

Results of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety

(Note by the secretariat)

The present document, prepared by the secretariat, presents the results of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow, 19 to 20 November 2009.

Upon the request of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee at its 30 November-1 December 2009 meeting this document was circulated to the seventy-second session of the Committee for information.

The Moscow Declaration adopted by the conference participants, which invites the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety and other conference information are available at the websites of the UNECE and of the Ministerial Conference: <http://www.unece.org/trans/events/2009/moscow09.html>.and <http://www.1300000.net/>.

This document is a reproduction of informal document No.5 distributed at the seventy-second session of the Inland Transport Committee.

I. RESULTS OF THE FIRST GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY

1. The First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety was hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation, on 19-20 November 2009. Welcomed by the General Assembly, the event offered a historic opportunity to raising the political profile of global road traffic safety crisis and make progress on tackling a leading cause of death and disability. According to the organizers as many as 1500 participants, including ministers and high level delegates from 150 countries, representatives of United Nations and United Nations agencies, international governmental and non governmental organizations, civil society and private companies attended the conference, which was addressed by President Dmitry Medvedev.
2. Participants called for action to address the large and growing global impact of road traffic crashes; reviewed progress made; and shared information and good practices on road safety. The Conference culminated with the adoption of the Moscow Declaration, which inter alia invites the General Assembly to declare a Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.
3. Rashid Nurgaliev, Minister of Internal Affairs, Russian Federation, Sergei Ordzhonikidze, Director-General, UNOG (on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General), Anarfi Asamoah-Baah, Deputy Director-General, WHO, Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary (on behalf of all the five regional commissions), Lord George Robertson, Chairman, Commission for Global Road Safety and Jamal Saghir, Director, World Bank were among speakers at the official opening.
4. In his address to the Conference participants, President Medvedev emphasised that the annual damage to the global economy from the road traffic crashes runs into US\$ 500 millions and called on the international community to rally around the problem of road safety and treat it with the same urgency as they have done so with the global financial crisis. He acknowledged that similarly to the vast majority of the countries, Russia has a major road safety crisis that he is committed to solve. In his outlined programme one of the key elements was to stop corruption at the traffic police.
5. In his message to the conference, delivered by Mr. Sergei Ordzhonikidze, the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon emphasized the United Nations initiatives to improve road safety as part of the broader development efforts; acknowledged the organizations' UN critical role in raising, mobilizing support and fostering cooperation to address the road safety crisis; stressed the significant regional and international initiatives undertaken by the United Nations system under the umbrella of the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration led by the World Health Organization and the Regional Commissions; and called on governments, vehicle manufacturers, public and private donors, NGOs and experts to work together towards tangible goals such as safer roads and vehicles, and greater investment in preventing traffic injuries.
6. Mr. Kubiš, speaking on behalf of all the United Nations Regional Commissions, stressed the severe consequences of road traffic crashes, in particular to low-and-middle income countries, and supported the Decade of Action for Road Safety. He also invited governments to implement existing road safety related UNECE agreements and conventions and stressed the importance of setting measurable targets to reduce fatalities and injuries. Moreover, he highlighted the main results of a UNDA funded project, which was jointly implemented by the five United Nations regional commissions; emphasized that young people are the most vulnerable group when it comes to road traffic crashes; and provided information on the UNECE related initiatives and future plans.

7. In two plenary sessions held during the first day, ministers from countries around the world and high ranking officers from international organizations discussed on traffic crashes as a development issue and presented good practices in road safety. During the second day, seven parallel road safety panel discussions were organized on policy frameworks; health sector's contribution; safe road users; safe road infrastructure, safe vehicles; and data for road safety. UNECE was well represented in these panels since WP.1 Chair and WP.29 vice-Chair were among the panel discussants, whilst the Director of UNECE Transport Division was the moderator of one of the panels.

8. At the closing part of the conference, participants adopted the Moscow Declaration. The Declaration invites the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2011-2020 as the "Decade of Action for Road Safety" with the noble goal to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of global road deaths by 2020.

9. Other UNECE activities during the conference included:

a. a joint United Nations regional commissions' stand displaying road safety related promotional materials. UNECE distributed a CD ROM prepared by the secretariat for the event that includes inter alia the just revised road safety resolution (R.E. 1 and R.E. 2), the summary of the final report on the implementation of the UNDA funded road safety targets setting project, the Conventions on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals, of 1969, etc. .

b. a regional commissions' transport coordination meeting and also a special session on road safety cooperation, during which an agreement was reached: (i) to continue close coordination of all transport related activities, with more focus placed on those overlapping areas that are among the first three priority issues of the regional commissions; (ii) to consider potential follow up to the current UNDA road safety project; and (iii) to gear up the implementation of the UNDA funded new project on global warming and transport.

c. numerous bilateral meetings and discussions with participating ministers and fellow international organisations.

d. a presentation by the secretariat about road safety legal instruments and the planned workshop to be held in New Delhi by UNECE in cooperation with the Government of India and the Institute for Road Traffic Education at a side event organised by the ASEAN countries.

10. It is worth noting that a travel fund had been established under WHO management with financial assistance of the governments of Australia, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, FIA Foundation and the World Bank to support travel and per diem costs of two government representatives from each of the 49 lowest-income economies.

11. In the course of the conference Minister Paul Clark, announced that the UK government has assigned 1.5 million pounds to the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility in support of the global road safety activities. In addition, a day before the conference, Michael R. Bloomberg had announced that it would donate US\$125 million to support projects aimed at reducing deaths and injuries on world's roads (the recent WHO publication entitled Global Status Report was also issued with Bloomberg's financial support amounting to US \$ 9 million).

II. CONCLUSIONS

12. The First Global Ministerial Conference on Road safety offered a historic opportunity to raise the political profile of global road traffic safety crisis and make progress on tackling a leading cause of death and disability.

13. The adoption of the Moscow Declaration, which invites General Assembly to declare a Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, if associated with adequate funding and political commitment for action, may mark a new era in addressing global road safety crisis.

14. UNECE has been well positioned in the conference. The visibility of its work has been positively boosted. The active involvement of the secretariat and the support given to the organizers through the international consultative committee produced tangible results and has been recognized.

15. Given the extraordinary challenge – over the past year UNECE staff involved has contributed to this global event, through additional efforts and work in excess of traditional secretariat job to a reformed WP.1 and intensified partnerships building by stretching resources – it is no longer sustainable.

16. To ensure both proper follow up to the Moscow conference and involvement in the implementation of the Declaration, as well as to take the opportunity given by the global event to re-position UNECE on the global road safety map, extra-budgetary resources will be needed. Today one P4, one P3 and one G4 staff are assigned to deal with the broad agenda of road safety, AETR, road transport (including a new agreement on road passenger transport) and road infrastructure.

17. Extra-budgetary solutions may be ensured through project related activities that would help the secretariat following up the Moscow results in areas of UNECE traditional competence, as well as for a new L staff that would need to be assigned to the road safety unit in the Transport Division.

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