

IRTAD and the Global Road Safety Facility

Response on behalf of the World Bank

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Background

Huge health losses from road traffic injuries in low and middle-income countries are projected over the coming decades. In 2002 health losses from road traffic deaths and injuries were ranked as higher than those from malaria and tuberculosis (at 8th, 9th and 10th respectively) and they are projected to become an even bigger problem by 2030 (where they are ranked 7th, 15th and 10th respectively). Under more optimistic assumptions about the performance of targeted health programs, health losses from road traffic deaths and injuries could become the 4th biggest source of health losses by 2030. By 2030 health losses from road traffic deaths and injuries for men are projected to rank 2nd behind those from HIV/AIDS, and from 2015 to 2030 they will be the single biggest cause of healthy life years lost by boys and girls, aged 5 - 14. ¹ This latter projection for children provides sufficient cause for alarm in the development community and justification for a sustained commitment to reduce the costly impacts of road crashes.

Road crashes disproportionately harm the poor and plunge households into poverty. Pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and public passenger transport passengers are especially at risk. Globally, regionally and nationally urgent measures are being called for to reduce the growing vulnerability of communities experiencing intensified road infrastructure provision and rapid motorization, underscored by the launch in 2004 of the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention by the WHO and the World Bank², and subsequent United Nations (UN) General Assembly and World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolutions endorsing its findings and recommendations and calling for a concerted international response to what was acknowledged as a growing global crisis.

In response to this call for action the World Bank established the Global Road Safety Facility to generate increased funding and technical assistance to target and overcome country safety management capacity weaknesses, in accordance with agreed principles and good practices. It supported this initiative through funding from the World Bank Development Grant Facility in partnership with its founding donors the FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, the Government of the Netherlands, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID).

¹ Mathers C & Loncar D (2005). Updated projections of global mortality and burden of disease, 2002 - 2030: data sources, methods, and results. Evidence and Information for Policy Working Paper, World Health Organization, Geneva.

² Eds. Peden M, Scurfield R, Sleet D, Mohan D, Hyder A, Jarawan E and C Mathers (2004). World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention. World Health Organization, Geneva.

UN Resolution A/RES/62/244 of 31 March 2008 commended the World Bank for its initiative in establishing the Global Road Safety Facility and acknowledged it as the first funding mechanism designed to support capacity building and provide technical support for road safety at the global, regional and country levels. There has also been a greater appreciation of the alignment of global road safety priorities with sustainable development goals. Responses to the global road safety crisis are now being integrated with broader initiatives concerning the global climate change agenda where there is an emerging recognition of the co-benefits of addressing road safety, congestion, local air pollution and energy security which all strongly increase the opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.³

While the findings and recommendations of the World Report have been endorsed and promoted by successive UN General Assembly and World Health Assembly Resolutions calling for action, insufficient capacity to act has resulted in little progress being made at on implementing them. Road safety management capacity weaknesses must be addressed as the highest priority, as current initiatives are insufficient to effect sustainable change. The challenge remains to generate the political will and associated global, regional and country leadership and resources required to achieve improved results.

Safety management capacity in low and middle-income countries is weak and even with accelerated knowledge transfer it will take a sustained long-term commitment to reverse the projected trends in health losses from road crashes. It is envisaged that the Facility will operate for at least a decade and its Strategic Plan 2006 - 2015 was developed in consultation with key road safety partners and stakeholders to mobilize and allocate the resources required to sustainably implement the World Report recommendations.⁴ The plan specifies the Facility's mission, goals, activities, governance arrangements, funding mechanisms, and implementation priorities, and provides the formal partnership framework for dialogue, cooperation and action concerning the Facility's ongoing management and operation.

We cannot expect immediate results. It will take several decades to bring road safety outcomes under control in low and middle-income countries on a sustainable basis. We must make a long term commitment to this endeavor. But we need to speed up and scale up actions.

Measures taken will require proper sequencing. Institutional capacity strengthening is a precursor to effective institutional delivery of safety services. For example, sustainable general deterrence road policing will require strong commitment, leadership and accountability from the Police high command and this capacity must be built. It will also require robust entry and exit controls for vehicles and drivers and these systems must be in place before the full power of safety compliance regimes can be felt.

