

DECADE OF ACTION FOR  
ROAD SAFETY 2011–2020



# SAVING MILLIONS OF LIVES



## Why this document?

For many years road traffic crashes have been acknowledged by the United Nations and its Member States to be a considerable challenge to the achievement of health and development goals. It has only been during the past decade, however, that the issue has gained the prominence it deserves among the world's most pressing international health and development concerns. Following the highly successful First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation in November 2009, a Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 was officially proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in March 2010. This document offers some key information about the Decade and WHO's role.

## Acknowledgements

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# Key facts

- Road traffic crashes take the lives of nearly 1.3 million people every year, and injure 20–50 million more.
- Road traffic injuries have become the leading cause of death for people aged 15–29 years.
- Over 90% of road traffic deaths and injuries occur in low-income and middle-income countries, which have only 48% of the world’s registered vehicles.
- Nearly half (46%) of those dying on the world’s roads are “vulnerable road users”: pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.
- In addition to the grief and suffering they cause, road traffic crashes result in considerable economic losses to victims, their families, and nations as a whole, costing most countries 1–3% of their gross national product.
- Without action, road traffic crashes are predicted to result in the deaths of around 1.9 million people annually by 2020.
- Only 15% of countries have comprehensive laws relating to five key risks: speeding, drinking and driving, and the non-use of helmets, seat-belts and child restraints.

## Top 10 leading causes of death, 2004 and 2030 compared

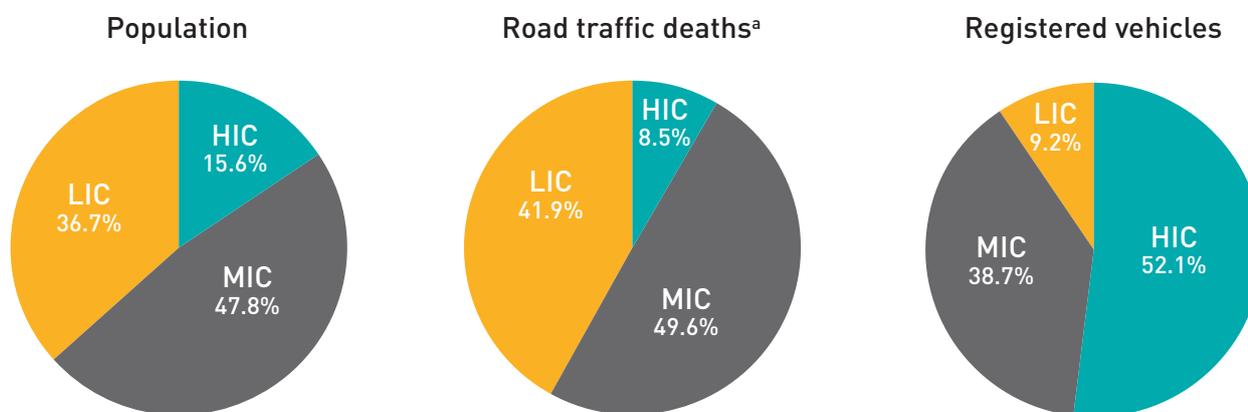
2004		2030	
Rank	Disease or injury	Rank	Disease or injury
1	Ischaemic heart disease	1	Ischaemic heart disease
2	Cerebrovascular disease	2	Cerebrovascular disease
3	Lower respiratory infections	3	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
4	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	4	Lower respiratory infections
5	Diarrhoeal diseases	5	<b>Road traffic injuries</b>
6	HIV/AIDS	6	Trachea, bronchus, lung cancers
7	Tuberculosis	7	Diabetes mellitus
8	Trachea, bronchus, lung cancers	8	Hypertensive heart disease
9	<b>Road traffic injuries</b>	9	Stomach cancer
10	Prematurity & low-birth weight	10	HIV/AIDS

