



PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Supporting Event for the High-Level Meeting on Global Road Safety

Friday, 3 December 2021
General Assembly Hall
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Summary by the President of the General Assembly



OVERVIEW

The President of the General Assembly (PGA) His Excellency Abdulla Shahid convened on 2 December 2021, the Supporting Event for the High-Level Meeting on Global Road Safety, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 74/299 and 75/308.¹

The programme² for the event consisted of an interactive thematic dialogue session on domestic and international financing for road safety and an interactive multi-stakeholder hearing. The summary of discussions presented are meant to inform the High-Level Meeting (HLM) on Global Road Safety to be held on 30 June and 1 July 2022. The theme of the HLM is **“the 2030 horizon for road safety: securing a decade of action and delivery”**.

Participants at the Supporting Event highlighted that the High-level Meeting would be an opportunity to share best practices, with high-level participation from senior officials across ministries and sectors, from all countries. The Supporting Event was a platform for governments to announce how they will channel and redirect financing to this priority area and engage whole-of-government action to implement changes to national road safety systems.

OPENING SEGMENT

The PGA opened the session³ noting that the world needs to address road safety as a global public health issue, as it is an unnecessary and tragic burden on families, communities, and economies. He emphasized that road accidents are entirely preventable, and the priority of the United Nations, Member States and road safety partners must be to implement preventive measures. The PGA highlighted the importance of the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021–2030), and said that unless it is implemented, it is nothing more than a plan of action.

Looking ahead, he said implementation by national and local governments would require two main elements: financing and the engagement of relevant road safety actors. With a notable funding gap in most countries and 90% of road deaths occurring in low and middle-income countries, the PGA further noted that achieving the targets will require increased financial support for these countries.

The PGA also highlighted that road traffic crashes are the leading killer of children and young people worldwide, aged 5 to 29. As things stand, they are set

¹ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/event/high-level-meeting-on-global-road-safety/>

² https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2021/11/Programme_RoadSafety.pdf

³ <https://www.un.org/pga/76/2021/12/03/supporting-event-for-high-level-meeting-on-road-safety/>

to cause a further estimated 13 million deaths and 500 million injuries each year during the next decade. The PGA invited the Member States, civil societies, and international community to use the session's exchanges as an opportunity to build collective commitments and strengthened partnerships, noting that each speaker shares a story that will foster greater understanding and knowledge on how we can better engage on global road safety.

Global road safety is a shared responsibility that must be prioritized and integrated. He concluded that achieving the road safety-related global targets would contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals under education, health, and the environment, among others.

[Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization](#), reiterated that the Global Plan guides safer roads, vehicles, road-use behaviour, and life-saving emergency care. He called on all governments to use the global plan to develop national plans, and invest the necessary resources to achieve their road safety targets, and where needed, international donors should support them. He stated WHO and partners in the UN Road Safety Collaboration were committed to supporting countries to develop and implement their plans. He concluded by noting that developing safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems make good sense.

[Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#), addressed the General Assembly on behalf of the five regional commissions, highlighting that the Regional Economic Commissions have been contributing over the years to improved road safety, through technical and legal work, road safety campaigns and initiatives aimed at raising awareness and advocating for increased political commitment to road safety. Ms Algayerova noted that several countries spend less than 1% of their national GDP on road safety investments, even though it is known that the cost of poor road safety can be up to 6% of GDP. It was also concerning that some countries reported a declining trend in expenditure in road safety initiatives in 2019 and 2020. She emphasized the powerful role that the private sector can play as an agent of change in this regard, including by supporting the UN Road Safety Fund.

[Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety](#), noted that road crashes can cripple economies, and this was particularly alarming in low and middle-income countries, where development has boosted vehicle ownership and expansion of roads, but road safety measures have not kept pace.

