



United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

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## CONFERENCE ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

24-25 November, Organized by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

### What are risks and hazards?

In everyday language, we use the term "risk" or "hazard" to refer to any event that has the potential to cause harm or damage, to people or the environment but also to property and immaterial assets.

What role does the United Nations play in making our world safer? One of the main purposes of the UN is to enable its Member States to shield their peoples from natural and other hazards.

### How does the UN discharge this function?

There is, of course, the important work of the UN Security Council to help maintain peace and restore security, and that of humanitarian agencies to relieve the suffering of populations in the face of immediate hardships. However, policy and technical work undertaken by the UN also helps mitigate material hazards.

### In what ways?

The UN guides public authorities and economic operators in developing and implementing technical regulations and standards. These tools are among the most powerful means for changing the behaviour of individuals and organizations. Sound rules, based on scientific evidence and best practice, greatly contribute to improving the safety of products and services and the stability of processes within organizations. They help



minimize the probability that things will go wrong and help minimize the impact of accidents.

### What will the Conference aim at?

It should offer assistance to:

- ▶ member States in setting up an appropriate regulatory toolbox, one that adequately protects from hazards, but does not stifle innovation and entrepreneurship;
- ▶ economic operators in improving internal control system so as to avoid accidents that may cause harm to consumers and the environment,
- ▶ implementing authorities in setting up efficient systems for controls by market-surveillance authorities and conformity-assessment bodies that minimize costs and ensure consumer safety.

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## UNECE APPEAL FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO ROAD SAFETY

Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary, urged Governments around the world to commit to road safety in an opening address delivered at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow this week.

In his message, Mr. Kubiš said:

"Improving road safety should be seen as a social contract in which participants from both public and private sectors are accountable for their respective actions and failures. Governments have a primary role to play in creating safe road traffic conditions through safe infrastructure, legislation, enforcement and education. They also have a responsibility to optimize expenditures – especially at this time of economic crisis – and reducing the number of road casualties will lower costs for their societies. Visible political commitment is key to safe roads, and visible political commitment will mobilize public support."

Road traffic casualties are a mounting problem worldwide. Low- and middle-income countries now bear the brunt of this burden with more than 90% of road traffic deaths occurring in these countries, which have less than half of the world's vehicles. The challenge has gone beyond tragic impact on human lives, through death or disability, to become a significant development and social issue. Estimates place the economic cost of road traffic crashes to between 1% and 3% of the world's gross national product.

On behalf of the five UN regional commissions, Mr. Kubiš supported an initiative to have 2011-2020 declared the "Decade of Action for Road Safety" by ministers participating in the Conference. He invited governments to implement existing agreements and conventions which provide the framework for safe roads, such as the Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals of 1968, as well as the agreements on vehicle regulations which provide safer and cleaner cars.



But good road safety policies may not be enough. The Executive Secretary stressed the importance of setting measurable targets to reduce fatalities and injuries. The implementation of these targets must in turn be monitored. A joint project between the five United Nations regional commissions which provides technical assistance on working with road safety targets found that:

- ▶ Setting targets communicates the importance of road safety
- ▶ Targets motivate stakeholders and increase accountability in achieving results



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## UNECE APPEAL FOR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO ROAD SAFETY (CONTINUED)

- ▶▶ Targets convey the message that the Government is serious about reducing road casualties
- ▶▶ Sub-national targets widen the sense of ownership by creating greater accountability, establishing more partnerships, and generating more action.

Targets raise media and public awareness and motivate politicians to support policy changes and provide resources.

Furthermore, Mr. Kubis pointed out that young people are the most vulnerable group when it comes to road traffic crashes and special attention to their needs is thus imperative.

For more information contact Virginia Tanase ([infotransport@unece.org](mailto:infotransport@unece.org)).

## HOW TO BETTER MEASURE INFLATION

Inflation is an increase in general price level and it affects both business and households. The rate of inflation determines how many goods and services can be bought for a given sum of money. Households and individuals therefore need to take inflation into account when they plan their spending. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the most commonly used measure of inflation. It is based on the average price changes of goods and services purchased by households.

