An Urgent Call to Action for Africa

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 population[1]. Without serious action, road crashes will cause an estimated 13–17 million more deaths and 500 million more injuries in the current decade[2].

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 2021–2030[5].

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

Despite having the lowest level of motorization in the world (2% of the world's cars[6]), the African region suffers from the highest estimated road traffic fatality rate (26.6 per 100,000 population), almost 10 points higher than the global average[7]. The continent accounts for 16% of the

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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 - WHO. (2013). Road Safety in the WHO African Region the Facts 2013. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/report/factsheet_afro.pdf

7 - WHO. (2018). Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publi-

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world's road deaths[8,9]. Around 650 people die on Africa's roads every day, and 44% of fatalities are among pedestrians and cyclists[10]. The numbers are especially bad for young people; a child in Africa is twice as likely to die on the road than a child in any other part of the world[11].

In Africa, road crashes are the fourth leading cause of death of people aged 5–44; more than 75% of casualties are among those of productive age, between 16–65 years[12]. There is a direct link between the impact of road crashes and worsening poverty in Africa[13]. In addition to road deaths, hundreds of thousands of people each year suffer long-lasting injuries from road crashes. Often, it is not only the victims who lose the ability to earn and support their families but also the family members who have to care for them. Medical costs and reduced income often lead families into crippling debt. At a national level, it is estimated that countries lose 3% or more of GDP annually as a result of road traffic crashes[14].

Different frameworks and instruments to address road safety have been developed by regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Transport Protocol[15], the Accra Declaration[16], and the African Union Road Safety Charter[17] amongst others. Several African states have committed to them. But commitments on paper are not enough; now it is time to turn commitments into concrete action.

CALL TO ACTION

Governments in Africa must match their words with actions by prioritizing road safety, demonstrating strategic leadership, and ensuring commitment by planning, funding, and full

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8 - WHO. (2013). Road Safety in the WHO African Region the Facts 2013. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/report/factsheet_afro.pdf

9 - African Union. Road Safety: African Action Plan for the Global Decade of Action for Road Safety. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/32186-doc-road_safety_african_action_plan_for_the_global_decade_of_action_for_road_safety-e.pdf

10 - WHO. (2018). Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565684

11 - SSATP Africa Transport Policy Program. (Accessed 2022). Changing the Figures of Road Safety in Africa. https://www.ssatp.org/topics/road-safety

12 - African Development Bank. (2013). Road Safety in Africa: Assessment of Progresses and Challenges in Road Safety Management System. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Events/ATFforum/Road_Safety_in_Africa_-_Assesement_of_Progresses_and_Challenges_in_Road_Safety_-_AfDB.pdf

13 - Africa Development Bank Group, Transport & ICT Department. (2013). Road Safety in Africa: Assessment of Progresses and Challenges in Road Safety Management System

14 -WHO. (2021). Road traffic injuries. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries

15 - Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. (2006). Protocol on Transport, Communications, and Meteorology. https://www.sadc.int/files/7613/5292/8370/Protocol_on_Transport_Communications_and_Meteorology_1996.pdf

16 - UN Regional Commissions, UN Habitat, SSATP, Ministry of Transport, Government of Ghana. (2018). Regional Workshop on Road Safety and Urban Mobility. https://unece.org/experts-meet-accra-improve-road-safety-and-urban-mobility

17 - African Union. (2016). African Road Safety Charter. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37309-treaty-0052_-_road_safety_charter_e.pdf

implementation of road safety interventions. This requires political ownership, positioning of road safety as a national priority, recognizing it as an integral part of the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and public articulation of a long-term measurable vision.

We call on governments in Africa to implement or guarantee accountable, well-resourced, and empowered road safety institutions that are responsible and capable of managing all necessary road safety elements and which coordinate with other governmental authorities such as Ministries of Health, Transport, Infrastructure, Social Development, Education, and Justice to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2030 and guarantee people's right to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable mobility.

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

a. Improve the data and evidence base to build a road safety and mobility information system in every country that:
 i. Collects, analyzes, disseminates, and enables access to reliable data and evidence, including sociological factors, to better understand the root causes of road morbidity and mortality behaviors in given contexts and develop evidence-based policies and plans;
 ii. Produces timely, reliable, accurate, well-categorized road safety data that is transparent, accessible to all, and independent of political influence;
 iii. Monitors, evaluates, and publishes road safety targets to ensure that commitments are put into action.

b. Protect vulnerable road users by:
 i. Implementing national laws limiting speed to 30 km/h in high risk areas especially where people walk, live, and play;
 ii. Relocating road space and improve land-use planning to promote a modal shift from individual motorized transport to active, sustainable, and safe modes, including walking, and cycling in urban and rural areas, and ensuring that road infrastructure is built that addresses the needs of vulnerable road users, especially those that are physically challenged;
 iii. Providing safe, affordable, accessible, and convenient public transportation that supports access to education and work and promotes equal opportunity.

c. Utilize global and regional frameworks and national and local legislation to support achievement of the 2030 targets by:
 i. Establishing and empowering lead road safety agencies in countries where they do not already exist;
 ii. Implementing national and local road safety plans that are aligned with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action 2021–2030 and the regional frameworks listed above as well as monitor, evaluate, and regularly publish progress to ensure transparency and accountability;

    iii. Adopting, ratifying and enforcing the African Road Safety Charter;

    iv. Ensuring that in-country laws and regulations are not only passed but also effectively implemented, enforced, and widely understood through public awareness campaigns.

d. Provide comprehensive support systems for victims and their families by:

    i. Equipping and enabling first responders to treat crash victims quickly and efficiently and guaranteeing the rights of bystanders who provide assistance;

    ii. Guaranteeing crash victims' and families' rights and support, including psychological, social, rehabilitation, and judicial support, for as long as is needed, and, where appropriate, enabling and simplifying claims procedures.

2 **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 investment 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.

3 **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.

Global Alliance of
NGOs for 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.

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