He called for: (1) a better understanding of domestic and international spending on road safety and of the capacity and needs of countries, (2) the need to identify strategies and roles of each stakeholder for better road safety investments with consideration for expanding beyond conventional partnerships to optimize safe mobility's benefits to the environment,

emergency–resilience, access to education, youth, and gender equality objectives, and (3) more donor engagement with the UN Road Safety Fund. The Fund is delivering road safety expertise and high–impact projects to 30 countries. He called on more collaboration as the Fund initiates its first replenishment cycle today with a Pledging Conference planned during the High–Level Meeting on Global Road Safety in June next year.

[Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under–Secretary–General for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#), emphasised that road safety is a critical component of sustainable transport. He welcomed the decision to hold a high–level meeting on road safety in 2022 and confirmed that UNDESA is prepared to continue working closely with all partners to promote sustainable transportation and improve global road safety, including through its new online repository to collect voluntary transport–related commitments and initiatives.

[Ms. Cynthia López Castro, Member of Parliament from Mexico](#), reminded that road safety is essential not just for the health and well–being of individuals and communities but also for economic growth. Road safety issues always involve massive costs from health care systems. She called for the continual improvement of road design, including maintenance, operations, effective management, funding and stronger policy and regulation as an instrumental way to save lives.

[Dr. Amani Abou–Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union \(AU\)](#) noted that intervention efforts at the AU to address road safety have included the adoption of the action plan for the decade 2011–2020, the establishment of the African road safety charter and other instruments at the continental level. She noted that the AU is promoting green smart urban mobility, the African Railways network to alleviate road freight and transport and is working closely with the Special Envoy on a safe and affordable helmets initiative for Africa. Her recommendations included: (1) operationalization of the African Road Safety Observatory and strengthening the institutional and legal frameworks of AU member states; (2) establishment and operation of centers of excellence, including digitalization for data collection and data management, vehicle safety and infrastructure equipment; (3) systematization of road safety audits and inspections, including limiting the import of sub–standard used vehicles; (4) calling on car manufacturers to apply safety and environmental standards for exported vehicles in Africa and (5) calling on insurers, automobile industry and philanthropic organizations to finance of road safety actions, including hospital and post–crash emergency care.

[Sir Danny Alexander, Vice President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank \(AIIB\)](#), underscored that road safety interlinks with other sustainable development goals and supports their achievements, including for better social and economic outcomes. He mentioned that as the third–largest investment

category for AIB, transport is one of the most important sectors of its investment.

The Opening Session closed with [Ms. Zoleka Mandela, Road Safety Activist](#) calling for low-speed, livable streets in all cities, in every neighborhood; safe journeys to school for children and adolescents globally; and more action on drink driving, helmet use, safe roads and safe vehicles.

SESSION 1: SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR ROAD SAFETY – INTERACTIVE PANELS

The first session was oriented towards discussing lessons learned and critical questions on how to improve road safety financing, along the following specific questions:

- How can existing domestic sources of financing for road safety be scaled up, including through innovative approaches to meet funding gaps?
- What are the challenges and opportunities to better leverage domestic financing for road safety in the Second Decade of Action 2021–2030, and what concrete actions can be taken by key actors?
- How is international funding and financing being used to support road safety efforts and what are some best practices?
- As a funder, what are concrete actions to be prioritized during the Second Decade of Action to accelerate progress on the global plan for the decade and the SDGs?

The session was moderated by International Journalist, Ms Femi Oke.

Panel 1: Domestic Financing

Context setting video statements were provided by:

1. Dr. Maria Segui Gomez, independent expert;
2. H.E. Ben Carroll, Australian Minister for Road and Road Safety;
3. H.E. Amina Mohamed, Kenyan Minister of Sports, Heritage and Culture; and
4. H.E. Saksayam Chidchob, Thai Minister of Transport.

The panelists were:

1. H.E. Alexander Gorovoy, Russian First Deputy Minister of Interior;
2. Mr. Lus Felipe Lota, Colombian National Road Safety Agency Director;
3. H.E. Dagmawit Moges, Ethiopian Minister of Transport;
4. H.E. Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid, African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy;
5. Mr. Andy Fillmore, Canadian Member of Parliament; and
6. H.E. Saul Antonio Castelar Contreras, El Salvadorian Vice Minister of Transport.