## Road traffic injury fatality rates<sup>a</sup> per 100 000 population, by WHO region and income group

WHO region	High-income	Middle-income	Low-income	Total
African	—	32.2	32.3	32.2
The Americas	13.4	17.3	—	15.8
South-East Asia	—	16.7	16.5	16.6
European	7.9	19.3	12.2	13.4
Eastern Mediterranean	28.5	35.8	27.5	32.2
Western Pacific	7.2	16.9	15.6	15.7
<b>Global</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>18.8</b>

<sup>a</sup> 30-day definition of a road traffic death  
Source: Global Status Report on Road Safety, 2009

## Population, road traffic deaths<sup>a</sup>, and registered motorized vehicles, by income group



<sup>a</sup> 30-day definition, modelled data. HIC = high-income countries; MIC = middle-income countries; LIC = low-income countries

### For more key facts, visit:

Global status report on road safety 2009

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/road\\_safety\\_status/2009/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2009/en/index.html)

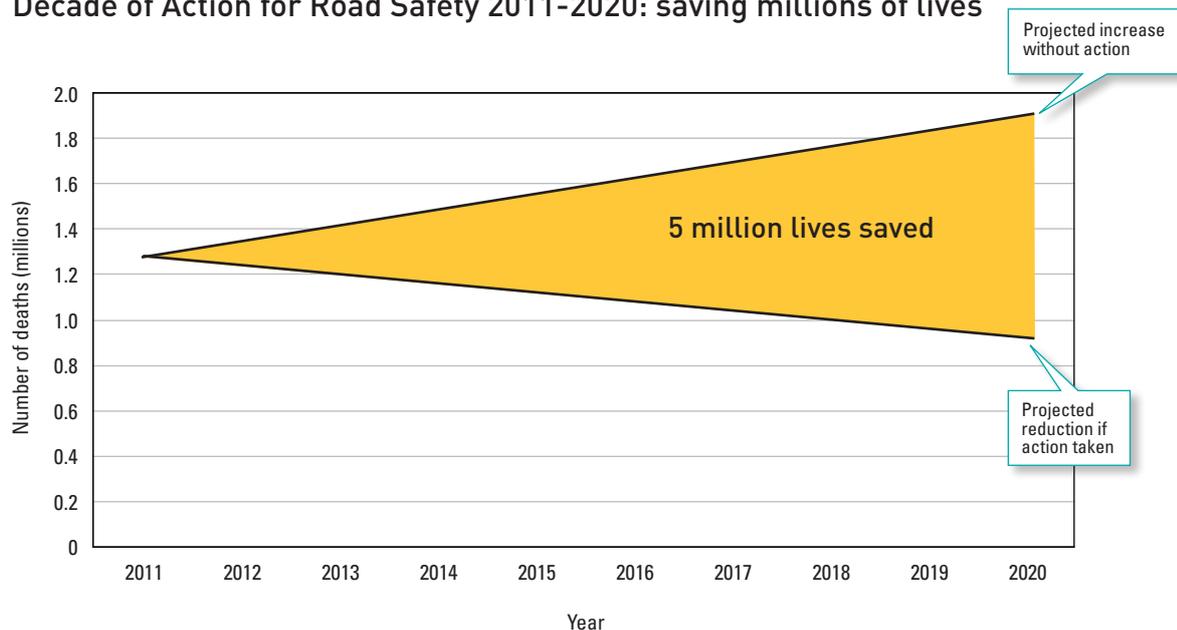
Global Health Observatory road safety

[http://www.who.int/gho/road\\_safety/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/gho/road_safety/en/index.html)

# Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

A Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 has been drawn to guide efforts at national and local levels. If the Global Plan is successfully implemented, the Decade could achieve its goal to stabilize and then reduce the forecasted level of road traffic fatalities around the world. If this ambitious target is achieved, a cumulative total of 5 million lives, 50 million serious injuries and US\$ 5 trillion could be saved over the Decade.

Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020: saving millions of lives



# Global Plan

## for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020

### **Pillar 1** **Road safety management**

This pillar focuses on the need to strengthen institutional capacity to further national road safety efforts. It includes activities such as putting into practice major United Nations road safety conventions; establishing a lead agency for road safety in the country involving partners from a range of sectors; developing a national road safety strategy; and setting realistic and long-term targets for related activities with sufficient funding for their implementation. It also calls for development of data systems to monitor and evaluate activities.

### **Pillar 2** **Safer roads and mobility**

This pillar highlights the need to improve the safety of road networks for the benefit of all road users, especially the most vulnerable: pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. Activities include improving the safety-conscious planning, design, construction and operation of roads; making sure that roads are regularly assessed for safety; and encouraging relevant authorities to consider all forms of transport and types of safe infrastructure when they respond to the mobility needs of road users.

### **Pillar 3** **Safer vehicles**

This pillar addresses the need for improved vehicle safety by encouraging harmonization of relevant global standards and mechanisms to accelerate the uptake of new technologies which impact on safety. It includes activities such as implementing new car assessment programmes so that consumers are aware of the safety performance of vehicles, and trying to ensure that all new motor vehicles are equipped with minimum safety features, such as seat-belts. Other activities covered include promoting more widespread use of crash avoidance technologies with proven effectiveness, such as electronic stability control and anti-lock braking systems. Managers of fleets are also encouraged to purchase, operate and maintain vehicles that offer high levels of occupant protection.

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 was developed by the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) and stakeholders from around the world. To achieve its goal, the Global Plan features five categories or “pillars” of activities which are described below. Indicators have been developed to measure progress in each of these areas.

#### **Pillar 4 Safer road users**

This pillar focuses on developing comprehensive programmes to improve road user behaviour. Activities include encouraging the development and adoption of model road safety legislation and sustained or increased enforcement of road safety laws and standards. These efforts are combined with public awareness and education to increase seat-belt and helmet wearing and to reduce drinking and driving, speeding and other risks. It also calls for activities to reduce work-related road traffic injuries and promotes the establishment of graduated driver licensing programmes for novice drivers.

#### **Pillar 5 Post-crash response**

This pillar promotes the improvement of health and other systems to provide appropriate emergency treatment and longer-term rehabilitation for crash victims. Activities include developing pre-hospital care systems, including implementation of a single nationwide telephone number for emergencies; providing early rehabilitation and support to injured patients and those bereaved by road traffic crashes; establishing insurance schemes to fund such initiatives; and encouraging a thorough investigation into crashes and an appropriate legal response.

Global Plan

For the full version of the Global Plan, visit:  
[http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade\\_of\\_action/plan/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/plan/en/index.html)

# Implementing the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020

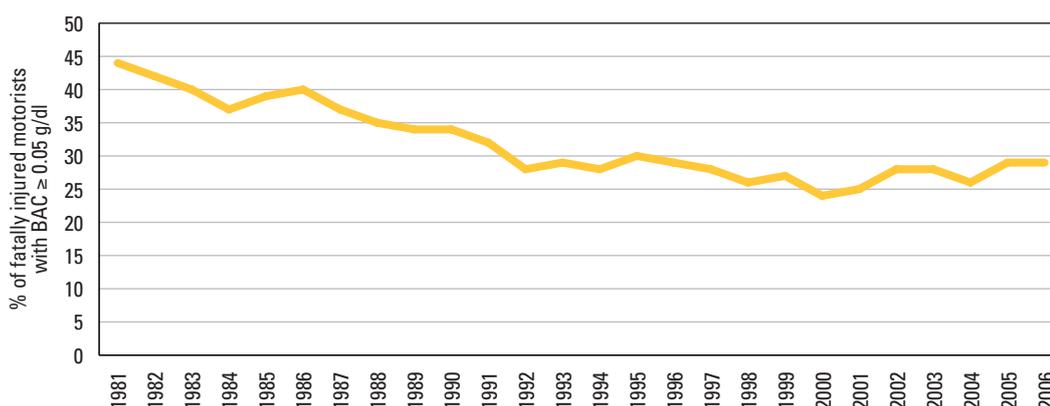
There is strong evidence about what works to prevent road traffic deaths and injuries. The Global Plan is based on the best evidence of what works given successful experiences from a number of countries. Here are some examples below.

