

## GLOBAL STATUS REPORT ON ROAD SAFETY

### INTERVIEW WITH DR ETIENNE KRUG

#### 1. Why did you prepare the Global status report on road safety?

Road traffic crashes kill more than 1.2 million people every year around the world, but so far there has been no assessment of how much progress countries are making on addressing this issue. This is the first *Global status report on road safety* which describes, for every country, the types of legislation in place, the enforcement level as well as the impact of road traffic crashes in those countries.

#### 2. What are the main findings of the Global status report on road safety?

The *Global status report on road safety* shows very clearly that road traffic crashes continue to be a major global public health problem, with 1.2 million people killed every year and almost 50 million a year injured. It also shows a huge inequality: we found in the survey that almost half of the people dying in road traffic crashes are people walking, on bicycles or motorcycles, not people inside cars. We also found that a large proportion, over 90% of people dying on the roads, are dying in low and middle-income countries, while those countries have less than half the vehicles in the world. Another important finding is that legislation, which is a very important tool to address road traffic deaths and injuries, is not in place. Less than 15% of the countries in the world have comprehensive legislation on seatbelts, motorcycle helmets, speed, drink-driving and child restraints. In addition, in most countries, when there is legislation - comprehensive or not - enforcement is weak. We don't find many countries reporting that their enforcement is up to the highest standards. And finally, we also found a huge gap in the information. Most countries don't really know how big the problem really is and what it costs them in economic terms.

#### 3. Why are pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists so vulnerable on the world's roads?

This survey shows that 46% of people dying on the roads are pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. Those people are travelling on the road without the protective "shell" of a car. What has happened is that over the last decade, we have developed our transport policies with the car in mind. We are making roads for cars. We are making travelling by car much easier, but we are forgetting pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. Those are now the ones who are more often getting killed, injured and disabled on our roads.

#### 4. What did you learn about road safety legislation and enforcement?

We found that last 15% of countries have comprehensive laws which address all five key risk factors; which are speed, drink-driving, motorcycle helmets, seatbelts and child restraints. We know for example that speed limits in urban areas shouldn't exceed 50 km/h and local authorities should be able to reduce them. Less than one third of countries have this type of legislation in place. We know that the risk of a crash decreases considerably when blood-alcohol concentration limits are reduced to 0.04 g/dl. Less than half of the countries in the world have actually done that. Again, the evidence is not matched by the existing legislation. We know that motorcycle helmets can reduce the risks of death by 40% and of severe injury by over 70%. 40% of the countries have a comprehensive law and motorcycle helmet

standards in place, which means 60% of countries don't. And finally we know that wearing a seatbelt can reduce the risk of death by up to 50% for front seat passengers and by up to 75% for rear seat passengers. Only half of the countries in the world require both front and rear seat passengers to wear seatbelts.

## **5. What does WHO advocate for in terms of next steps for moving the road safety agenda forward?**

The *Global status report on road safety* makes some very clear recommendations based on the findings of the study.

First of all, we need to include pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists in our transport policies. They represent half of the deaths in the world. We need to do more to protect them on the road.

Second, we found that only 15% of the countries have in place comprehensive legislation. Additional legislation needs to be developed in many countries to match the best standards available.

Third, enforcement needs to be improved. There where legislation exists, it is clear that the enforcement does not match the legislation, which explains part of the deaths and injuries in the world.

And finally, additional research will be needed to improve our knowledge about the magnitude of the problem in many low and middle-income countries in particular.

These are the next steps for many, many countries around the world.

We are very encouraged by the uptake on the international level. We are planning to use the findings of the report as a basis of discussion at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, which will happen in Moscow on 19-20 November this year. From there, we hope we will be able to plan a Decade of Action on Road Safety in which we will address many of the issues found in this report.

The time to act is now.