Participants shared lessons learnt from financing road safety improvements. These included assessments that financing road safety improvements would mitigate GDP loss of up to 5% (USD\$ 4.942 billion in the case of Kenya) annually resulting from road crashes. Several participants encouraged the use of innovative domestic financing mechanisms, including the use of taxes linked to fuel and other sources of energy taxed; vehicle imports; compulsory third-party insurance schemes; fees paid for vehicle registration and driver licenses; and speeding tickets.

Looking ahead to the High-Level Meeting on Global Road Safety, participants also expressed strong support for the following considerations as prerequisites for successful financing of road safety in the Second Decade of Action:

- Prioritize road safety as a core value at the heart of our national and regional mobility systems; including through the use of renewed national regulations, policies and targets which are supported by concrete plans targeted at encouraging the use of safer vehicles; focusing on vulnerable road users including youth; investing in infrastructure; and focusing on enforcement on national traffic laws including seatbelt use and drunk driving.
- Mainstream road safety in all Ministries, not just those directly working on road policy and road police and work towards demonstrating quick wins to help prove the case for further road safety budget allocations.
- Cultivate private sector partnerships in road safety financing solutions, including through the UN Road Safety Fund, the use of compulsory insurance schemes, and the use of credit facilities for hard and soft road safety infrastructure.
- Promote the interlinkages between climate resilience and financing for road safety using a “whole of society” approach. Such an approach may include building smart cities where sustainable walking and cycling infrastructure will be part of the urban design and planning.

In an intervention from the floor, the delegate from Cote d’Ivoire advocated for substantial funding for low- and middle-income countries and welcomed the launch of the replenishment cycle for the UN Road Safety Fund. He urged all bilateral and multilateral partners to increase their funding for road safety and given the scale of the needed funding to reach the road safety global targets, for the issue to be given higher priority by donor and beneficiary countries alike.

Panel 2: International and Private Financing

Context setting video statements were provided by:

1. Mr. Mahmoud Mohieldin, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Financing the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development;
2. Ms. Lilyana Pavlova, European Investment Bank Vice President; and
3. Ms. Marie Gautier-Melleray, French Inter-Ministerial Delegate for Road Safety.

The panelists were:

1. Mr. Young Tae Kim, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum;
2. Ms. Claudia Adriaola-Steil, World Resources Institute Director;
3. Mr. Binyam Reja, World Bank Group Acting Global Director;
4. Ms. Kelly Henning, Bloomberg Philanthropies Director of Public Health; and
5. Mr. Avi Silverman, FIA Foundation Deputy Director.

Participants discussed the importance of governments needing a clear policy tool and plan anchored in the safe system approach to mobilize and channel international financing effectively to support road safety; making concerted efforts to better mainstream road safety as a development assistance (ODA) priority, especially among large country donors and private sector actors; and the need to invest in innovations such as road safety bonds, similar to green bonds or debt-for-nature swaps.

Several participants also encouraged a focus on safe and sustainable mobility, including a call for road safety to be mainstreamed and reflected as the opportunity and investment needed to address other SDG priorities; public health targets, and post-covid-19 recovery.

Similar to participants in the earlier panel on domestic financing, participants in the session made a case for road safety actors to do a better job in highlighting best practices and success stories of what is being done with money already being invested in improving road safety, both in terms of hard infrastructure as well as soft infrastructure improvements on post-crash care response and used car safety standards among exporting countries.

It was also noted that environmental, social and governance (ESG) investments are soaring, but road safety is not on the radar screen of these investors and more needs to be done to raise the viability of road safety to ESG investors similar to the climate change agenda.

In an intervention from the floor, delegates from Benin and the Russian Federation noted that road safety efforts must be linked to financing, including through the UN Road Safety Fund.

SESSION 2: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR ROAD SAFETY – INTERACTIVE PANELS

The second session focused on articulating the role of diverse stakeholders in improving safety on the roads. In line with the principle of shared responsibility for road safety that is at the heart of the safe system approach, the session underlined the essential and complementary roles of multilevel and multisectoral stakeholders in improving the level of safety on the roads.

The session was moderated by International Journalist, Ms Femi Oke.

