

INTERNATIONAL ROAD FEDERATION (IRF)

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IRF STATEMENT
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at the
Roundtable "Are we victims of development successes?"



This statement provides feedback from IRF and its member organisations on the issue that fatality rates due to road traffic crashes continue to rise despite the many actions that are already undertaken in the past few years to eliminate this epidemic.

Introduction

Despite of the attention that has been paid in the recent years to road safety interventions to reduce fatalities and crashes on our roads: through infrastructure, education, enforcement, it has not been enough since road traffic death rates continue to increase. And most at risk are the vulnerable road users: pedestrians, motorcyclists and cyclists, who count for half of the estimated fatalities who die in road traffic crashes every year.

Road deaths and injuries are unaffordable in every country, and in low and middle income countries they also have poverty-increasing consequences. According to the WHO, Road crashes are the leading cause of death for people aged 15-29, and the second leading cause of death for children aged 5-14.

In addition to the tremendous personal impact, road crashes cost local economies and communities an estimated 1-3% of GDP every year, equivalent to a cost of US\$2-4 billion every day. These costs directly impact the health sector, business sector, transport sector and the community.

Road deaths and injuries can be prevented. A safe road system can be designed where no road user is subject to a crash that will result in death or serious injury. This can be achieved through the provision of safe road users, in safe vehicles at safe speeds on safe roads. Many solutions are proven and ready for implementation – all that is needed is the political will and leadership to apply them on a large scale.

1. Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure projects need to have the 'road safety' component integrated into the project as well as designing and catering for the vulnerable road user.

Special attention needs to be paid to sustainable financing road safety into infrastructure projects. This can be by Road Funds, such as the Ethiopian Road Fund which allocates 3% of its funds to Road Safety; Sponsorships, PPP's just to name a few.

The IRF recommends that special attention is paid to the vulnerable road users. The road infrastructure can be adapted to them by separating the various groups of users:

- Speed management through road chicanes and speed bumps
- Dedicated motorcycle lanes,
- Separate bicycle lanes
- Side walks
- Safe crossing points (pedestrian refuges, shorter crossing distances, signalized crossings, traffic calming, shared use zones).

There are many good examples where this has been implemented. A good example to look at would be the programme developed by one of our members in the City of Tshwane, South Africa aimed at vulnerable road users, which initiated a Safe Roads Infrastructure – Guidelines for Developing Countries which have been produced.



2. Safer Vehicles:

It is important for safety standards for new vehicles to be harmonized across the globe. National legislations should actively take part in adopting these in their countries as well as supporting and encouraging making safer vehicles, identifying emerging vehicle safety technologies, as well as responsible environmental friendly solutions.

3. Behavior:

Driver education and behavioral aspects should be assumed early in order to create awareness that road safety is the responsibility of everyone and concerns everyone. Various campaigns such as wearing helmets, drinking and driving, wearing seatbelts, or avoiding talking on cellulators have already proven to diminish road fatalities in various developing countries such as in Vietnam with children and helmets, the city of Tswane in drinking and driving. We strongly recommend that the public sector teams with the private sector as many companies are already conducting road safety campaigns.

4. Enforcement:

Laws should be drafted in a way that they are both effective and enforceable. Governments should also concentrate on capacity building of their enforcement workforce and sometimes this also includes changing the perception of the community in regard to traffic enforcement to include being seen as part of education and assistance.

Bearing in mind the above, we feel that each of these four major aspects should be looked at in their context and not by applying a cut and paste solution that works in one country and expecting it to work in another without some modifications. It is important to have political will and partnerships which must engage government, business, communities and civil society to create synergy between all key stakeholders. This, coupled with an integrated approach of involving law enforcement, driver's education, new technologies, infrastructure design and capacity building, will ensure all the areas of the safe system approach are taken into account.