## Australia

### Reducing drinking and driving through random breath testing

Consuming alcohol before driving increases the risk of a crash as well as the likelihood that death or serious injury will result. Passing a drinking and driving law and enforcing it can reduce the number of road deaths by around 20%. Random breath testing is the primary drinking and driving law enforcement tool used throughout Australia. The police can stop and perform a breath test on a driver at any time, irrespective of their driving behaviour. Highly visible “booze buses” are used to conduct testing while media campaigns support enforcement. The evaluation of random breath testing has shown long-term reductions in alcohol-related crashes.

#### Effectiveness of random breath testing on alcohol-related crashes in Australia



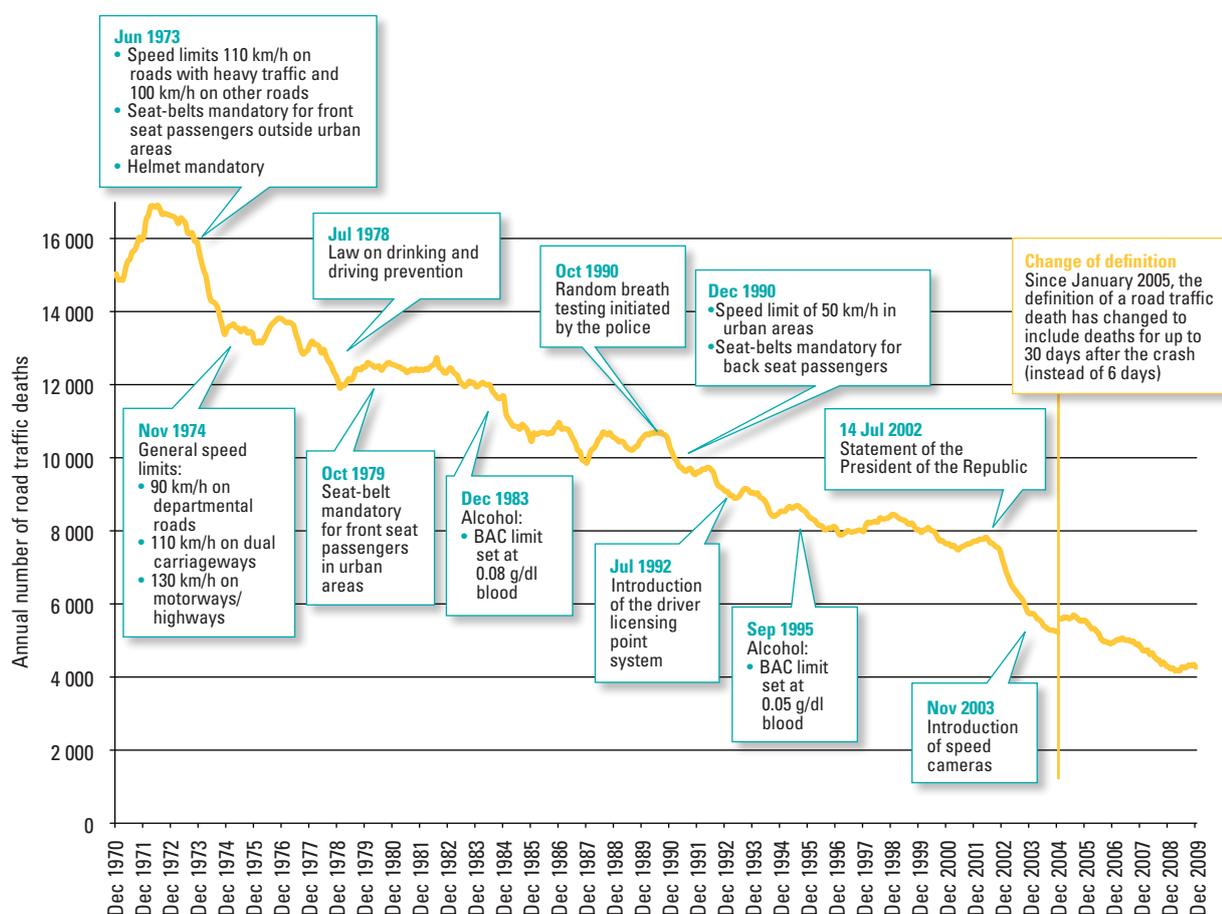
Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government, 2009

