



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement

by

Mr. Christian Friis Bach

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

Delivered at the

Second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety

“Time for results”

Brasilia, 18-19 November 2015

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues,

On behalf of the UNECE, it is a pleasure for me to attend this Conference and a great honour to address you this morning.

Let me express my appreciation to the Government of Brazil for organizing this important conference and for warm hospitality.

It has been emphasized again and again: Too many women, men and children die in road accidents; road crashes cause too many crippling injuries; and the human, social, and economic burden of the current global road safety situation cannot be accepted. We must do something. We must live up to our promise to cut the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents in half by 2020.

In UNECE we are more than ready to assist. Our Inland Transport Committee (ITC) has worked for 68 years to ensure that roads, vehicles and road users are as safe as possible by establishing the legal foundation for how traffic is organized across the world. The result is not less than 58 UN transport legal instruments and conventions – including many global road safety conventions.

These conventions cover a broad range of road safety issues such as road safety management, road signs and signals, internationally harmonized traffic rules, global vehicle regulations for safety, technical inspection of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods by road, road user behavior, driving times and rest periods for professional drivers, and the mutual recognition of third party liability insurance.

All these essential elements create a solid legal foundation which we call a “360 degree approach” to road safety with stronger traffic rules, safer roads and vehicles, safe handling of dangerous goods and competent drivers. We know how to do it. We know how to save lives on our roads.

As such the Inland Transport Committee has become the only existing, permanent UN intergovernmental road safety forum which focuses on improving road safety through developing and updating legal instruments. And we invite you to come.

Because the most important point I wish to make is that all these road safety instruments and agreements are not ours. They are yours. Ready to take, ready to use. They are globally available. However, once you join you need to implement and enforce the agreements. To do that, it takes political will, commitment and financial resources. I encourage you to make this crucial move.

The good news is that more and more countries do join. Since 2011, 50 governments have acceded to UN transport conventions and the total number now stands at over 1,700. 28 of the 50 accessions were to road safety conventions. Countries such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Moldova, Slovenia, Qatar, Tajikistan, Turkey and Viet Nam have acceded. This proves that they are globally applicable and useful. We need many more countries to join.

Over the next two days and the time ahead I will, together with the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt, advocate for a strong commitment from governments to accede and effectively implement the United Nations road safety conventions. It is indeed time for results.

Thank you.