

**Opening statement for the Executive Secretary**  
**United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety**  
**Geneva, 29 October 2019**

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to participate in today's United Nations Partnership Meeting for Road Safety. The Meeting is being called by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt and hosted by UNECE. You heard from him earlier and it is worth repeating some of key road safety messages.

With 1.35 million deaths per year, road safety is one of the biggest challenges of our times. To meet this challenge, we have to fulfill our respective individual roles while also collaborating and coordinating our actions. Today's meeting is in service of this goal.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Todt for his tireless efforts in promoting the UN legal instruments to enhance road safety governance throughout the world, and for his work on the UN Road Safety Fund, to ensure the availability of financial resources to improve road safety actions.

Sustainable Development Goal 3.6 calls for halving global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020.

I do not need to remind you that we are very far from achieving this target. Today, we have an opportunity to reflect on how we can accelerate progress. In 2020, we should take stock, assess what went wrong and decide on how we can do better in the future.

A few words about the UNECE. The UN Economic Commission for Europe is one of the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations. We are a technical organization with a strong and unique collection of global and regional legal frameworks on transport. These instruments are a powerful tool for sustainable development, including for road safety.

The UNECE Inland Transport Committee is the only body in the UN focused on inland transport. For over 70 years, it has provided an intergovernmental forum where countries come together to forge tools for economic cooperation, and negotiate and adopt international conventions on inland transport.

These 59 conventions are indispensable for developing safe, efficient and sustainable inland transport systems. They are legal frameworks that build safer roads and safer vehicles, and ensure that we have safe drivers. The carriage of dangerous goods by road, road traffic rules, road signs and signals, vehicle inspections and technical regulations for new vehicles are among the topics addressed by these conventions.

The UNECE encourages all governments in all regions to join these

instruments – we stand ready to support the accession process.

Of course, once the legal frameworks are in place, we need to build awareness and capacity to ensure their effective implementation.

As already mentioned, UNECE offers powerful tools for governments to assess the national road safety system, identify gaps according to the Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety, and give recommendations to address the most pressing road safety issues.

An efficient road safety system also requires financing. That brings me to my next point.

Since April 2018, the UNECE has hosted the UN Road Safety Fund.

Today, the Fund has already reached nearly 20 million dollars in pledges.

The Fund is a multi-stakeholder financing instrument bringing together UN organizations, governments, civil society, and the private sector. The focus of the Fund is on low- and middle-income countries and on projects that address key gaps in national road safety systems, with concrete institutional impacts. Five pilot projects were approved last year and are now being implemented.

I am also pleased to inform you that the Fund launched its first call for proposals on 9 October. At this time, there is 4 million dollars to be distributed for approved road safety projects having an immediate and tangible impact on road fatalities. I encourage everyone to work with the Participating UN Organizations to submit high quality, impactful

proposals. The outcome of the call will be announced at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in February 2020.

Twenty million dollars seems like a lot money, but clearly further financial pledges to the Fund are needed to scale up the impacts and to help us achieve the road safety related SDGs.

In closing, the UNECE stands ready to work with all stakeholders to enhance road safety. In this respect, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Taalas, the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization.

The weather – be it be rain, snow, fog or extreme temperatures – affects the behavior of road users, vehicles and roads. In other words, it affects road safety. I hope Mr. Taalas will tell us how we can better incorporate the weather risks into UNECE’s road safety work, as we seek to address road traffic injuries.

Thank you.