# France

## Charting progress over decades

Since the early 1970s, France has made great strides in reducing fatalities on the nation's roads. This has been the result of myriad factors, including adoption and enforcement of legislation on speeding, seat-belts and drinking and driving. Since 2002, a combination of factors including a stated commitment from the highest level of government, stricter enforcement of legislation especially through the use of speed cameras, and media campaigns explaining the traffic rules and risks has accelerated the decrease in annual fatalities. From the early 1970s to 2009, deaths have declined from more than 16000 annually to just over 4000 annually.

### Evolution of the number of annual road traffic deaths in metropolitan France, 1970–2009



Source: Graphique reproduit avec l'autorisation de l'Observatoire national interministériel de la sécurité routière (ONISR), France

# Ghana

## Establishing a nation-wide ambulance service

Until the early 2000s, emergency trauma care in Ghana was informal and extremely limited. Most patients injured in a road crash were taken by their relatives to a health facility where they would receive limited first aid. In 2001, efforts to address emergency trauma care gained political support. In 2004 the government established a nationwide ambulance service and a dedicated emergency hotline. In less than four years:

- the number of cases handled by the national ambulance system rose from 205 in 2004 to 8250 in 2008;
- the average response time for ambulances decreased from 17 minutes in 2006 to 13 minutes in 2008; and
- the average time spent at the scene decreased from 19 minutes in 2006 to 14 minutes in 2008.



© AN Zakariah/GAS

# Malaysia

## Modifying road infrastructure to improve safety



© K Rajam/WPRO

Separating different types of vehicles, for example, two and three wheeled vehicles from four or more wheeled vehicles is a proven intervention to reduce road traffic crashes. Exclusive motorcycle lanes are a means to do so. These lanes are dedicated solely for use by vehicles such as motorcycles, scooters and bicycles. They are becoming common in a number of Asian cities, where they have proven to dramatically reduce collisions and resultant injuries by creating safer driving environments for all road users. For example, evaluation of the Federal

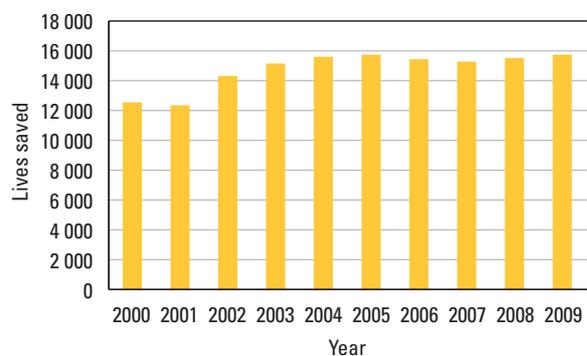
Highway Route 2 in Malaysia which includes an exclusive motorcycle lane revealed that crashes were reduced by 39% after this lane was built.

## United States of America

### Increasing seat-belt wearing through the “Click It or Ticket” campaign

Wearing a seat-belt reduces the risk of being ejected from a vehicle and suffering serious or fatal injury by between 40%–65%. Click It or Ticket is the most successful seat-belt enforcement campaign ever conducted in the country. The cornerstone of the campaign is the national Click it or Ticket May Mobilization, during which law enforcement agencies join forces across the country. Their efforts are supported by national and local media campaigns. From 2000–2009, over 140 000 American’s lives were saved by seat-belts.

