

An Urgent Call to Action for Africa

Each year, the world suffers 1.3 million preventable deaths and an estimated 50 million injuries from road crashes¹. Without serious action, road crashes will cause an estimated 13–17 million more deaths and 500 million more injuries in the current decade².

UN Member States have adopted a resolution 74/299 *Improving Global Road Safety*³ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (target 3.6)⁴ and are therefore mandated to reduce road deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030. We know what works to achieve this target: the actions needed are set out in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030⁵.

Frameworks and targets have been set: it is time to act now.

Regional Context

Despite having the lowest level of motorization in the world (2% of the world's cars⁶), the African region suffers from the highest estimated road traffic fatality rate (26.6 per 100,000 population), almost 10 points higher than the global average⁷. The continent accounts for 16% of the world's road deaths^{8,9}. Around 650 people die on Africa's roads every day, and 44% of fatalities are among pedestrians and cyclists¹⁰. The numbers are especially bad for young people; a child in Africa is twice as likely to die on the road than a child in any other part of the world¹¹.

In Africa, road crashes are the fourth leading cause of death of people aged 5–44; more than 75% of casualties are among those of the productive age, between 16–65 years¹². There is a direct link between

¹ WHO. (2018). *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565684>

² WHO & UN Regional Commissions. (2021). *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>; Job, RFS. (2019). *Development of a Safe System Approach*, Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, 13 January 2019, Washington DC.

³ United Nations General Assembly. (2020). *Resolution A/74/L86 Improving Global Road Safety*. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N20/226/30/PDF/N2022630.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁵ WHO & UN Regional Commissions. (2021). *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>

⁶ WHO. (2013). *Road Safety in the WHO African Region the Facts 2013*. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/report/factsheet_afro.pdf

⁷ WHO. (2018). *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565684>.

⁸ WHO. (2013). *Road Safety in the WHO African Region the Facts 2013*. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2013/report/factsheet_afro.pdf

⁹ African Union. Road Safety: *African Action Plan for the Global Decade of Action for Road Safety*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/32186-doc-road_safety_african_action_plan_for_the_global_decade_of_action_for_road_safety-e.pdf

¹⁰ WHO. (2018). *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565684>

¹¹ SSATP Africa Transport Policy Program. (Accessed 2022). *Changing the Figures of Road Safety in Africa*. <https://www.ssatp.org/topics/road-safety>

¹² African Development Bank. (2013). *Road Safety in Africa: Assessment of Progresses and Challenges in Road Safety Management System*. https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Events/ATFforum/Road_Safety_in_Africa_-_Assesment_of_Progresses_and_Challenges_in_Road_Safety_-_AfDB.pdf



the impact of road crashes and worsening poverty in Africa¹³. In addition to road deaths, hundreds of thousands more people each year suffer long-lasting injuries from road crashes. Often, it is not only the victims who lose the ability to earn and support their families but also the family members who have to care for them. Medical costs and reduced income often lead families into crippling debt. At a national level, it is estimated that countries lose 3% or more of GDP annually as a result of road traffic crashes¹⁴.

Different frameworks and instruments to address road safety have been developed by regional bodies such as the SADC Transport Protocol¹⁵, the Accra Declaration¹⁶, and the Africa Union Road Safety Charter¹⁷ amongst others. Several African states have committed to them, now it is time to turn commitments into concrete action.

Call to Action

Governments in Africa must prioritize road safety and demonstrate strategic leadership by planning, orchestration, and execution of road safety interventions through political ownership, positioning road safety as a national priority, recognizing that it is an integral part of the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and publicly articulating a long-term measurable vision.

We call on governments in Africa to implement or guarantee accountable, well-resourced, and empowered road safety institutions that are responsible and capable of managing all necessary road safety elements and which coordinate with other governmental authorities such as Ministries of Health, Transport, Infrastructure, and Education, in order to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2030 and guarantee people's right to safe mobility.