Panel 1: Role of Private Sector, Civil Society, Academia and Youth

Context setting video statements were provided by:

1. Ms Olive Kobusingye, Chair, Road Traffic Injuries Research Network;
2. Mr Rob McInerney, CEO, International Road Assessment Programme iRAP and;
3. Mr Song Dewang, Senior Expert, Intelligent Driving Group, Baidu.

The panelists were:

1. Ms Lotte Brondum, Executive Director, Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety;
2. Mr Adnan Hyder, Senior Associate Dean, George Washington University;
3. Mr David Ward, Towards Zero Foundation;
4. Mr Per Ericson, Executive Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer, Autoliv;
5. Ms Viviam Perrone, Asociacion Madres del Dolor and;
6. Ms Daniela Gomez, Global Youth Coalition for Road Safety.

Participants discussed the role of non-governmental organizations, academia, youth and private sector in supporting road safety improvements. They underlined the role of NGOs in helping to generate political will, mobilizing communities and holding governments accountable. They delved into the importance for youth and civil society to be more meaningfully engaged in policymaking and implementation, emphasizing their function in representing the perspectives of communities using transport systems but also suffering from the consequences of poorly designed systems.

Participants further reiterated the need to adopt a safe system approach and underscored the importance of implementation research by academia and research institutions to assist countries in identifying means to turn available global evidence on safe system interventions into actionable measures in their settings. They also discussed the contribution of innovation and new technology development by private sector actors in improving road safety outcomes (e.g., ABS for motorcycles, child restraint systems and ISOFIX, intelligent speed assistance, automated vehicles).

While highlighting the essential roles of NGOs, academia, youth and the private sector, the panel cautioned against a dilution of governments' responsibilities towards road safety. Panelists emphasized that governments – at various levels, have essential and exclusive roles to play including law making, planning, budget allocation and enforcement. In line with this, they discussed the relation between political priorities and funding allocation and called for additional funds and periodic reporting on the level of funding for road safety and expenditures made. They further stressed the need for the adoption and implementation of harmonized technical regulations to ensure appropriate levels of vehicle safety in all countries.

At the end of the panel discussion, participants reiterated key asks that could be considered at the High-level Meeting on Global Road Safety:

- Frame road safety as an issue of social justice and equity;
- Ensure meaningful engagement of the youth in identifying, prioritizing and implementing road safety solutions;
- Call for governments to disclose the amount of funding for road safety and types of expenditure;
- Identify clear accountability and monitoring mechanisms to encourage and track progress over the next decade;
- Include specific and actionable measures to harmonize technical standards for vehicle safety through legislation; and
- Promote social justice for road traffic victims.

Panel 2: Government, regional integration bodies, the UN & other International Organizations

Context setting video statements were provided by:

1. H.E. Adina Valean, EU Commissioner for Transport;
2. H.E. Suleyman Solyu, Minister of Interior, Turkey and;
3. H.E. Mohamed Abdeljalil, Minister of Transport, Morocco.

The panelists were:

1. Mr Pablo Martinez Carignano, Executive Director of the National Agency of Road Safety, Argentina;
2. Ms Bronwen Thornton, CEO, Walk 21;
3. Mr Luiz Otavio Maciel Miranda, Traffic Department of State of Pará DETRAN/PA, Brazil;
4. Mr Jamil Ahmad, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, UNEP;
5. Ms Nancy Vandycke, Secretariat, Sustainable Mobility for All (SUM4All) Consortium and;
6. Mr Nanda Srinivasen, Associate Director for Research and Program Development, NHTSA.

Participants discussed areas of collaboration, cooperation and partnerships across governments, UN and regional organization to improve road safety. They underlined the role of UN and international organizations in facilitating policy dialogue, sharing of road safety information and experiences across countries through different forums and networks (including the UNRSC, WP1, Sum4All, regional data observatories).