Lives saved by seat-belts, USA, 2000–2009



Source: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/>

## Viet Nam

### Improving helmet-wearing rates through enforcement of legislation

Research has shown that correctly wearing a motorcycle helmet can cut the risk of death by 40% and reduce the risk of serious head injuries by 70%. In 2007 the Government of Viet Nam passed a law requiring all motorcycle drivers and passengers to wear helmets. Strict enforcement of this law by police around the country led to a tripling in helmet wearing rates, reaching over 90% among both drivers and passengers.



© WHO/M. Peden

Within a year of the Government’s decision, police had intensified their enforcement and the fines for not wearing a helmet had increased substantially, while hospitals reported a 16% reduction in the risk of a head injury compared to the previous year. Police reports show that over 1500 lives were saved and over 2500 serious injuries prevented in the year after the helmet law was passed. Motorcycles comprise 95% of all registered vehicles in Viet Nam, and this policy on helmet use is therefore likely to have contributed significantly to these positive road safety benefits.

# WHO's contributions to the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020

WHO will support implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. Below are descriptions of some of the ways WHO plans to be involved in the coming years.

## Coordinating global efforts

WHO, in collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions, is the coordinator of road safety across the United Nations system. In this regard WHO acts as the secretariat for the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC), a network of 60 governments, United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations, foundations and private companies. Across the Decade, the UNRSC will be instrumental in guiding global efforts by continuing as it has since 2004 to advocate for road safety at the highest political levels; compile and disseminate good practices in prevention; share information with the public on risks and ways to mitigate those; and draw attention to the need for increased funding. The UNRSC will coordinate and plan the key milestone events of the Decade.

## Monitoring progress through global status reports

While the UNRSC will be in charge of evaluating the overall impact of the Decade, WHO will provide one of the tools for doing so through its status reports. The *Global status report on road safety*, published in 2009, provided the first comprehensive assessment of the road safety situation globally. With data from 178 Member States, the report continues to be a reference for policy-makers, practitioners and the media and serves as a catalyst for change in many countries. These status reports collect information on the number and rates of fatalities; the existence of national strategies and targets; legislation and enforcement on a number of key risks; and the current state of post-crash care. The forthcoming *Global status report on road safety*, to be released on 2012, will serve as a baseline for monitoring activities relating to the Decade, with subsequent reports published every two years.

## Supporting road safety programmes in countries

In 2010, WHO and five other consortium partners received funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies to further road safety in ten countries. Dubbed the Road Safety in 10 Countries (RS10) Project, this initiative supports the governments of Brazil, Cambodia, China, Egypt, India, Kenya, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Viet Nam. In all countries, the RS10 Project focuses on selected key risks for road traffic crashes. For example, the focus in Kenya is on helmets and speeding; in Mexico on seat-belts and drinking and driving; and in the Russian Federation on seat-belts and speeding. Efforts are focused on strengthening legislation and enforcement and



educating the public through social marketing campaigns. WHO also supports road safety efforts in other countries such as Malawi and Mozambique to improve safety around schools. Over the Decade, WHO will continue to support these and other national road safety initiatives leading to sustainable government programmes.

### Helping to improve emergency services

Another important contribution to the Decade will be WHO's support as part of the RS10 Project to pilot projects to improve emergency services in India and Kenya. In addition WHO is working with a number of partners to create the Global Alliance for the Care of the Injured. The partners involved in this nascent network have been instrumental in producing many of the guides released by WHO and others in recent years.

### Building capacities

Through the RS10 Project and other national road safety initiatives, WHO will support the building of capacities among WHO staff and its partners to design, implement and evaluate road safety programmes. As part of these broader capacity building efforts, doctors are trained to more accurately prepare death certificates, journalists are trained to better report on road traffic crashes, and staff from nongovernmental organizations are trained to strengthen their collaboration with the media. Road safety is also an important component of TEACH-VIP and MENTOR-VIP, two WHO-led capacity building efforts.

