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STATUS OF ROAD SAFETY IN ASIA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Road traffic injuries and fatalities are major social, economic, health and development problem. Therefore, there is a continuing need to place road safety high on global, regional and national agenda and enhance coordination at global, regional and national level while planning and implementing measures for improving road safety.

2. The document provides an overview of the global and regional road safety status and outlines regional efforts towards improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific. It also highlights some regional experiences on improving road safety based on Country Status Reports on Road Safety, 2009 received from member States.

II. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ROAD SAFETY SCENARIO

3. Road traffic accidents kill an estimated 1.3 million people and injure 50 million people per year globally, and global road fatalities are forecast to reach 1.9 million by

2020.^a As they account for more deaths than malaria, road traffic accidents can be considered no less than a global pandemic.

4. It is estimated that the number of deaths from road accidents in Asia is about 700,000 per year, accounting for more than half of the world's road fatalities. By 2020 it is estimated that two thirds of the world's road fatalities will occur in this region. Together, China and India accounted for more than half of the reported number of road fatalities in the ESCAP region in 2007.^b This means that the already unacceptable high number of road accidents, with their cost in human lives, will increase even further if sufficient progress is not made in improving road safety.

5. Motorization rates range widely in the ESCAP region (the number of private cars per 1,000 persons ranges from 3 to 618). Two- and three-wheelers constitute more than two thirds of all motorized vehicles in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. However, the comparatively larger impact of road accidents on vulnerable groups in ESCAP developing countries is not due merely to a different vehicle mix; it is also a systemic issue in which accidents disproportionately impact on lower income groups and younger people.

6. The global vehicle population has topped 1.3 billion; in Asia, the total was 569 million (43 per cent of the global population) in 2007^c. The vehicle population in China reached 160 million in 2007, and China has become the second largest automobile market and third largest automobile manufacturing country in the world.^d

^a Commission for Global Road Safety, *Make Roads Safe: A Decade of Action for Road Safety* (London, Commission for Global Road Safety, 2009).

^b Based on data from the World Health Organization (WHO), *Global Status Report on Road Safety: Time for Action* (Geneva, WHO, 2009), table A2.

^c Based on data from the World Health Organization (WHO), *Global Status Report on Road Safety: Time for Action* (Geneva, WHO, 2009), table A2.

^d Wei Zhang and others, "Road safety in China: challenges and opportunities", Report No. UMTRI-2008-1, Transportation Research Institute, University of Michigan, 2008.

7. In many parts of developing Asia, encroachment onto the right-of-way is a common problem. After a road is developed, many people move in looking for business opportunities, thereby creating ribbon development along the roads. Pedestrians, bicycles, pushcarts, motorcycles, cars and trucks compete for road space and thus create serious safety problems.

8. The nature of road safety issues in ESCAP developing countries differs significantly from that in developed countries. In Asia, most of those killed or injured in road accidents are vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and motorcyclists. In South Asian countries, typically more than 50 per cent of all road fatalities are pedestrians^e. In East Asian and South-East Asian countries, more than two thirds of the victims are motorcyclists. In contrast, in North and Central Asia the mix in terms of casualties is similar to that of members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). All the developing ESCAP countries have higher fatality rates than OECD countries.

9. In order to create road safety awareness and commitment at the highest level, the United Nations General Assembly through its resolutions has called for increased attention and resources to be directed towards improving global road safety, and stresses the need for enhanced international cooperation. The most recent resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 on improving global road safety proclaimed the period 2011–2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety, with a goal to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels and among other encourages Member States to continue to strengthen their commitment to road safety.

III. ESCAP ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES

10. Road safety has always been high on ESCAP agenda. Road safety issues got more prominence after adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Improving Road Safety in

^e E/ESCAP/CTR/4

Asia and the Pacific Region, by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan in 2006. The declaration has overall objective of saving 600,000 lives and preventing a commensurate number of serious injuries on the roads of Asia and the Pacific over the period 2007 to 2015.

11. Thereafter, the secretariat organized three regional expert group meetings on road safety in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The secretariat has also been actively participating in United Nations Road Safety Collaboration meetings and participated in the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety held in Moscow in 2009.

12. The first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport (FAMT) in Bangkok in December 2009, requested the secretariat to organize regional road safety meetings to consider the implementation of the Moscow Declaration, as well as to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts to set road safety goals, targets and indicators through networking among national and subregional organizations.

13. Thereafter, at its 66th Commission Session in Incheon, Republic of Korea, the secretariat adopted resolution 66/6 of 19 May 2010 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific. This resolution reaffirms the importance of addressing global road safety as a public policy issue of major concern as well as the need to further strengthen regional cooperation, taking into account the needs of low-income and middle-income countries, including those of the least developed countries.

14. With a view to create regional road safety awareness the secretariat is implementing a project “Achieving road safety goals and targets for Asia and the Pacific: Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020)” to assist member States in developing and implementing their national road safety strategy, action plan, goals and targets to be achieved by 2020 in line with the Decade of Action.

