
Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC)

28th Session
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(online)

Road safety issues and policy interventions in SPECA countries

(Item 5.4 of the Agenda)

Note by ESCAP/ UNECE

1. While significant progress in improving road traffic safety has been made in some countries in the last decade, the overall global results are far worse, and changes are urgently needed to considerably reduce the number of global road fatalities and injuries. Road traffic injuries constitute the first cause of accidental death globally. Road traffic crashes are responsible for more than 1.35 million deaths each year, while estimates of non-fatal injuries range from 20 million to 50 million, and cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations. According to some estimations, road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.
2. Several global initiatives have been undertaken to improve the global road safety situation in the last two decades. The General Assembly has adopted a total of nine resolutions¹ since 2004. Three global ministerial conferences on road safety were organized, namely in Moscow, the Russian Federation (November 2009), Brasilia, Brazil (November 2015) and Stockholm, Sweden (February 2020), all of which adopted a declaration urging governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and philanthropic foundations to cooperate in addressing related issues.

¹ Road Safety resolutions adopted by the General Assembly are available at: <https://www.who.int/roadsafety/about/resolutions/download/en/>

3. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the international community clearly placed road safety among the top development issues by setting the ambitious target of halving the global number of road fatalities and injuries by 2020 as part of Sustainable Development Goal target 3.6 on good health and well-being. The issue of road safety is also reflected in target 11.2 which aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all.
4. On 31 August 2020, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 74/299² on improving global road safety which proclaimed the period 2021–2030 as the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety, with a goal of reducing road traffic fatalities and injuries by at least 50 per cent between 2021 and 2030. The Resolution requested WHO and the UN regional commissions to prepare a global plan of action of the Second Decade. In response to this, the ESCAP Transport Division and UNECE Sustainable Transport Division joined the Global Task Force led by WHO to develop a global plan of action. The plan was finalized and launched by the global community on 28 October 2021.³
5. In consideration of the global challenges encountered by the Member States, the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) was established in April 2018 as a multi-partner trust fund to facilitate concrete action toward achievement of the road safety targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Fund aims to help low- and middle-income countries put in place effective national road safety systems to a) substantially curb the number of fatalities and injuries from road crashes, and (b) reduce economic losses resulting from them. Its grants strengthen national and local capacity to manage and improve road safety by providing funding and technical expertise.
6. The UNRSF has run several calls for proposals to-date and as a result, is currently supporting 44 projects, in 88 low- and middle-income countries, showcasing the impact of joint partnerships between the UN and an array of stakeholders. Last call for proposals was completed in October 2022. From 61 project proposals, 12 projects globally are selected for

2 Resolution 74/299 can be accessed at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/226/30/PDF/N2022630.pdf?OpenElement>

3 <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>

financing. In SPECA region one project is selected for funding - Contemporary design standards for safety, accessibility, and sustainability (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan).

UNECE Road safety activities

A. Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)

7. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) serviced by the UNECE secretariat is the only inter-governmental permanent road traffic safety body in the United Nations system. Participation in WP.1 is open to all countries across the world. Typically, WP.1 meets twice a year in Geneva, Switzerland. The UNECE Sustainable Transport Division provides the group's secretariat support: services sessions, prepares documents, agendas and reports, collects and disseminates information and facilitates the liaison among Governments.
8. Amongst other matters, WP.1 adopted amendment proposals to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic with a view to maintaining consistency between the convention and the provisions of vehicle regulations adopted in the framework of the 1958 Agreement, such as light and light signalling. Furthermore, WP.1 is considering proposals to amend the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals, European Agreement Supplementing the 1968 Convention, and Protocol on Road Markings, additional to the European Agreement Supplementing the Convention and has been discussing issues related to remote driving, the mutual recognition of driving permits, a safe system approach, multidisciplinary crash investigations and distracted driving.

B. United Nations legal instruments

9. From the last WG meeting, the number of contracting parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic remained at 102. A new contracting party acceded to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic bringing the total number to 88 and the total number of contracting parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals is 73. The number of contracting parties to the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (1970) remained at 52.
10. Under the administration and responsibility of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the 1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Harmonized Technical United Nations Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be Fitted and/or be Used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these United Nations Regulations (Revision 3), and the

1998 Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or used on Wheeled Vehicles, have 60 and 39 contracting parties respectively, covering not only countries with a major automotive industry but also those relying on vehicle imports. The number of contracting parties to the 1997 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections is 17.