### Supporting nongovernmental organizations

In recent years, WHO has increasingly recognized the value of nongovernmental organizations, in particular in the area of advocacy. Such groups are key to increasing political will and generating a demand from the public for safer roads. Across the Decade WHO will support a strategic approach to advocacy by such groups. WHO will also support establishment of a more formal global network of nongovernmental organizations to support implementation of the Global Plan.

### WHO global and regional focal points for the Decade

To contact WHO headquarters and regional office focal points for the Decade, visit:

[http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade\\_of\\_action/focal/who\\_regional\\_offices/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/focal/who_regional_offices/en/index.html)

# What can you do to support the **Decade of Action for Road Safety** 2011–2020?

The Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 is everybody's Decade. We all have an interest in ensuring that the vision of the Decade becomes a reality. Below are some ideas for what you might do to support the Decade.

## **Policy-makers:**

- release national or local plan in line with the Global Plan;
- enact new legislation or improve enforcement of existing legislation;
- ensure funds to support the national plan.

## **Nongovernmental organizations:**

- create awareness raising tools;
- organize high-profile public events;
- influence the creation or modification of legislation.

## **Private companies:**

- release a fleet safety policy;
- support campaigns in the communities in which the company operates;
- contribute financially to the Road Safety Fund.

## **Young people:**

- serve as “ambassador” for road safety;
- join a youth assembly;
- ensure the safety of roads around schools.

## **Victims and survivors:**

- share stories of the consequences of road crashes;
- host an event on the annual World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims;
- support nongovernmental organizations.

## **Media:**

- commit to reporting news and features on road safety;
- report responsibly on road traffic crashes, using reports on crashes as an opportunity to address prevention;
- serve as a conduit for social marketing and mass media campaigns.

## A symbol for all: the road safety “tag”



The road safety “tag” is the new global symbol for road safety and the key visual for the Decade of Action for Road Safety. It will unite efforts which take place in the context of the Decade. A promotional web site for the tag encourages groups marking the launch of the Decade to “Wear. Believe. Act.” by wearing the road safety tag and displaying it on advocacy materials for Decade-related events; reflecting on the impact of road traffic crashes and the possibilities for prevention; and taking action to ensure greater safety on the roads. To purchase the tag as a wearable or decorative item, request the artwork for printed materials or contribute financially to the newly established Road Safety Fund, visit:

<http://www.decadeofaction.org>



Recognition is growing about the critical development and public health challenge posed by road traffic deaths and injuries. I call on Member States, international agencies, civil society organizations, businesses and community leaders to ensure that the Decade of Action for Road Safety leads to real improvements.

**Mr Ban Ki-moon**

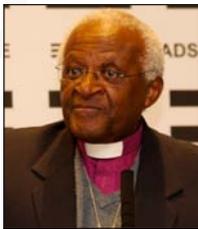
Secretary-General, United Nations



The Decade of Action for Road Safety creates the political platform needed to scale up some well-defined measures. Evidence tells us that these measures work, and can save millions of lives.

**Dr Margaret Chan**

Director-General, World Health Organization



It is time for those who can make a real difference to step up to meet this challenge and to commit to the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

**The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu**  
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town



By making road safety a priority over the Decade of Action for Road Safety, we have the potential to save millions of lives, and to prevent many millions of injuries and disabilities.

**Ms Michelle Yeoh**

Actress and Global Ambassador for the Make Roads Safe Campaign



Too many people are killed or injured on the world's roads. The World Health Organization predicts that road traffic injuries will rise to become the fifth leading cause of death by 2030. The time is now to commit to action. The Decade of Action for Road Safety has the potential to save millions of lives.

**Mr Michael Bloomberg**

Mayor of the City of New York



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ROAD SAFETY 2011-2020

[www.who.int/roadsafety/decade\\_of\\_action](http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action)