15. The main activities of the project include: (i) organization of regional expert group meeting to develop regional road safety goals, targets and indicators for the Decade; (ii)

organization of national workshops and advisory services to assist member countries in developing road safety strategies, and setting or refining national road safety goals and targets; and (iii) establishment of a web-based road safety network to encourage partnerships and monitor achievements at the regional and national levels.

16. The project builds on the outcome of the United Nations Development Account project entitled “Improving Global Road Safety: Setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets”. The project also envisages the extension of the target year of the ESCAP Road Safety Goals, Targets and Indicators from 2015 to 2020 in line with General Assembly resolution 64/255.

17. In 2009, the secretariat undertook missions to Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal and Sri Lanka to assist these member States in organizing national road safety workshops. In August 2010, the secretariat undertook a similar mission to Mongolia. The secretariat is planning to undertake advisory missions to developing member countries to assist in developing national road safety strategies and action plan and provide support in organizing national workshops with participation of all stakeholders involved in the area of road safety.

IV. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT BY MEMBER STATES AGAINST ESCAP ROAD SAFETY GOALS, TARGETS AND INDICATORS, 2007-2015

18. Over the past three to four years, all of the ESCAP member States have implemented road safety efforts according to their respective resources and seen gains as a result. The following paragraphs attempt to provide a basic summary of some of the key gains based on the information provided by member States from earlier reports^f and in their 2009 Country Status Reports.

19. Many member States have introduced national road safety actions and targets over prescribed timeframes. They include Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India,

^f <http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/roadsafety/RoadSafetyIndicators.asp>

Indonesia, Japan, Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam.

20. The national actions and targets of Bhutan and Indonesia are substantially based on the ESCAP road safety goals, targets and indicators. Mongolia and Nepal are well progressed towards developing national strategies, whilst Cambodia is in the progress of refining its existing national action plan. Two member States, the Philippines and Thailand are developing new national road safety strategies covering 2011 to 2020.

21. Many member States have also either designated or have announced plans to designate a lead road safety agency to coordinate and oversee the implementation of national road safety activities. They are Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey and Viet Nam.

22. Road safety audits are carried out in Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Japan, Lao, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. Blackspot programs are in place in Armenia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal and Republic of Korea. Vehicle inspections are also mandatory in Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand.

23. In addition, laws on the usage of seat-belts and helmets are in place in Armenia, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Drink-driving laws are also enforced in Armenia, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

24. Significantly, at the time of the preparation of this paper, more than 50 per cent of the ESCAP members who had provided 2009 country status reports, reflected either a

stabilization or a decrease in fatality rates from road accidents when comparing 2009 and 2007 statistics.

Table 1: Progress in reducing casualty in road accidents in selected member States

<i>ESCAP member States</i>	<i>Number of road fatalities</i>			<i>Fatality rates per 10,000 motor vehicles</i>	
	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>Average change per year</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>
Armenia	371	325	-6.2%	10.11	Not provided
Bangladesh	3,749	2,958	-10.5%	Not provided	Not provided
Bhutan	111	78	-14.9%	31.09	Not provided
Kazakhstan	4,714	2,898	-19.3%	15.18	Not provided
Kyrgyzstan	1,214	1,005	-8.6%	38.11	Not provided
Malaysia	6,282	6,218	-0.5%	3.73	3.55
Philippines	1,185	1,115	-3.0%	2.15	Not provided
Russian Federation	35,972	27,659	-11.6%	9.30	Not provided
Thailand	12,492	10,717	-7.1%	4.88	Not provided
Turkey	5,004	Not provided		3.84	2.969

25. In particular, as shown in Table 1 during 2008-2009, Kazakhstan reported an average yearly reduction in road fatalities by 19.3%; Bhutan 15%; the Russian Federation 11.6%; Bangladesh 10.5%; Thailand 7.1%; and Armenia 6.2%. This demonstrates that it is feasible to achieve very significant reductions in road fatalities in a short period of time if there is commitment and sustained effort by a member State government and other national road safety stakeholders.

26. However, in some countries road fatalities are increasing though at a somewhat slower rate. During 2007-2009, as shown in Table 2, the road safety status reports of Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Tajikistan show increase in fatality rate varies from 1.5 to 6.7 per year.

Table 2: Casualty in road accidents in selected member States

<i>ESCAP member States</i>	<i>Number of road fatalities</i>			<i>Fatality rates per 10,000 motor vehicles</i>	
	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>Average change per year</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>
Cambodia	1,545	1,717	5.6%	Not provided	
India	105,725	119,860	6.7%	Not provided	

Indonesia	16,548	18,205	5.0%	Not provided
Tajikistan	464	478	1.5%	Not provided

V. SELECTED COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ROAD SAFETY ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES

27. Amongst other ongoing road safety initiatives as reported in previous years, the following member States in their 2009 country status reports have advised of recent new or extended road safety action. Table 3 summarizes selected examples extracted from the country status reports. This is not a complete listing of all initiatives undertaken by the relevant member State.