We call for:

1. **Evidence-based actions that put people, especially pedestrians and vulnerable road users, at the center**
 - a. Improve the data and evidence base to build a road safety and mobility information system in every country that:
 - i. Collects, analyzes, disseminates, and enables access to reliable data and evidence, including sociological factors, to better understand the root causes of road morbidity and mortality behaviors in given contexts and develop evidence-based policies and plans;
 - ii. Produces timely, reliable, accurate, well-categorized road safety data that is transparent, accessible to all, and independent of political influence;
 - iii. Monitors and evaluates road safety targets to ensure that commitments are put into action.
 - b. Protect vulnerable road users by:
 - i. By 2030, implementing national laws limiting speed to 30 km/h where people walk, live, and play;

¹³Africa Development Bank Group, Transport & ICT Department. (2013). *Road Safety in Africa: Assessment of Progresses and Challenges in Road Safety Management System*

¹⁴ WHO. (2021). *Road traffic injuries*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries>

¹⁵ Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. (2006). *Protocol on Transport, Communications, and Meteorology*. https://www.sadc.int/files/7613/5292/8370/Protocol_on_Transport_Communications_and_Meteorology_1996.pdf

¹⁶ UN Regional Commissions, UN Habitat, SSATP, Ministry of Transport, Government of Ghana. (2018). *Regional Workshop on Road Safety and Urban Mobility*. <https://unece.org/experts-meet-accra-improve-road-safety-and-urban-mobility>

¹⁷ African Union. (2016). *African Road Safety Charter*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/37309-treaty-0052_-_road_safety_charter_e.pdf



- ii. Relocating road space and improve land-use planning to promote a modal shift from individual motorized transport to active, sustainable, and safe modes, including walking, and cycling in urban and rural areas;
 - iii. Providing safe, affordable, accessible, and convenient public transportation that supports access to education and work and promotes equal opportunity.
 - c. Utilize global and regional frameworks and national and local legislation to support achievement of the 2030 targets by:
 - i. Implementing national and local road safety plans that are aligned to the Global Plan for the Decade of Action 2021–2030 and the regional frameworks listed above;
 - ii. Adopting and ratifying the African Road Safety Charter;
 - iii. Ensuring that in-country laws and regulations are not only passed but also implemented and enforced.
- 2. Investment in road safety**
- a. Prioritize road safety in government spending
 - i. Allocating a progressively increasing governmental budget, dedicated for road safety;
 - ii. Transparent reporting on road safety spending against the planned budget on an annual basis.
- 3. Civil society involvement in decision-making processes**
- a. Meaningfully include, engage, and support civil society organizations that represent road users as strategic partners within all levels of road safety planning and execution.

Our role and commitment

We, as civil society, have a role defined in the Global Plan. We commit to play our part in advocating for and enabling people’s rights to safe mobility and achieve a 50% reduction in road deaths and injuries by 2030.

We commit to:

1. Stand up for people’s right to be safe on the roads

We empower people and communities to claim their rights to safe and healthy mobility. We show the reality of the roads they use and highlight the experiences of road victims and their loved ones who have been affected by crashes. We speak up on decisions that affect road safety.

2. Use data and evidence to show what needs to be done

We amplify data, evidence, and best practices from around the world and we collect ground-level data and evidence that show the impact of safe and unsafe roads on people and communities.

3. Hold our governments and other stakeholders, accountable for people’s right to be safe on the road and for the 2030 target

We hold accountable those stakeholders, listed in the Global Plan, that can enact change, such as governments, multilateral organizations at the local level, and private sector.

We keep road safety on the agenda until every person is guaranteed — through commitment and action — their right to safe mobility. We monitor progress and put a spotlight on action and inaction.

4. Partner with other stakeholders

Partner with other organizations to position road safety in the context of other cross-cutting issues, such as climate, active mobility, socio-economic equity, and human rights recognizing that the Sustainable Development Goals are integrated and indivisible.