



News Release

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Multi – million dollar fund to combat hidden epidemic of road crashes

International Road Safety meeting in London

A Global Road Safety Facility is announced today by the World Bank and the FIA Foundation to combat the 1.2 million annual deaths from road traffic injuries.

The Global Facility receives an initial donation of \$5 million from the World Bank, \$5 million from the FIA Foundation and €1 million from the Dutch Government.

The Global Facility, which will be managed by the World Bank, aims to generate increased funding and technical assistance for global, regional and country level initiatives designed to enable low and middle income countries to implement their own road safety programmes.

The ultimate objective of the Global Road Safety Facility is to catalyze an accelerated reduction in road deaths and injuries in developing countries. More than 2.5 million lives could be saved and 200 million injuries avoided if fatality rates in poorer countries were reduced by a further 30% by 2020.

The announcement coincides with a meeting in London this week, hosted by the FIA Foundation, of a new UN taskforce to develop a response to the hidden epidemic of road crashes:

The United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, coordinated by the World Health Organisation and including key UN agencies, the World Bank, several governments and road safety NGOs, is formulating an action plan to tackle a largely ignored epidemic of road fatalities and injuries, more than 80% of which occur in less developed countries. Delegates will be addressed by UK Road Safety Minister Dr Stephen Ladyman MP.

The hidden epidemic of road traffic injuries:

- 1.2 million people are killed in road traffic crashes every year. This toll is forecast to double by 2020;
- Fifty million people worldwide are injured by road crashes each year;
- More than 80% of those killed in road crashes live in middle and low income countries;
- Road crashes are estimated to cost between 1-5% of a country's GDP. For developing countries this cost is more than all development aid received*;

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- Road crashes are the second leading cause of death for young men, behind HIV/AIDS.

David Ward, Director General of the FIA Foundation, said:

“The FIA Foundation is proud to support the establishment of this new Global Facility in partnership with the World Bank and the Government of the Netherlands. This initiative will alert governments to the need for urgent coordinated action to prevent a global catastrophe. Will the international community really stand back and allow millions to be killed and maimed every year, when we already have available the solutions and tools to prevent this hidden epidemic which causes so much poverty and human misery?”

Maryvonne Plessis-Fraissard, Transport Director of the World Bank, said:

“The road safety gap between poor and rich countries is widening. Road crashes disproportionately devastate the poor and their consequences can plunge families into poverty. We have established the Facility to support new measures that will address this global priority and help reverse the forecast trends. Achieving the goals and objectives of the Facility will require sustained commitment. We are now calling for additional support from our partners in the donor community to work with us to implement the Facility and to grow and consolidate its longer term operations.”

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Note to Editors:

1. The Global Road Safety Facility’s mission is to ‘generate increased funding and technical assistance for global, regional and country level initiatives designed to accelerate and scale-up the efforts of low and middle income countries to build their scientific, technological and managerial capacities to prepare and implement cost-effective road safety programmes’. The Facility will be managed by the World Bank in Washington D.C. The World Bank is committing \$5 million over three years to the Facility; the FIA Foundation is providing \$5 million over five years. The Government of the Netherlands is contributing €1 million;
2. The FIA Foundation is an independent, UK registered charity working on international road safety. The FIA Foundation is a major donor to global road safety and is active in road safety advocacy around the world;
3. The World Bank recently estimated road crash costs in developing countries at \$100 billion. Costs for road traffic crashes include direct costs, such as medical care, property damage and insurance administration; and indirect costs including property damage, delays on the roads, loss of earnings, lost productivity and environmental costs. Because of under reporting of road injuries and lack of data in many countries, all figures are best estimates.

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