The Practical Guide to Producing Consumer Price Indices is a new handbook on how to compile the CPI. It is a practical tool to help national statistical organizations improve their CPI statistics. It provides guidelines on all aspects of CPI compilation, with focus on practical solutions to the problems faced by index compilers on data collection, calculation methods and publication policy.

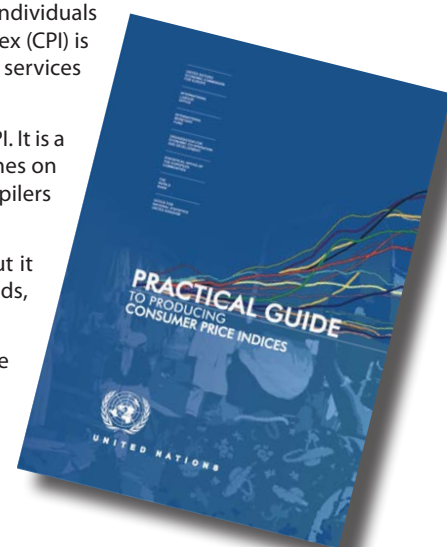
The handbook is particularly aimed at CPI compilers in less statistically developed organizations, but it is relevant to compilers in all countries. It is accompanied by a CD-ROM with interactive training aids, examples and references.

The handbook has been prepared by experts from many countries and organizations, under the auspice of the United Nations Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics. It supplements the *international Consumer Price Index Manual: Theory and Practice*, published in 2004. ■

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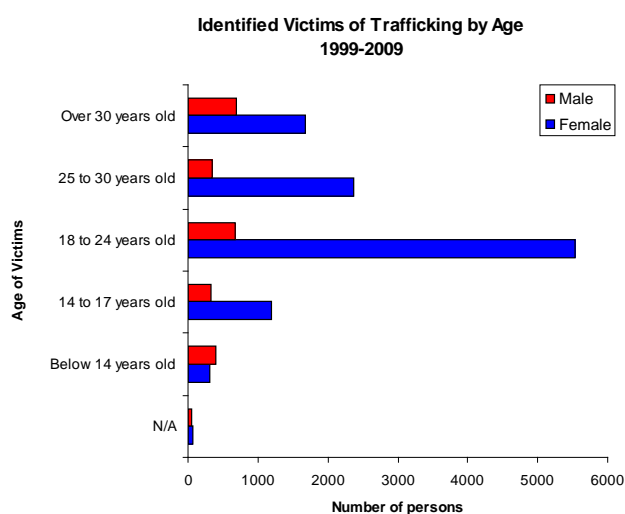
This publication and other manuals on price statistics are available at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/archive/02.07.e.htm>.

To order print copies, email the publication title and your postal address to [support.stat@unece.org](mailto:support.stat@unece.org).



## FACTS AND FIGURES

### GENDER DIMENSION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Source: IOM Global Human Trafficking Database, data presented, between January 1999 and September 2009

Trafficking in human beings is a criminal act and a severe violation of human rights, often related to gender inequality. In recent years, the media regularly focus on the trafficking of women, while giving little attention to male and child trafficking. However, apart from sexual exploitation, trafficking also includes other forms, such as labour exploitation, begging and low level criminal activity, affecting both sexes.

Data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) demonstrate that between January 1999 and September 2009, out of 13,500 globally assisted victims of trafficking, the majority were women (82%), while men accounted for 18% of the caseload. One sixth of victims of trafficking assisted by the IOM were under 18 years of age. These statistics do not represent the full scope of the problem in any country as they only reflect persons who have been identified and assisted as victims of trafficking. The relatively low proportion of males may reflect in part an observation bias, since most of existing empirical research concentrates on women.

Despite the fact that the link between trafficking and development is a complex one, it is apparent that poverty and limited social opportunities are important contributing factors to trafficking in human beings. Among direct causes are criminal syndicates' desire for profit and demand for exploited labour. ■

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