



**Remarks**

**by**

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**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary**

**of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**Supporting Event on Road Safety**

**3 December 2021, 10:00 AM**

Excellencies, good morning.

Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the UN General Assembly, thank you for the invitation to make this address at such an important event.

On behalf of the five United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, it is my great honor to address the Supporting Event for the High-Level Meeting on Road Safety.

The Regional Economic Commissions have been contributing over the years to improved road safety, through our technical and legal work, road safety campaigns and initiatives aimed at raising awareness and advocating for increased political commitment to road safety. This work has been recognized by various UNGA resolutions over the years.

Yet, despite these efforts and the completion of the First Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), the world still registers 1.3 million lives lost due to road crashes annually – 90% of them in low- and middle-income countries. In addition to lives lost, 20-50 million people suffer often life-altering injuries and disabilities each year due to road crashes – a fact which resonates especially today on International Day for Persons with Disabilities.

Most recently, the Regional Commissions, hand-in-hand with the World Health Organization and the UN Road Safety Collaboration, have worked on developing the Global Plan for the Second Decade of Action on Road Safety 2021-2030. We are confident that this Global Plan provides a robust blueprint to achieve the target of halving deaths on the road by 2030.

As we embark on the next steps for implementing the Global Plan, the Special Envoy for Road Safety Jean Todt, sent out letters to ministries of Finance on behalf of the UN Road Safety Fund, to understand the scale of road safety investments in all countries. From the responses received to date, the majority of countries spent less than 1% of their national GDP on

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road safety investments, even though we know that the cost of poor road safety can be up to 6% of GDP. We also noted with concern that some countries reported a declining trend in expenditure in road safety initiatives in 2019 and 2020.

In view of the magnitude of the impact on low- and middle-income countries, business as usual cannot be an option.

Leading up to the high-level meeting on improving road safety, we must turn our collective attention towards what actions we need to build on and which actions we need to introduce as we tackle the global road safety crisis.

Despite two road safety SDGs and numbers resolutions and high-level statements and events, the political will of nations to improve global road safety have not been fully mainstreamed at the highest levels and have not been mainstreamed alongside other better-known priorities.

This is a shared responsibility, necessitating a “whole of society” and coordinated approach. Given the focus of today’s meeting on financing, I also want to emphasize the powerful role that the private sector can play as an actor of change in this regard.

Through the United Nations Road Safety Fund, created 3 years ago, there has been some important progress in this regard. However, with only USD\$18 million mobilized in its first phase 2018 – 2021, today’s launch of the UN Road Safety Fund’s first replenishment cycle for new road safety projects in 2022-2025 could not be more timely. I call for contributions to the Fund to fulfil its transformative and catalytic mission.

There is no question that investing in road safety pays off.

I realize that the COVID pandemic has shifted attention away from a number of pressing topics. We cannot afford for road safety to be one of

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them. But we risk neglecting road safety at a heavy price – a price being disproportionately paid by low- and middle-income countries.

As we prepare ourselves for the High Level Meeting in June next year, I call on us in this room and online across the globe to (1) feature road safety in domestic, international and private priorities (2) mainstream road safety in our domestic, international and private programming and initiatives, bearing in mind the interlinkages with health, economic prosperity, climate action and so many other priorities and (3) channel appropriate levels of financing in support of those priorities and programmes.

I hope that when we convene in summer for the High-Level Meeting, we will all have concrete and meaningful measures to announce in support of our joint aspirations.

Thank you.

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