Participants also stressed that global policy instruments, such as the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 and UN road safety instruments, are useful tools to guide the development of national and local road safety plans. They urged governments to adopt a safe system approach in their national and local plans addressing the different action areas underlined in the Global Plan (namely multimodal transport and land–use planning; safe roads; safe vehicles; safe road use and post–crash response) and considering safety as an integrated part of mobility systems and not a stand–alone issue.

They nevertheless warned against the development of standard / “model plans” replicating global tools without considering whether these plans can be implemented in the context of the country. In line with this consideration, participants encouraged countries to identify and adopt solutions fit to and implementable in their contexts and respond to the population’s needs. The existence of tools developed at the global level to assist countries to set priorities fit for their contexts was mentioned.

Participants further stressed the role of local authorities in improving road safety: local authorities are the main entities responsible for the implementation of plans, they are best positioned to grasp population’s needs, they can utilize both transport–related tools (e.g. roads’ construction or maintenance, vehicles’ registration, enforcement) and other tools (e.g., land–use planning, prioritization of walking and cycling under environment and health policies) to raise the level of safety on the roads.

At the end of the panel discussion, participants reiterated key asks that could be considered at the High–level Meeting on Global Road Safety:

- Adopt a whole–of–society approach to improve road safety that brings together different public and private actors and different agendas (including environment, equity, accessibility);
- Reinforce the role of women and the consideration of a gender perspective in transport planning;
- Further mobilize governments at local, provincial and municipal levels as key drivers for the design and implementation of road safety strategies;
- Promote walking as a transport mode of great value and invest in safe and efficient walking infrastructure to develop attractiveness for walking;
- Ensure that all plans for road safety are based on a safe system approach and;

- Integrate safety in the broader agenda of sustainable mobility.

CLOSING SEGMENT

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, Deputy Executive Secretary for UNECE, underlined that results would help leverage more funding. When we can show that interventions are improving road safety it will trigger further investment at domestic and international levels. He highlighted that short term financing, including the grant projects financed through the UN Road Safety Fund, plays an important bridging function which is critical, especially for countries with poor road safety systems.

But, major financing is required beyond small grants. He made the following points:

- The Global Plan of Action is not yet funded;
- It is important to report on expenditures at the national level and the sources of funding;
- Legislation is key when it comes to safety standards, and also for enforcement, and to enable a framework for funding and action at the national level, and there are UN road safety conventions and regulations available as a basis for legislation;
- Data is key, and the role of the Road Safety Observatories, national and regional is key to create an evidence base and assess impact;
- Private sector involvement needs to be based on incentives to invest, and a clear opportunity for investment. For this a clear Investment case for Road Safety is needed, to demonstrate the success generated by funds invested and ideally to understand how many lives were saved;
- Linkages between the Road Safety financing and Climate financing, as well as generous recovery packages, is critical. And investment in more liveable cities with safe roads will be a critical contribution to post-COVID recovery; and
- ESG-oriented and Impact Investment – both gathering pace in the broader context of Financing for SDGs is yet to turn its attention to Road Safety as a High-Impact area. A structured dialogue with the financial industry will be critical, along with the creation of new tools and a clear demonstration of what works, and with what measurable impact.

Mr Etienne Krug, Director of the Department for Social Determinants, World Health Organisation invited participants to reflect on the high burden caused by road crashes highlighting that since the car was invented over 15 million people died of road crashes which accounted for more than the casualties in world war one. He stressed that knowledge is available on what the effective interventions are and that the focus should now be on implementing these interventions. He warned against the risk of stopping action at the level of development of plans and strategies, and emphasized the need for actual and sustained implementation of these strategies and plans. In this regard, he highlighted that

turning road safety plans into concrete actions requires political will at the highest level. Noting that road safety is a development issue with multifaceted aspects, he urged that transport systems be designed around people and not cars and called for a modal shift where the healthiest forms of transportation – walking and cycling, are prioritized, safe and attractive.

The [PGA](#) closed the session by thanking all participants and the moderators. He called policymakers to engage a broad scope of stakeholders to identify and support the implementation of solutions that fit the contexts in different countries and are properly financed. The PGA reiterated the need for all actors in societies to be involved in road safety, including government agencies, youth, civil society, academia and the private sector.
