

Speaking Points for Executive Secretary for Ashgabat Conference

Thematic Discussion 10:

Global Vision Zero: reaching a new era in road safety

What policies could most effectively enable us to achieve the road safety related SDGs and how can UN road safety Convention be implemented to benefit road safety?

To achieve the SDG 3 target 6, here are the factors we need to consider:

- establishing, teaching, and enforcing appropriate user behavior in traffic,
- safer road infrastructure,
- safer vehicles
- effective post-crash response

Proper road safety governance is key to all of these. Countries need effective national agencies designated to work on road safety. These must have a strategy and plan of action, and sufficient resources to work. And these strategies need to be laid down on the solid foundations offered by the UN road safety legal instruments.

On road user behavior, the benchmark 1968 Convention on Road Traffic is the most thorough one in existence. It is amended as necessary to address changing conditions.

On safe road infrastructure, two UN legal instruments are key: (1) the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries, which sets out infrastructure parameters for different types of roads, (2) the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, which offers a uniform system of road signs, signals, symbols and markings.

For safe vehicles, the 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts sets out the regulations that help vehicles conform to internationally agreed safety standards. These regulations are constantly maintained and updated.

UNECE is ready to provide capacity building, and assessments of countries' legal and institutional frameworks, in order to help them implement all these legal instruments.

UNECE also provides the secretariat to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt. In particular, we support his efforts to mobilize sustained political commitment to making road safety a priority, and to raising awareness of the UN road safety legal instruments.

Moving over to SDG 11, target 2, we need a strong focus on promoting the shift from private vehicles to public transport. UNECE has analyzed the public transport situation in many UNECE capitals and formulated recommendations that could enable this shift. These are related to quality and safety of public transport, affordability of urban transfers, city infrastructure and charges policies. I invite you to take a look at our relevant publication.

Finally, we need sound road safety data to implement and monitor all these policies.

How the various road safety activities could be most effectively financed?

Providing the necessary funding to the competent authorities should be seen as an integral part of the national road safety governance. We are currently in the process of establishing a UN Road Safety Fund, which can help those countries that lack the resources. This fund should

prioritize funding for action related to the achievement of the road safety related SDGs and the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

In this framework, the fund should enhance the implementation of the UN road safety legal instruments. It should catalyze actions on the ground by supporting advocacy and awareness building with the participation of all stakeholders. It should ensure accountability and participation in road safety policies. It should finance knowledge generation and exchange. It should strengthen capacity to review progress by improving road safety analysis and statistics, infrastructure assessments and conducting country-led road safety peer reviews. Meanwhile, core road infrastructure programmes and other mainstream road safety activities should remain the responsibility of governments, development banks and the private sector.

The international community should work together to agree as soon as possible on the options and modalities for establishing the UN Fund for Road Safety. I call on all stakeholders to accelerate efforts leading to this establishment.

Is vision zero achievable on the global level? What needs to be done to achieve it?

To achieve “vision zero” we need a safe system: A pro-active, holistic and forward-looking one that understands and manages the complex interaction between operating speeds, vehicles, road infrastructure and road user behavior. Linking the individual elements of the system will enhance safety, as other elements can prevent serious injuries even when one of the components fails. We need a combination of policies, on one hand to help road users obey traffic rules and on the other hand to help authorities provide safe vehicles and infrastructure. The UN road safety legal instruments offer the necessary foundation for this work.

Thank you.