

Discussion of Regional Road Safety Issues for the Second UN Stakeholders Forum— February 27, 2007

The discussion of the Stakeholders Forum focused on reports from the 5 UN regions to highlight the principal road safety accomplishments, assess the road safety needs, and identify the high-burden countries in each region. These key questions will be distributed before the forum and information collected from each region will be compiled and distributed.

- 1. What is the biggest problem in road safety facing your country/region?**
(Identify your country and region, and please be clear if you are replying about the country or region or both. Also, please give examples or descriptions that use qualitative data and stories to make your points clearly and effectively.)
- 2. What are some of the biggest accomplishments in road safety you would have seen in your country/region?** Using the framework of the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention*, in which category is there the biggest gap between what is recommended and what you have been able to accomplish?
- 3. What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the physical road infrastructure and infrastructure policy in your region?** Would the recommendation of the Robertson Commission's *Make Road Safe* report to allocate 10% of road safety infrastructure investment to safety be useful for your country?
- 4. What do you need to turn the Road Traffic Injury epidemic around in your country/region?** For which types of assistance offered by the Global Road Safety Facility do you have the greatest need?
- 5. As we move forward with a Global Action Plan—a plan that builds on the World Report, the report of the Commission on Global Road Safety, the UN Resolutions—what should this plan address so that it will be most helpful to your country and region?**

Those who answered the questions at this meeting were:

Europe—Christopher Smith, Marie-Noëlle Poirier

- Transport Division, UNECE
- **Asia Pacific**—Alex Rohrle, Transport & Tourism Division, UNESCAP
- **Africa**—Marie Therese _____, Regional Integration Section, UNECA
- **Western Asia**—Bassam Anani, First Economic Affairs Officer, Transport Team, UNESCWA
- **Americas**—Ricardo Sanchez, Economic Affairs Officer, Division of Natural Resources and Infrastructure, UNECLAC

The UN regions are large and heterogeneous—and do not correspond to WHO or World Bank regions or political divisions—so it is hard to paint a simple picture that describes all the countries of any single region. Panelists tried to give a meaningful impression of the range of answers that might be found within their region, focusing on the low- and middle-income countries with the largest road traffic injury burdens. They focused on two questions and tried to give examples or descriptions that use qualitative data and stories to make their points clearly and effectively:

- 1. What is the biggest problem in road safety facing your country/region?**

ECA (Marie Therese): In Africa the biggest problem is to get the country to include road safety issues as a priority area in their national development agenda and get it implemented.

ECLAC (Ricardo): There is a lack of focus and continuity in planning for road safety, a lack of consistent leadership, and inadequate funding. There is no political will, there is poor design and maintenance of infrastructure, and no enforcement of road and driving behavior for speed and alcohol.

ESCAP (Alex): The biggest problem we have in the region—a huge region that includes Nepal, China, Afghanistan, and Japan—is getting road safety to be seen not as one commodity but as a development issue. There are problems with governance so that the system that evolves is a mixture of private sector financing and local initiatives that gets created without the input of knowledgeable engineers who are actually there. In addition, intersectoral collaboration is hard when ministers are from opposing parties who are trying to compromise each other.

ECE (Chris): There is a wide range of differences among the 56 member countries of UNECE, but one general problem is the lack of political engagement and failure to make road safety a priority.

ESCWA (Bassam): My sense is that our biggest problems are inadequate infrastructure and driver behavior together with weak enforcement of traffic laws.

2. What are some of your regions biggest accomplishments and where is the biggest gap between what is recommended in the World Report and what has been accomplished?

We thought there was a way to get the quantifiable objectives but thought it would be useful to do assessments and report on qualitative review. Answers are predictable and what is your conclusion. If we put the most important thing for region into action plan what would that be. What would you like to see a plan cover?

Ricardo: The biggest gap is in the area of leadership and implementation. Our record of road safety accomplishments is poor because knowledge is not enough without the political will to implement effective road safety programs. Implementation is key and we need to be sharing knowledge about effective implementation with countries that have been successful.

Marie: We have learned some things about specific technical aspects of road safety, like data collection, but we lack a coherent political approach to the problem of road safety. In Accra we took a significant step forward by bringing stakeholders together with all the pertinent governmental sectors, and it was the first time these people were talking the same language and saying what they would want to see in road safety.

Alex: In Asia Pacific there is amazing thing happening because a tremendous number of people are being lifted out of poverty and economic decisions are now starting to be made that take into account the impact on the environment and society. Not all of the countries have succeeded in this economic growth but they will follow the leading examples if these countries can change the paradigm to “green growth” which takes the environment and safety into account. They are trying to convince policymakers that they can’t have growth without attention to human factors.