Measures taken must be systematic and at scale. We cannot continue with the fragmented and partial responses of the past thirty years. Simply preparing guidance manuals and funding small scale initiatives, for example, will not suffice. Much more is needed.

Integration

Road safety measures taken must be integrated with key development challenges and priorities.

The world is rapidly urbanizing. Climate change is an urgent and major development challenge. Energy security is vital. Good governance underpins effective progress. Global health is paramount.

Road safety cannot be addressed in isolation of these development priorities; without risking being displaced by them. Road Safety is a development challenge. Systematically addressing congestion, local air pollution, energy security and road safety can strongly increase the opportunities for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the achievement of a sustainable development path. For example, safer facilities for walking and cycling and lower vehicle speeds would result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, local air pollution and energy consumption. As a consequence we would see less road deaths and injuries, and less deaths and loss of life quality arising from poor air quality and sedentary lifestyles.

Measures taken must be aligned with this bigger picture and the co-benefits of an integrated development strategy must be clearly articulated and quantified to the extent possible. Making the linkages and showing the co-benefits between improved road safety and the achievement of other higher profile development goals will be crucial to achieving the support needed for the proposed Decade of Action for Road Safety and its ambitious performance targets. In one sentence, road safety needs to be perceived and implemented in an integrated fashion and not in isolation.

³ Transport Sector Board, World Bank Group (2008). Safe Clean and Affordable Transport for Development: Transport Business Strategy 2008 - 2012, Washington DC.

⁴ World Bank Global Road Safety Facility (2007). Strategic Plan 2006 - 2015. The World Bank, Washington DC.

Inclusiveness

Measures taken must be inclusive of all road users and citizens.

We are a global development agency and our dream is a world free of poverty. Development aims to promote higher living standards for all, with an emphasis on improved access to infrastructure services, health, education and people's ability to participate in the economy and society. This inclusiveness is central to how we view country development which has broadened from a narrow focus on income and spending to include education and health, and social, and stakeholder participation. As the absence of development, poverty must be understood from a similar perspective. Poverty is the inability to achieve basic prescribed standards in most or all of these areas. Hence the sheer scale of the health losses alone from road crashes makes road safety a development priority.

The cruel irony is that the consequences of road deaths directly impact the poor in low and middle-income countries even though generally they have done the least to cause them. The majority of road deaths and injuries in these countries are and will be among the poor - the 'vulnerable road users' -pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. Children are particularly at risk. Yet the poor and those thrust into poverty as a consequence of road crashes are often left powerless in the face of large-scale infrastructure provision and rapid motorization.

Measures taken must be responsive to the priorities and rights of the poor who should not bear the burden of scaling up investment in road transport systems. Infrastructure solutions should meet the requirements of all users, especially those most vulnerable and least protected, and more inclusive planning and service provision is vital to make roads safe for everyone.

The lessons learned from past experience have shaped our appreciation of these three challenges of sustainability, integration and inclusiveness. In general our projects and more so those of our partners have been too small and too fragmented to achieve measurable results, and they have been focused on safety interventions alone and not taken account of the institutional capacity required to implement them effectively. It is fair to say that these practices still continue with the belief that low-cost improvements in the absence of strong institutional commitment and sustained country investment will suffice. We are working to change this.

World Bank Priorities

At the World Bank we acknowledge our responsibility to promote improved road safety in our client countries. We have around 30 years experience in working with our clients on this and the lessons learned are shaping the new initiatives that we are now rolling out.

In May last year the World Bank Group issued a new Transport Business Strategy, Safe, Clean and Affordable Transport for Development which places a high priority on improved road safety. The emphasis is on a proactive approach of doing no harm, rather than the traditional approach of reacting to the lack of safety when it reveals itself. For example, the benefits of having median barriers to eliminate deaths and injuries from head-on crashes can be anticipated and captured with their immediate installation, rather than waiting several years for these deaths and injuries to occur in sufficiently high numbers to warrant intervention. Likewise deaths and injuries occurring at road junctions can be largely eliminated by the adoption of roundabout designs, rather than signalized or sign-posted junctions which result in more catastrophic injury outcomes.