11. The World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) has recently adopted a considerable number of amendments to United Nations vehicle Regulations related to safety and environmental aspects with focus on modern driver assistant systems for protection of vulnerable road users, which were complemented by three new UN Regulations (Vulnerable Road Users in Front and Side Close Proximity, Vulnerable Road Users Direct Vision and Reverse warning); as well as the first UN Regulations for automated vehicles was updated with additional elements (e.g. lane change and operational speed up to 130 km/h) making its use case for automated motorway driving complete. The work related to automated/autonomous vehicles is governed by the WP.29 Framework Document on Automated/Autonomous Vehicles, which has been endorsed by ITC in 2020. In addition, WP.29 established a framework document on vehicle whole-life compliance, which links the different elements during the vehicle's lifetime starting from approval, conformity of production, registration and re-registration, market-surveillance, periodic technical inspections, roadside technical inspections until scrapping and recycling.

C. Technical assistance in the road safety field

12. Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR):

- The RSPR was designed to help the beneficiary country to strengthen the road safety management capacities and effectively address and improve national road safety system. The most critical road safety aspects and priority needs in the beneficiary country will be identified by preparing the RSPR. The RSPR will map gaps in national institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks, assess the level of compliance with UN road safety legal instruments - all in line with the ITC Recommendations and the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety and give recommendations for future actions.

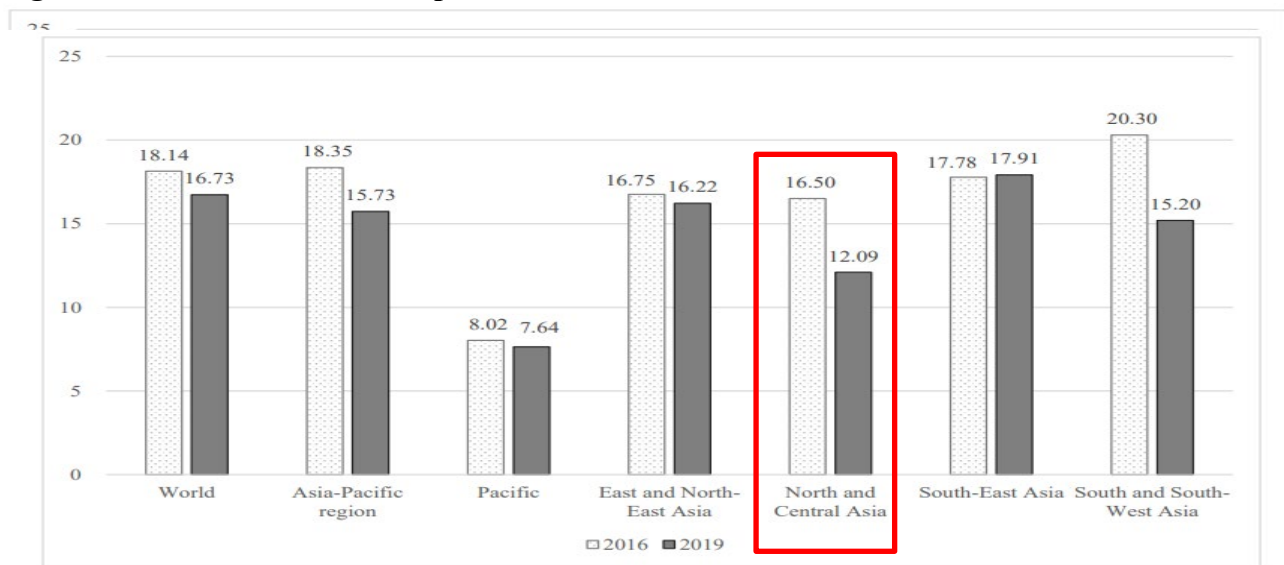
- Based on the recommendations of the meeting of H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the UNECE Executive Secretary Olga Algayerova in Tashkent in July 2021 – UNECE launched preparatory work on the RSPR draft Concept note, in cooperation with UNICEF Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan is appointed as a national focal point and project counterpart. Kick-off meeting (April 2022) and three fact-finding missions (May, September and November 2022) already took place and finalization of RSPR report is ongoing.
- UNECE organized capacity development workshop on How to design safe roads on 17 March 2023. National experts strengthen knowledge on how to design safer roads and get appropriate reasoning to updated national standards and guidelines. The workshop has built capacity on how changes in road design influence the basic road safety indicators, and representatives learned on international best practice in road design and road work zone safety. Good cooperation with EIB and UNICEF UZ in implementation of the workshop.
- On 18-19 May 2023 UNECE in cooperation with UNICEF UZ and the Road Traffic Safety Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan organized RSPR policy dialogue with Uzbek road safety stakeholders and the How to improve National Road Safety System Workshop. RSPR team presented to national stakeholders results of the RSPR Uzbekistan first draft, collected suggestions and comments and strengthen knowledge on RSPR recommendations. Meeting clarified some issues which are not captured during the fact-finding missions with national focal point.
- In 2019 the Government of Kazakhstan agreed with UNECE to prepare Kazakhstan Road Safety Performance Review. The project aim is to assist Kazakhstan to strengthen the road safety system and effectively address and improve national road safety record. RSPR should help Government to identify the most critical road safety aspects and priority needs. The discussion how to restart this project is currently ongoing with the Kazakhstan ministries.

