275119129-eng.pdf?sequence=6>

9 - International Transport Forum. (2020). Road Safety Annual Report 2020. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/road-safety-annual-report-2020>

10 - International Transport Forum. (2017). Benchmarking Road Safety in Latin America. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/benchmarking-road-safety-latin-america>

11 - 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety. (2020). <https://www.roadsafetysweden.com/>

12 - WHO & UN Regional Commissions. (2021). Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>



who are least protected on our roads, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

- a. Address speed, which is the primary factor aggravating all other risk factors (including driving under the influence of alcohol or psychotropic substances, distraction, drowsiness, fatigue, use of a mobile phone, inexperience, reckless behavior, etc.) by incrementally reducing maximum speed limits, including 30 km/h limits, in urban areas where there is a typical and predictable mix of road users by 2030.
- b. Improve the safety of motorized two-wheeler users by:
 - i. Incorporating security systems and technologies that reduce and mitigate human error into the vehicle standards required in each country.
 - ii. Raising the standard required for the granting and issuance of driving licenses for novice drivers of motorized two-wheelers.
 - iii. Establishing records of the topography of injuries to increase understanding of road crashes and implement effective measures based on evidence.
- c. Provide comprehensive support systems for road crash victims and their families and guarantee their protection by:
 - i. Establish and enforce protocols for victims and their families, including response times, for on-scene and on-site care.
 - ii. Mandating thorough investigations for crashes that result in serious and fatal injuries, including determining cause and detecting culpability. The data should be used to inform prevention strategies and ensure an effective judicial response for victims and their families.
 - iii. Ensuring effective deterrents, rigorous enforcement, and prosecution and sentencing of offenders as appropriate.
- d. Enact and enforce road safety legislation to:
 - i. Establish blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limits to prevent impaired driving (drink- and drug-driving) with specific provisions for novice and professional drivers.
 - ii. Restrict the use of handheld electronic devices while driving and other distractors.

2 Guarantee the right to safe mobility:

- a. Draft and enforce laws or constitutional changes to enshrine the right to safe, sustainable, and inclusive mobility so that they transcend government terms and short-term priorities.
- b. Formulate short, medium, and long-term objectives with results indicators to monitor how effectively people's rights to safe mobility are being protected.
- c. Promote the participation of civil society in the formulation of laws that seek to improve road safety and promote sustainable mobility.
- d. Promote sustainable mobility, in healthy and equitable conditions through the creation of safe spaces for non-motorized transportation.

3 Transparent and accountable investment to make mobility safe: Demonstrate accountability by channeling funding into implementation of proven life and injury-saving interventions, recognizing that evidence-based interventions have a high return on invest-

ment and publicly report on road safety spending that incorporates the safety of all road users as a core element.

- a. Allocate budgets for the full implementation of the above-mentioned actions;
- b. Report annually on the budget and spending for the above-mentioned actions.

4 NGO involvement in decision-making processes: Work with NGOs and communities, enabling an environment where civil society and government can work together effectively, so that evidence-based road safety decisions that save lives and reduce injuries are made at every level of government.

- a. Establish clear mechanisms for an enabling environment for NGOs to meaningfully participate in decision-making processes and support governments to fulfill their accountability for delivering the reduction in deaths and injuries from road crashes.
- b. Promote constructive dialogue between civil society, private sector, and governments to enable better road safety governance and regulation for the benefit of people and communities.
- c. Promote the role of NGOs and showcase how civil society can contribute to the implementation of Safe System approaches and active transportation policies.

OUR ROLE AND COMMITMENT

We, as civil society, have a role defined in the Global Plan. We commit to play our part in advocating for and enabling people's rights to safe mobility and achieve a 50% reduction in road deaths and injuries by 2030.

We commit to:

1. Stand up for people's right to be safe on the roads

We empower people and communities. We show the reality of the roads they use and highlight the experiences of road victims and their loved ones who have been affected by crashes. We speak up on decisions that affect road safety.

2. Use data and evidence to show what needs to be done

We amplify data, evidence, and best practices from around the world and we collect ground-level evidence that show the impact of safe and unsafe roads on people and communities.

3. Hold our governments accountable for people's right to be safe on the road and for the 2030 target

We keep road safety on the agenda until every person is guaranteed — through commitment and action — their right to safe mobility. We monitor progress and put a spotlight on action and inaction.