Table 3: Selected country-specific road safety activities and experiences

<i>ESCAP member States</i>	<i>Recent action as reported in 2009 Country Status Reports</i>
Armenia	A national road safety strategy and five year action plan was launched in August 2009 with an aim of reducing the number of road fatalities by 10 per cent over five years.
Bangladesh	Current overall road safety target is a 50% reduction in road traffic accidents within 25 years.
Bhutan	Road safety equipment including traffic batons, breath analyzers and speed guns were procured. Additional new motorcycles and manpower for increased highway inspection have also been funded.
Cambodia	The draft second National Action Plan 2011-2020 has the goal of reducing the fatality rate per 10,000 registered vehicles to 4.5 in 2020 (which is a 30% reduction in the absolute number of fatalities). Road safety curriculum training for lower secondary school teachers was introduced in 20 provinces, and extended to 24 provinces for primary schools. Funding was allocated towards road safety initiatives including through private partnerships.
India	The Government endorsed a holistic National Road Safety Policy which outlines policy initiatives at all levels to improve road safety. Minimum standards for child restraints in cars were prescribed.
Indonesia	Continued rollout of an accident investigation training program (360 participants in 12 provinces) and road safety audit training (510

	<p>participants in 17 provinces). The Government allocated 150 billion rupiahs (approximately USD 16.6 million) towards road safety. A dedicated website with national road safety and impact evaluation reports was established.</p>
Kazakhstan	<p>Acceleration of the Young Inspectors' Movement in 85% of Kazakhstan public schools. In 2009, the Government carried out 9,377 road audits covering 336,854 kilometres, installed 181 new traffic lights and repaired/upgraded 455 traffic lights. A road safety database to record and analyze road accidents has been planned for 2011.</p>
Kyrgyzstan	<p>The Government has approved an Action Program for road safety for the period 2009-2011. However due to the current social and political situation, the program has been suspended indefinitely. In 2009, road security officers identified 144,860 seat belt violations and 15,699 drink driving violations. 3,189 drivers were charged for speeding offences, an additional 948 are still under investigation.</p>
Malaysia	<p>Remedial measures are being carried out on 30 black spot hazardous areas in 2010 and the motorcycle lane program continues to be implemented.</p>
Mongolia	<p>The Mongolian Government is considering a longer term road safety action plan beyond its current yearly action plans. By October 2010, it will have identified and analyzed 10 blackspots. At the same time, it will be conducting a national conference. The Government is also currently undertaking a study on preventing accidents involving secondary school students.</p>
Philippines	<p>The new Road Safety Action Plan 2011-2020 aims to reduce road accident casualties by 50%.</p>
Russian Federation	<p>Legislation on drink driving was introduced. 110 new elevated and underground crossings were constructed and safety barriers installed in seven road accident-prone sections. The Government also purchased technical equipment and specialized vehicles for road safety surveillance, and launched multiple public awareness campaigns under the motto "Respectful driving".</p>
Sri Lanka	<p>In 2009, the Government allocated USD 77.57 million towards road safety initiatives, and increased the allocation to USD 100 million in</p>

	2010. A National Road Safety Policy has been prepared, and road safety awareness campaigns and training programs including driver training, traffic safety education for school children and general public awareness programs were carried out.
Tajikistan	The Road Safety Program for 2009-2013 has the overall aim of preventing the loss of lives of citizens from road accidents.
Thailand	A new overall road safety target of a 50 per cent decrease of deaths per 100,000 population within the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) and a short term target of decreasing the death rate to 14.15 deaths per 100,000 population to be achieved by 2012.
Turkey	Road safety targets according to Turkey's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan includes improving the conditions of black spots where traffic accidents heavily occur; generalizing smart transport systems to ensure efficient utilization of existing road infrastructure; and speeding up traffic engineering practices which increase road safety on Turkish roads. Targeted campaigns on cell phone usage, restraint systems, speed, pedestrian safety and red light violations were also carried out. 87 black spots and sections were improved and a further 130 high risk road sections requiring treatment identified.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

28. Road safety is an important issue for Asia. Unacceptable high numbers of road fatalities and injuries are occurring in Asia. The situation will worsen further if coordinated actions are not planned and implemented to improve road safety.

29. It is encouraging to see that many member States have planned and implemented road safety activities according to their respective resources. For example, some countries have introduced national road safety actions and targets with prescribed timeframes; designated a lead road safety agency; passed laws on the usage of seat-belts, helmets and drink-driving; and carry out road safety audits and vehicle inspections as part of their national road safety actions. Whilst the progress made by these member

countries is encouraging, more targeted programmes and activities are still required in other countries. There is always more that can be done in the area of road safety.

30. It is encouraged that a good way forward would be for member States to:

1. aspire towards a 50 per cent reduction in road fatalities for 2011-2020;
2. continue to develop coordinated national road safety strategies and action plans which contain:
 - a. quantifiable and qualitative goals and targets with clear timeframes; and
 - b. responsibilities for the lead road safety agency and relevant road safety stakeholders; and
3. commit more resources to implement the Decade of Action for Road Safety.