Road safety in ESCAP region

13. The Asia-Pacific region accounted for 59.8 per cent of the global road fatalities in 2019. In the Asia-Pacific region, a recent analysis indicated that road fatalities had gone down by 12.13 per cent between 2016 and 2019. This improvement can also be seen in the decrease in the region's proportion of global road deaths: from 62.8 per cent in 2016 to 58.5 per cent in 2019.

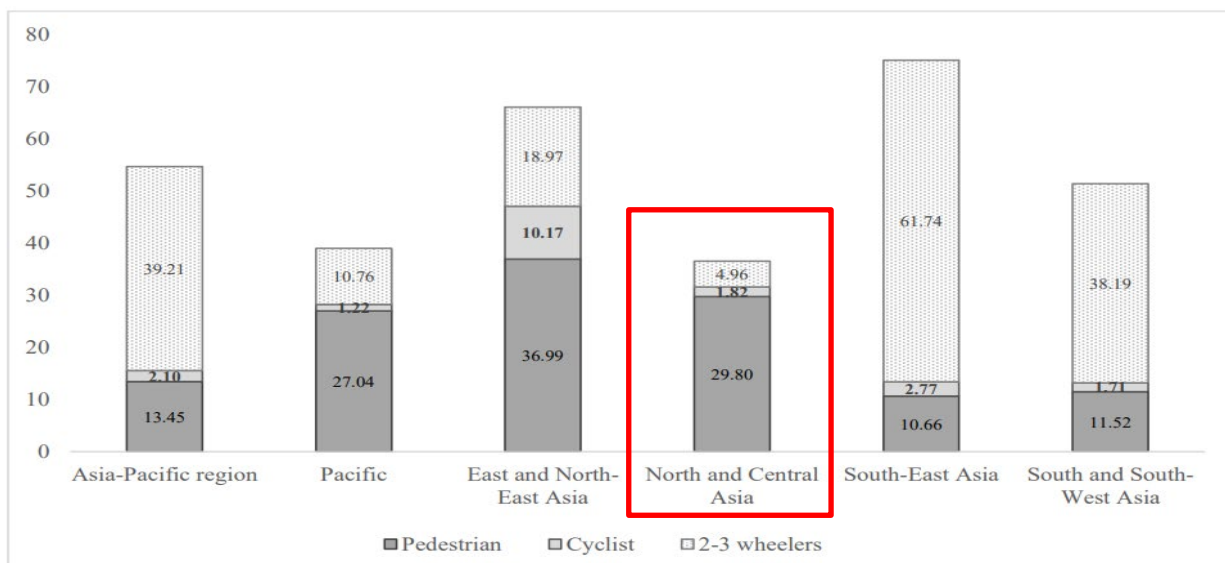
14. While the average road traffic fatality rate in the region in 2016, 18.35 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, was higher than the worldwide average of 18.14, in 2019 that rate had improved to 15.73, which was lower than the worldwide average of 16.73. Global, regional and subregional road traffic fatality rates are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Road traffic fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants



Sources: ESCAP calculations of the road fatality data for 2016 are based on World Health Organization (WHO), Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018; the 2019 data are from WHO, Global Health Observatory data repository, available at www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/topicdetails/GHO/road-traffic-mortality.

15. Vulnerable road users- pedestrians, cyclists and motorized 2 and 3-wheelers represent more than half of all ESCAP region (approx. 55%) road fatalities. The burden of road fatalities is disproportionately high among upper and lower middle-income countries in relation to the size of their populations. The problem is more acute (54.8%) in the lower middle-income countries in the ESCAP region.

Figure II: Fatalities of vulnerable road users in the region in 2016 (%)

Source: ESCAP calculations based on 2016 data from WHO, Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018 (Geneva, 2018).

16. In the SPECA region, as far as the rate of road traffic death is concerned, there was significant variation (Table 1).

Table 1: Estimated road traffic death rate in SPECA countries²

No.	Country	Estimated road traffic death rate (per 100 000 population)	
		2016	2019
1.	Azerbaijan	8.7	6.7
2.	Kazakhstan	17.6	12.7
3.	Kyrgyzstan	15.4	12.7
4.	Tajikistan	18.1	15.7
5.	Turkmenistan	14.5	13.5
6.	Uzbekistan	11.5	11.7

17. **The Regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030⁴** - While the global plan addresses the global road safety issues in general, more attention needs to be put on the local issues in a regional plan, for example, motorized 2-3-wheeler safety, and climatic condition of the region. In consideration of this, at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok and online in December 2021, adopted the

⁴ The Regional Plan can be accessed at: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/EN_CTR5_Safe%20and%20inclusive%20and%20mobility%20%282%29.pdf

Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific 2022–2026.

