

≡ MAKE ROADS SAFE

NEWS RELEASE

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5 million lives must be saved on the world's roads by 2020

UN 'Decade of Action' needed as death rates set to double

Governments in all countries must combat the world's fastest growing public health emergency by committing to a road safety 'Decade of Action' which would save 5 million lives and prevent 50 million serious injuries, says a new report by the Commission for Global Road Safety launched today (5).

A coordinated UN action plan for road safety is urgently needed with road crashes set to become the leading cause of disability and premature death for children aged 5-14 across developing countries by 2015.

Make Roads Safe campaign ambassador, movie actor Michelle Yeoh, today joins Ministers from developing countries, senior UN and World Bank figures, and celebrities including F1 driver Felipe Massa, at the report launch in Rome to highlight the hidden epidemic of road traffic injuries and to urge UN action on road safety.

The 'Make Roads Safe' report, endorsed by the world's leading road safety experts, urges UN governments attending the first ever global governmental conference on road safety in Moscow in November, to support a 'Decade of Action for Road Safety' between 2010-2020. During the Decade the international community should invest in a \$300 million action plan to catalyse traffic injury prevention and re-focus national road safety policies and budgets.

Road crashes already kill more people in the developing world than malaria, at an economic cost of up to \$100 billion a year, equivalent to all overseas aid from OECD countries:

- More than one million people are killed on the roads of developing countries every year, and tens of millions are injured, a toll set to double by 2030. Road crashes are already the leading global cause of death for young people aged 10-24;
- Road crashes have now overtaken malaria as a major killer in developing countries;
- They are forecast to be the number one cause of disability and premature death for children aged 5-14 in developing countries by 2015, according to WHO projections.

To tackle this growing epidemic, the Commission for Global Road Safety makes a number of key recommendations:

- The UN should approve a ‘Decade of Action for Road Safety’ and governments should collectively commit to reducing the forecast 2020 level of road deaths by 50% (from 1.9 million to below 1 million a year). It would have a similar status to the current UN Decade to Roll Back Malaria;
- Achieving the 2020 target could save up to 5 million lives and prevent 50 million serious injuries – a \$300 million international fund should be established to encourage and support road safety interventions;
- Interim targets and strategies should be established to promote 100% helmet and seat belt use in every country by 2020, together with other road safety interventions;
- The World Bank, regional development banks and other donors should dedicate at least 10% of their road investment budgets to road safety;
- The UN Secretary General should appoint a UN Special Envoy for Road Safety to raise the profile of the issue.

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, Chairman of the Commission for Global Road Safety, said:

“Five million lives are at stake over the coming decade. We have the tools and the vaccines to save these lives. Now we need the international community to demonstrate the political will to succeed. The forthcoming ministerial meeting in Moscow can be the turning point marking a new direction for global road safety. We must respond to this preventable epidemic with urgency and determination.”

Michelle Yeoh, Make Roads Safe Global Ambassador, said:

“Over the past year I have traveled in many countries and seen the terrible impact that a lack of basic road safety can have on people’s lives. A child is killed or maimed on the roads every thirty seconds. These tragedies are so sad, and so unnecessary, because we have the ability to prevent this. It is time for the talking to stop. It is time for real action to make roads safe.”

Felipe Massa said:

“We must do more to tackle road traffic injuries, the biggest killer of young people around the world. By promoting seat belt and helmet use, enforcing drink driving and speeding, and improving road and vehicle design we can really make a difference. I am pleased to support the Make Roads Safe campaign and the call for a Decade of Action for road safety.”

Karla González, Minister of Public Works and Transportation of Costa Rica, said:

Road infrastructure safety conditions should be a priority for governments. We must pay particular attention to vulnerable road users, like cyclists and pedestrians, who are in great danger while going to their schools or work. We need an inclusive approach to our infrastructure design since we face the highest rates of mortality.”

ENDS

Note to Editors:

The Commission for Global Road Safety was established by the FIA Foundation to examine the framework for, and level of, international cooperation on road safety, and to make policy recommendations. One key recommendation for a first ever Ministerial-level global conference on road safety, has already been adopted by the UN General Assembly.

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