Under the new strategy we are looking to accelerate road safety knowledge transfer and scale up road safety investment. This requires a shift from smaller fragmented road safety components that cannot produce measurable improvements, to larger scale, systematic investments that produce measurable and sustainable results, and which encompass institutional capacity building as a core objective. It also places a higher priority on finding and earmarking sources of road safety financing, and the priority inclusion of road safety improvements in country assistance strategies.

We have created the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility as the first funding mechanism designed to support global, regional and country capacity building. A recent independent evaluation of the Facility has confirmed the early achievement of its goals and the need to scale up its activities.

Main areas of activities are:

Capacity building includes, for example, funding country road safety management capacity reviews, country advisory services to assist the preparation of road safety investment operations, the Hubei Road Traffic Training Center, and the development of a global traffic safety police network (RoadPol) to engage and strengthen institutional leadership and processes for road policing in country police agencies.

Program delivery includes, for example, funding activities of the Global Road Safety Partnership and the World Health Organization in their focus countries.

Infrastructure safety includes, for example, funding the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) for the development and application of infrastructure safety rating tools and the International Roads Federation for country training courses in road infrastructure safety.

Research and development includes, for example, funding the Road Traffic Injuries Research Network to support country-based research, the Harvard Initiative for Global Health to improve Global Burden of Disease estimates of country road deaths and injuries and associated health losses, and country data support initiatives of the International Road Traffic Accident Database (the IRTAD Group).

Advocacy includes, for example, funding the development of an association for country collaboration in Latin America and the Caribbean, the second Global Stakeholders' Forum in Geneva, and support for regional participation in the UN Global Road Safety Collaboration.

Training and workshops includes, for example, funding safety management training initiatives with Sub-Saharan Transport Policy Program (SSATP) member countries and country-based workshops supporting the preparation of road safety investment programs and projects.

In the spirit of **improved aid effectiveness**, we are committed to harmonizing policies and practices for quality assuring the safety of road infrastructure across international financial institutions and related agencies. We have made a start on this in partnership with the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Working together with the IRTAD group

The International Road Traffic and Accident Database (IRTAD Database) collects accident, victim and exposure data from OECD countries on a continuous basis, and the International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group (IRTAD Group) is a related group of road safety experts and statisticians from member countries.

Further to its operations, the IRTAD Group has entered into a MOU with the World Bank Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) to foster research, analysis, knowledge transfer, and training relating to improving road safety in the developing world.

GRSF are promoting IRTAD activities in countries where the has targeted programmes by setting up a knowledge transfer mechanism between IRTAD members and targeted countries, in order to assist these countries in setting up proper data collection and management systems that will allow them, over time, to monitor their road safety performance. The Role of IRTAD Group would be to constitute mentoring teams (composed of representatives of the IRTAD Members) for countries identified by the GRSF.

We need to design and develop country peer review and mentoring programs focusing on data collection and management processes and monitor and evaluate the progress of country peer review and mentoring programs.

A small team of experts should be established in each selected country to be the IRTAD contact and liaison points.

GRSF needs to support the implementation of country peer review and mentoring programs through grant agreements and Bank project funds where appropriate.

Our first example of this exercise can be the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV) in Argentina taking advice from Spanish expert.

They are providing us with information regarding the current road crash data system in Argentina, in order to proceed with the organization of the twinning arrangement with the Spanish road safety agency for collaboration in the area of road crash data development.

A Road Safety Monitoring and Evaluation System would be developed. This component would be aimed at promoting a better data collection by the ANSV, in cooperation with provincial, police and health agencies. It also includes the design and development of a comprehensive crash data management system that will aid in identifying critical links, and provide feedback for improved decision making. To this end, we expect to allow the ANSV to access international best practice through the system, possibly on a pilot basis through linkage to the IRTAD. The current data collection system will be evaluated and implementation of more efficient practices will be made (such as standardizing the reporting forms, establishing guidelines for data extraction from within the healthcare system, etc.).

The expected output is an improved national crash data and analysis system that is accessible not only to the police but to all safety agencies and partners contributing to the improvement of road safety outcomes. The Global Road Safety Facility is inviting other regions and countries to pick this up and express their interest for this.

The GRSF are aiming at starting partnerships with at least one country per region (six regions) and year over a two year period. This would make it a total of twelve partnerships by the end of that period.