18. In the Regional Action Programme, road safety was identified as one of the priority areas for the region and noted the importance of the development of a regional plan of action for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 in line with the Global Plan. The Transport Division of ESCAP reviewed the Global Plan in the context of the ESCAP region and prepared a draft regional plan of action for the Second Decade in line with the Global Plan in consultation with the members and associate members. The Committee on Transport at its seventh session held on 23-25 November 2022 in Bangkok and online welcomed the Regional Plan of Action.

19. The annex to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway network – annex II bis, entitled “Asian Highway design standards for road safety” – was adopted at the seventh meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway in December 2017. As per article 8(5) of the Agreement, this new annex II bis will enter into force 12 months after two thirds of the parties to the Agreement have deposited an instrument of acceptance with the Secretary-General, either directly or through the ESCAP secretariat.⁵ The annex hasn’t entered into force as of now and those SPECA countries who haven’t done so are encouraged to take steps to accept it. ESCAP secretariat stands ready to assist in the process. The entry into force of annex II bis to the Agreement is important as it would trigger a process among member countries towards improving their local infrastructure standards to accommodate new facilities for better road safety. The regional plan of action (arena 1: road safety infrastructure) recommends revise the national road engineering and construction standards including the acceptance of the standards adopted by the annex II bis.

20. As part of its mandate to promote road safety in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP published a report on “Road safety and mobile phone use in the Asia-Pacific Region”. It can be found at: <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2022/road-safety-and-mobile-phone-use-asia-pacific-region>

21. ESCAP is one of the 14 participating UN organizations of the UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF). Currently, ESCAP is implementing six projects funded by the UNRSF, including a project entitled: “Contemporary design standards for safety, accessibility, and sustainability” is under implementation in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries. The

⁵ The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Annex II bis is available at: <https://www.unescap.org/resources/intergovernmental-agreement-asian-highway-network>

implementing partners of ESCAP are International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), Eastern Alliance for Safe and Sustainable Transport, International Road Federation, CAREC Transport Secretariat, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the European Investment Bank.

22. An effective monitoring and evaluation of progress on road safety is contingent upon accurate data systems to measure and monitor road traffic deaths, injuries, and crashes. ESCAP joined the regional initiative of a group of development organizations towards establishing the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO)⁶ as regional forum on road safety data, policies and practices across Asia and the Pacific. The objective of the Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO) is to better serve and support member countries in their concerted efforts to address road safety data related issues. As of August 2022, 27 ESCAP member countries including six SPECA countries, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan became a member of Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory (APRSO).

23. The APRSO Annual Meeting and the Regional the Road Safety Seminar will take place in Manila, Philippines from 5 to 7 December 2023. APRSO will host its administrative Annual Meeting, comprised of General Assembly (country members) and the Steering Committee meetings. The Road Safety Seminar will address key topics in road safety relevant to Asia and the Pacific, with the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP). The full 2-day program is designed to give participants a deeper understanding of effective, evidence-based interventions that can be applied towards the goals of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. This is being designed as a flagship event on the road safety calendar reaching out to a diverse body of stakeholders.

The Thematic Working Group may wish to:

- Continue their efforts to develop and implement national road safety strategies and action plans, strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation to achieve goals and targets in line with the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety as well as road safety-related SDGs.
- Consider the Economic Commission for Europe Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2030 and the Regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific for the Second Decade of Action

⁶ A list of the APRSO members can be found at: <https://www.aprso.org/about-aprso>.

for Road Safety 2021–2030 as a guiding framework for the improvement of road safety situation in their respective countries.

- Efficiently implement United Nations legal instruments on road safety.
- Consider activities under the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF).
- Ask for political support and commitment as well as scaling up of funding for road safety endeavors in the SPECA countries, including infrastructure improvements and advocacy programs.
- Build on the results of Road Safety Performance Reviews, encourage SPECA Member countries to ask for technical assistance in road safety through RSPR.
- Encourage those SPECA countries, which haven't done so, to accept the annex II bis to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway network;
- Ensure the collection of quality road safety data and request technical assistance in data collection to facilitate the regular monitoring of road safety at the national and regional levels.
- Encourage those SPECA countries, which haven't done so, to join the The Asia-Pacific Road Safety Observatory and actively participate in it activities.